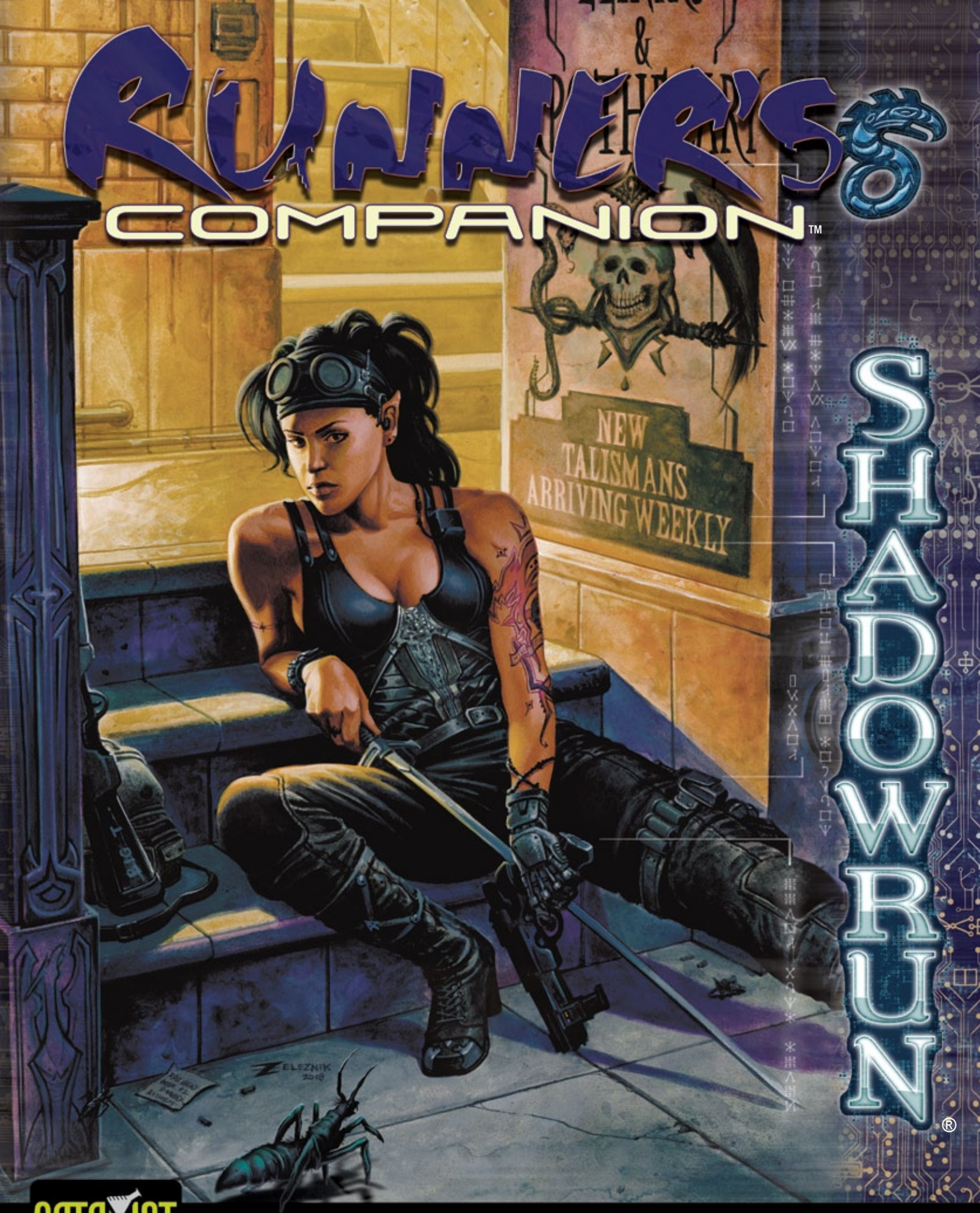
RUNNER'S COMPANION™



SHADOWRUN®

CORE CHARACTER RULEBOOK

CATALYST game labs

Simon Wentworth (order #1132857)

MASTER THE SHADOWS

Life in the shadows has never been as dangerous, and runners need every edge they can get. Runner's Companion opens up a world of expanded options for Shadowrun players with dozens of New Qualities, Advanced Contact and Lifestyle Rules, and handy tips on running, travelling and smuggling, and operating in a surveillance society.

This core book for Shadowrun, Fourth Edition also introduces Metavariants, Changelings, and the Infected as player character options, and expands the scope of the game to include unique non-metahuman characters such as Shapeshifters, Free Spirits, and a new generation of AIs among others.

SHADOWRUN®

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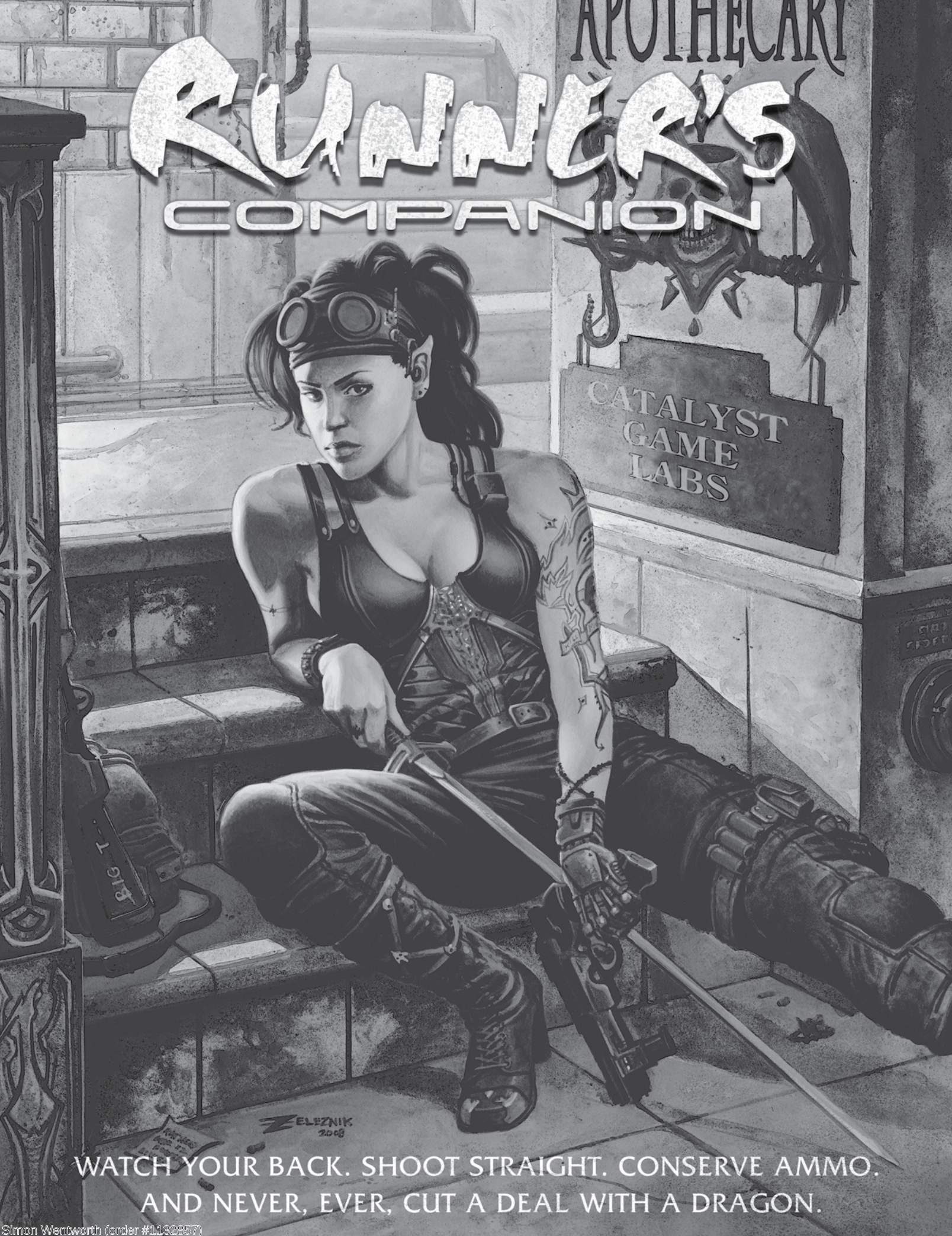

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First Printing by Catalyst Game Labs,
an imprint of InMediaRes Productions, LLC
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Connecting Jackpoint VPN ...
... Matrix Access ID Spoofed.
... Encryption Keys Generated.
... Connected to Onion Routers.
> Login
****
> Enter Passcode
****
... Biometric Scan Confirmed.
Connected to <ERROR: NODE UNKNOWN>
"There is a monster in all of us ... not figuratively, literally. Go to sleep yourself, wake up something ... different."

*JackPoint Stats*___

44 users currently active in the network

Latest News
* <sticky> This private p2p MoSoSo network is now gamma. There isn't software anywhere that doesn't have a fault, though, so report any glitches to me. – FastJack
* 3 new members have joined this network

Personal Alerts
* Your "xpl0it3r" agent has 1 message for you
* You have 5 new private messages
* You have 3 messages queued for anonymous re-routing
* You have 11 new responses to your Jackpoint posts
* Tarislar safe house payment due in 73 hours, 2 minutes and 4 seconds
* You have an urgent message from cult member contact [Ignore]

First Degree
You are hidden from all contacts.

Your Current Rep Score: 50 (94% Positive)

Current Time: July 15, 2071, 1115

PREFERENCES
FEEDS
TASKS
LINKS
HISTORY

Welcome back to JackPoint, omae; your last connection was severed: 2 hours, 23 minutes, 1 second ago

JackPoint

Today's Heads Up

Do you need a new contact? Are you afraid you'll wake up SURGED? Looking for that new smuggling route? Perhaps you're in the market for a new pad, or are new to the shadows and wondering how to stay off the grid? We've compiled an eclectic list of files...they may not all be down your alley, but you'll find something useful. [Link][Guests]

Incoming

* A new street drug seems to be creating a lot of buzz. Catch the latest gossip on its effects and the rise of the outfit behind it. [Tag: Ghost Cartels]
* If you've been to the wild side and returned to yak about it, how about sharing your thoughts on our guide to the great urban wildernesses of the day? [Tag: Feral Cities]

Top News Items

* The 4,600 page "Sapience Report" has caused a backlash across the UCAS/CAS by Humanis Policlubs and even stirred more moderate-minded organizations. The report was commissioned as a trans-disciplinary review of racial diversity and sapience to aid legislation in deciding who (or what) qualifies for civil rights and possess criminal responsibility. However, the "humans first" groups are calling it an attempt to push the meta-human agenda, citing that 10 of the 15 members of the research panel hail from the Green/Awakened bloc. Link.
* Omar Chavez, widely believed to be the Sottocapo of the Chavez Mafia in Denver, died yesterday in helicopter crash over the CAS sector of Denver. The incident is under close scrutiny by both the CAA and the ZDF. Chavez was 94. Link.
* Early this morning, an explosion powerful enough to register on seismographs as far away as New Delhi and Neo-Tokyo was detected in Shaanxi. Triangulation suggests that it came from the vicinity of the tomb of Shih Huang Ti. Reporters have been prevented from accessing the region and the Shaanxi government is refusing to comment at this time. Link.

CHAT | MESSAGES | FILES | POSTS | NEXUS | SEARCH

Active ComStar Firewall
Active Jack-in-the-Box Antivirus
Active SpamWitch Filter
On/Receiving Commcode
Excellent Signal
Active Hidden Mode
Local Map

RUNNER'S COMPANION
Invited Guests
<none>

Posts/Files tagged with "Runner's Companion":
* Starting Out
* Survival Tips
* Contacts
* Life on the Run
* Metavariants

[More]

CONTINUE
ADVANCED SEARCH
SAVE

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. . . STARTING OUT . . .

Look, regardless of what you've heard, shadowrunners aren't just people who shoot other people right in the face for money. I've met dozens of runners worthy of the tag, and every one of them has a different story. Nobody chooses this life, it chooses them, and anybody who tells you otherwise has been watching too many old sims.

It's not an easy life. Right now, I can tell you three ways I can get out of this restaurant, and I already know how I'm going to kill you if I need to. Chill, I'm not going to kill you unless I have to. You asked lady, I'm just telling you like it is.

Hell, most of us don't even choose our own street names. When I started out doing corporate work in Sekondi, I jumped an anti-corp insurgent, stabbed him with a poisoned knife, and then got back into hiding to let him slowly die. My squad-mates started calling me *Auwa* after that. That's not what I'm called now, of course, but you get the idea.

I was originally taught close quarters combat, but I've also picked up some sniper training, infiltration techniques, Matrix security, and counter-terrorism driving. I've got more than my share of implants. I've had a role on each team I've worked with, and my skills complement theirs. I've picked up a lot of friends along the way and even lost some of them.

Since then, I've trained my abilities. Physical training, combat drills, studying. Yeah, researching. Sometimes, it's more important to know which gang is in control of what city block, or whose stock is selling hard, or even which school won the last Horizon Bowl than it is to know how to assault a strongpoint. I need to keep both my body and my mind sharp. Speaking of staying sharp, close your eyes a moment.

// 762–TRANSCRIPTION ERROR–NOISE ABOVE THRESHOLD //

Dumb fucker. This is Bravo Mike. Primary objective accomplished. Clear the street for extraction, the clock is running.

Now, where were we? Get up, have a seat. What, you think I'd come to a posh place like this for just an interview? Oh, suck it up. If you want to be a real journalist, you're gonna see blood. Besides, I didn't hit his wife or kids.

Before I go, I want to make sure you let your readers know that shadowrunning isn't all glamour, sex, and wealth. Sure, sometimes people will manage to get that for themselves. Sometimes, we don't choose the jobs, the jobs choose us. Sometimes, we get to stick it to The Man. Sometimes, we rob from the rich and give to the poor. Sometimes, we're the only thing standing between some innocent family and a corporate cleanup squad, a raving blood mage, or a hive of insect spirits. Sometimes, we're heroes. Sometimes, we shoot other people right in the face for money.

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THE SHADOWRUNNER

A shadowrunner can be a lot of things, from a specialist operator with military background to Barrens trash trying to work her way out of the hole she was born in. Ask three runners where they come from and, you'll get five answers. But, something undeniably sets them apart. It takes a special kind of individual to put her life on the line to do other people's dirty work—someone a cut above the average metahuman. A runner lives a dangerous life, and not just when the bullets are flying. She gets the job done by any means she deems necessary, and she gets paid for it. It takes someone with the right skills, attitude, and a flexible moral compass. Those who run the razor's edge for kicks and fame are probably suicidal or sociopathic.

There are almost as many reasons for a person to become a shadowrunner as there are shadowrunners. So what makes a shadowrunner? Where does he come from? Why does he do what he does? What kind of background produces such an individual?

FALLING INTO SHADOW

There are many reasons why people become shadowrunners. Most often, it is out of necessity, often due to a sudden event that causes a dramatic upheaval, such as a corporate sell-out, a betrayal, or a violent tragedy. Some are victims of circumstance, or casualties of the rat race with no other way of cashing in on their talents.

Some leave their lives voluntarily, preferring freedom from the shackles of mind-numbing corporate drudgery and the emancipation to whatever authority they once acknowledged. Some people simply end up in the shadows.

To just as many, it's a means to survival. For others it's a means to an end, a step on a longer path to revenge, self-validation, or redemption—seeking in the shadows satisfaction or answers they cannot find in the light.

Most do it for the money, the prestige, or both. A rare few claim to do it for the adventure and the challenge of the job.

When designing a new character, one of the most defining elements should be his background. To one extent or another it should impact his skillset, his outlook, his knowledge base, his contacts, and more often than not his motivations.

Fallen from Grace

Many shadowrunners start out as legitimate citizens with promising careers. Something happens, and they find the lives they had planned and dreamed slipping between their fingers. They slip through the cracks and find themselves in the shadows doing their best to survive and thrive in the Sixth World.

Such runners, typically, have some skills left over from their lives that they turn to new purpose, along with contacts in various government, corporate, or other legitimate society positions. They have either somehow dealt with their SINs or still have them weighing them down. While adapting to life on the other side can be hard, such runners are usually served well by their insider's familiarity with the inner workings, prevailing attitudes, trappings, and procedures of the system—be it the megacorporate machine, military complex, government bureaucracy, or a tribal culture.

Rising from the Gutter

For some, shadowrunning is a step up the food chain. Scions of the many gangs, organized crime syndicates, and the barrens of one of the Sixth World's sprawls, they've clawed their way up from the streets. These runners have already had it tough and are often willing to do anything to stay out of their former lives.

In most cases, they've never had SINs or have earned criminal SINs somewhere along the line. What skills they have, they've picked up on the streets and in what passes for schools in the lower class inner cities. Many still owe debts of loyalty, gratitude, or money to their former allegiances that enabled them to forge themselves into what they've become.

Most maintain strong connections and contacts among underworld and street-types and are intimate with the street-level realities of the city and its movers and shakers.

Born to the Dark Side

By 2070, a few runners hail from the shadows already. It has been decades since shadowrunners became a fixture of Sixth World life, and there are second- and even third-generation shadowrunners working for Mr. Johnson. The families of fixers, street docs, and veteran shadowrunners that have followed in their parents' footsteps tend to know the people their parents knew, moving through the shadow society that is their birthright. They learn early on to make the most of their talents and find their niche in the urban ecology. They often hone their abilities and skills under the watchful eye of veteran runners and talented specialists.

Such shadowrunners join the extended shadow community early on, making contacts and solidifying a reputation. They are better connected than most and well-versed in the intricacies of the local criminal and corporate scenes.

THE ROLE OF SHADOWRUNNERS

The Sixth World is one of fractured power bases. It is filled with nations, sovereign corporations, criminal syndicates, powerful individuals of myriad origins, and even a few influential street gangs, magical groups, and other organizations. All of them want what any powerful entity wants: more power.

The powerful have a few obstacles in this pursuit, however. With so many vying for power, there are a number of places—geographical, political, or virtual—that lie between these factions and outside of their bounds. Large entities, such as nations and corporations, move very slowly and do not have the institutional nimbleness they need to capitalize on most opportunities. Individuals and small entities, on the other hand, either do not have the resources or easily become targets when they move against their rivals' interests.

The shadowrunner moves in the figurative shadows between the looming powers that be. She is both a criminal and an agent of change. She moves swiftly where corporations and other organizations only creep. She has the ability and resources to complete her job where others do not, and the anonymity to make retaliation futile against both herself and her employer.

In a way, shadowrunners are vital to the economy of the 2070s. They certainly help move money and goods, both as tertiary sector participants and secondary sector clients. As a vehicle for the machinations of the powers that be, they move resources between different "markets," which makes them one of the factors preventing the world from devolving into a series of strongholds. Of course, staving off a dark age is a poor trade-off for having one of the most dangerous jobs on (and off) the planet and a severely reduced life-expectancy.

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Urgent Message...

SHADOWRUNNER ESSENTIALS

While each role on a shadowrun team has different priorities and functions to fulfill, and characters' will likely adapt their choices in skills and gear accordingly, there are a few essentials every shadowrunner should possess to make it through his first few jobs.

Some skills and items of gear are so important to runners that they are virtually indispensable in the shadows. While characters can get by without these, survival and success are much more likely if you possess one or all of them.

Skills

In a profession where stealth and going unnoticed can be the difference between a smooth milk run and a lethal gunfight, the Infiltration skill, even with a low rating, is a vital addition to a runner's repertoire. Just as Infiltration allows you to pass through physical spaces unnoticed, the Etiquette skill allows you to pass through social spaces unnoticed and maneuver in social situations. In the dangerous world shadowrunners inhabit, knowledge is power. The awareness of your environment or the ability to spot a crucial clue or a potential foe make the Perception skill a must-have for runners. Finally, it is a truism that the best way to not get hurt is to avoid being hit. Armor will only protect you so much, making Dodge or Gymnastics important survival skills.

Gear

The one essential item almost no shadowrunner can afford to be without is a commlink, even if he does not use it on the job or very often. A commlink of any rating allows you to communicate and coordinate effectively as well as opening the global information resource that is the Matrix up to everyone (and it even makes table-talk among players an in-game feature). As professional criminals and deniable assets, fake SINs, IDs, and licenses, while not usually enough for to pass you off as an ordinary citizen indefinitely, can mollify, or at least stall, whatever security forces may become interested in your presence.

The Sixth World is a violent place and even a little armor can mean the difference between life and death. Remember to keep an eye on the rating, though, unless you don't expect your Agility, Reaction, or Initiative attributes to come into play. Likewise, packing a weapon or two for personal protection is a necessity in the character's line of work. Last, but not least, for those inevitable occasions when a runner will get hurt, a medkit and trauma patch will not only prove a boon to your teammates, but if you keep it somewhere accessible on your person, your companions can use it to save you, too.

THE TEAM

No man is an island, and this is doubly true in the shadows, where no one can afford to stand alone. In the dangerous streets of 2070, even for the most competent runner it's impossible to cover all the angles, and it's essential to have someone you can trust watching your back (regardless of whether he's motivated by self-interest or friendship).

Whether they have worked together for years or are assembled by a fixer or Johnson for a single job, the essential component for a successful operation is a shadowrunning team. And the key to a successful team is versatility: building on members' strengths, covering each others' weaknesses, and complementing one another's skill sets.

The simplest way to achieve this is for members of a team to possess complementary *roles*. Typically, each team member is the "go-to guy" for particular duties, although it is not unusual for individual skills to overlap and have people that act as a fallback for teammates in certain roles. A team composed exclusively of specialist gunbunnies or faces might will be stymied by a magical or purely Matrix-based threat. By the same token, a team of investigators or matrix specialists would be handicapped if they have to face a heavily-armed SWAT unit.

TEAM ROLES

Shadowrun teams can encounter a bewildering variety of challenges, obstacles, and opponents in the course of doing business, and, while it's impossible to cover all angles, competency in a number of key areas is the best way of overcoming them. These areas are called team roles, or simply, roles, and some are more essential to the average shadowrun team than others (depending on the type of campaign some may be indispensable). This is not to say that every shadowrunning team *must* cover all roles. However, there are roles that are more critical than others.

Keep in mind that some roles implicitly require more character specialization than others. A runner need not specialize in one and only one role. A character's role on a team can be more fluid if he diversifies his abilities and skill set, though, the more specialized the character is in his field of choice, the less varied his skillset is likely to be. A Street Samurai (p. 101, *SR4*), for example, covers both the Close-Quarters Combatant and Fire Support roles. The Occult Investigator (p. 97, *SR4*) can handle the Magical Support and Investigator roles. On the other hand, hyperspecialized adepts or technomancers are unlikely to accomplish more than one role.

In fact, the *Shadowrun, Fourth Edition* system is flexible enough to allow a number of different approaches one can take to fulfill a role. This being the case, roles are best viewed as essential areas of expertise, rather than character exclusive vocations or specializations: a Close Quarters Combat specialist might be a specialized adept, a cybered street samurai, a magician using self-possession, or even a drone rigger.

Note that fixers, principal employers (such as Mr. Johnson), and others who hire or fund shadowrunners are usually aware of the capabilities of a team before the job is offered, and so a group will rarely be asked to do something of which they are incapable. For example, a team with no magical support will generally not be hired to investigate a coven of toxic shamans. Gamemasters are

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encouraged to keep their players' characters' capabilities and roles in mind when choosing or designing adventure scenarios. Should a role on a team that is vital to the completion of a run not be filled, the team itself, the fixer, or Mr. Johnson involved might want to recruit an NPC to fulfill the role.

Specialists

Within each role, a character's performance can often be optimized by focusing on specific skills, abilities, augmentations, magic, and powers that enhance effectiveness in his chosen function. Such concentration in a given role, however, often comes at the cost of versatility and investment in other areas.

While specialists may steal the limelight from other characters when their crucial skill set comes into play, they can also find themselves lacking in other situations. While characters who have been designed as specialists will typically out-perform generalists, depending on group make up and flexibility, they can still be a hindrance. It is up to the gamemaster to plan appropriate challenges and difficulties for both the specialist characters and those with more versatile skill sets.

DIFFERENT APPROACHES

There are a great many methods that shadowrunners use in their jobs. Some prefer to use overwhelming firepower. Some use subtle magic. Some use high-tech devices and Matrix intrusions. Some like to just have a lot of friends that can do the work for them.

Most methods fit into the broad categories of physical, mystical, or technological approaches. Each approach has certain strengths, weaknesses, and unique properties, and each has its own tools, style, and means of improvement. Some characters specialize in a single approach to their role(s). Others may take a different route, since a single shadowrunner can easily incorporate aspects of two or all three approaches into his repertoire. For instance, an adept cat burglar often mixes the physical, mystical, and technological approaches.

It is not uncommon to think that role dictates a particular approach (and this may indeed be the case for highly specialized characters), but, in reality, almost every role can be enacted from multiple character types.

The Physical Approach

In this approach, the shadowrunner relies on her own physical abilities above all else. She is in the thick of things, taking on opponents and obstacles herself. While her performance may be enhanced by weapons, technological equipment, or implants, this approach differs from the technological approach in that the character relies on gear integral to her own body and mind rather than standalone devices or electronic intermediaries.

This approach generally benefits from expending both cash and Karma alike on character improvement.

The Mystical Approach

The shadowrunner who uses this approach favors the supernatural or technomantic forces to accomplish his objectives. The overwhelming majority of those who use this approach are magicians or adepts of some sort. Technomancers also fit into this category, for while a technomancer's abilities are not magical, their intuitive relationship with the Matrix and Resonance can be described as mystical.

While it can be boosted somewhat with an expenditure of cash, this approach relies primarily on the practitioner's Karma for its power.

The Technological Approach

This approach relies heavily on external gear, sophisticated electronics, and other technological devices. Commlinks, drones, software, vehicles, and other implements of technology feature heavily in this approach, often augmented with wireless technology and software.

Money fuels this approach the most, but Karma spending can also have an impact.

KEY ROLES

This section includes an analysis of the major roles important to successful shadowrun teams. The selection that follows addresses eight areas of expertise that every team might want to benefit from: Close Quarters Combat, Fire Support, Infiltration, Investigation, Magical Support, Matrix Support, Negotiation, and Transportation.

The examples and suggestions given should by no means be construed as an exhaustive list, but a starting point for your own team's composition.

CLOSE QUARTERS COMBAT

Shadowrunners spend a lot of time in confined areas. It's the nature of the job and urban environments. Characters find themselves in a claustrophobic sewer or a back alley, inside a research lab or a cube farm, infiltrating an automated factory floor or packed warehouse, in a dense forest or cramped cave. When fights start in these confined spaces, opponents are in close proximity, cover is plentiful, lines of sight are blocked, and the fighting gets up close and personal.

The Close Quarters Combat specialist focuses on combat and specifically physically engaging the opponent, via armed or unarmed combat. For the most part, this role concentrates on melee combat, as well as short-range weapons like thrown weapons, pistols, tasers, and impact projectiles at short ranges. The goal is to engage at close range and either put the opponent down or keep her occupied.

It is not unusual for characters in this role to act as scouts or pointmen, particularly if they are stealthy. This make it relatively easy to close to melee range; engaging unprepared opponents from surprise can be as effective and often more controlled and stealthy than using guns.

Duties

Close quarters combat specialists are expected to be able to act swiftly against close targets and either contain or eliminate them. Other duties include preventing opponents from attacking other team members with different roles, and getting into engagement range quickly and efficiently. Close Quarters Combat specialists are also often expected to stealthily neutralize opponents up close and personal. Close Quarters Combat specialists are also favored when non-lethal force is required, since melee prowess allows greater control of the damage done than firearms.

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In a world where firearms are plentiful and security forces are armed, many opponents are overly reliant on firearms and relatively unskilled in melee combat. A skilled Close Quarters Combat specialist will turn this to her advantage. Engaging in melee often will catch many opponents unprepared (a security guard faced by a shadowrunner is more likely to reach for his gun than his stunbaton), and she can leverage that into a quick and devastating takedown.

Getting Physical

There are numerous potential ways to approach this role, and it can be fulfilled by a variety of character builds. Typically though, both attributes and skills factor heavily into melee combat.

The four Physical attributes are of the greatest importance to this role, along with Initiative. Agility and Strength both lend to the character's offense, and Reaction and Body to the defense. A high Initiative helps assure that the Close Quarters Combat specialist has the jump on opponents.

This approach starts with a good skill rating in the weapon(s) of choice. Any of the skills from the Close Combat skill group would be appropriate, as would Pistols or Throwing Weapons. Investment in Dodge or Gymnastics are also priorities. Competency in skills from the Stealth (particularly Infiltration) and Firearms Skill Groups are also beneficial, for those times when the target is too far to engage immediately or directly in melee combat.

The Martial Arts quality (p. 156, *Arsenal*) and the various associated maneuvers offer advantages as well.

Character Builds

There are a number of approaches to this role. Perhaps the most popular is that of the adept, particularly those that follow the Warrior's Way. Many adept powers are particularly suited for this role (most notably Attribute Boost, Combat Sense, Critical Strike, Elemental Strike, Improved Ability, Improved Reflexes, Killing Hands, Mystic Armor, and Nerve Strike).

Augmented characters offer great versatility with some implants—both bio- and cyberware are imminently suited for melee combat including multiple custom and armored cyberlimbs with high attribute boosts, implant weapons, and various Initiative and Reaction enhancements). Melee specialist adepts can be hyperspecialized by combining magic and technological augmentation.

Magicians are a less obvious option to the close-quarters combat role. They can summon spirits and order them into melee combat or use possession (especially with spirits of beasts and guardian spirits). Another means is by spells, especially Increase (Attribute), Increase Reflexes, and the various touch-range Combat spells. The mystic adept can draw from both aspects of his abilities in fulfilling this role.

Another off-beat choice might be a technomancer combining their superiority in the Matrix with that of the "meat world" using echoes such as Acceleration, Biowire, Mesh Reality, and even Resonance Trodes.

Though less common, riggers and technomancers can also fulfill the duties of this role by using drones in melee (particularly those with mechanical arms or fully anthroform drones).

Essential Gear

When it comes to essential gear, the character should possess the weapon(s) that corresponds to her choice of skill(s)—that is, of course, if the character isn't an Unarmed Combat specialist and dispenses weapons. Melee weapons are effective tools in causing a lot of damage at close range and are often more controllable in terms of the damage dealt.

When choosing weapons, note that, while the stereotypical Close Quarters Combat specialist benefits from possessing a high Strength, this need not be the case, and several weapons require only contact to do damage (poisoned blades, stun weapons, etc.). Characters should maintain a backup ranged weapon, just in case. A few weapon modifications (pp. 146–153, *Arsenal*) can also prove interesting additions.

Augmentations that improve the attributes and skills spotlighted above, such as muscle replacement, muscle augmentation and toner, bone lacing, and customized cyberlimbs, all support this role, not to mention the various types of implanted weaponry (from cyberspurs to shock hands). This role also benefits from various forms of implanted armor and skeletal reinforcement. Additionally, any augmentation that offers additional Initiative Passes is of great help in this role. The extra Initiative Passes can be used in active defense on the way into close range or simply to mete out more punishment.

Armor, both worn and implanted, especially with a high Impact rating but that doesn't restrict movement, is essential.

Should a rigger attempt to fill this role, drones with a full mechanical arm can be used to great effect in melee combat. In a pinch, any drone can be used to ram opponents or simply hinder their movements.

FIRE SUPPORT

In the military, the term "fire support" means artillery or close air support that is used in conjunction with ground operations, usually an assault. To shadowrunners, the term's meaning is similar, but with a limited scope. The fire support role handles physical engagements that are out of range of close-quarters combat.

Ranged combat is a staples of the Sixth World; firearms are so accessible and cheap, that their use by criminals, security and law enforcement is ubiquitous. Even Joe Q. Public will often carry some firearm for personal protection. Firefights can be lethal affairs, but, while just about anyone can be handed a pistol or rifle and told to fire at anything that moves, it takes skill and training to use weapons and magic to their fullest potential.

Probably the most common character role, a fire support specialist is either a crack weapons specialist or a combat magician capable of both taking down enemies and suppressing opposition.

Duties

The duties of this role are three-fold. The first and most obvious duty is to eliminate threats that are out in the open at long range. Second, to keep opponents under cover pinned until either a close quarters combat specialist can close or another fire support specialist can move to a flanking position. This role is also responsible for "area interdiction;" keeping opponents clear of certain areas of a battlefield.

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Whether opting for a physical approach using heavy firepower or combat magic, suppressing the opponents, or sniping individuals, the Fire Support specialist is assigned the dangerous job of keeping enemies at a distance and eliminating threats before they can engage the remaining team members. Fire Support specialists are also often called upon for specialized functions, such as ranged assassinations or the use of heavy weapons against hardened targets or vehicles.

Taking the Shot

More than their attributes, Fire Support characters are highly dependent on their skills and the tools of their trade.

For mundane characters (and adepts), a high Agility is fundamental to this role, as is a good rating in the skill(s) used with the character's weapon(s) of choice. Reaction and Body attributes can also be useful, although it is possible to make up for deficiencies in both attributes in other ways. Though largely secondary, the high Strength of some metaypes and augmented characters may prove useful for recoil compensation.

Initiative, while important, is not the be-all and end-all of this role. While it is easier to neutralize threats before they can get a bead on you, it is also useful to be able to choose targets after they have acted in a Combat Turn. Extra Initiative Passes are highly useful in either case.

In terms of skill set, weapon skills are crucial. Fire Support characters can either hyperspecialize in one weapon or diversify around several. Seeing and identifying targets makes Perception a vital skill for this role. Dodge or Gymnastics are also crucial, since finding and taking cover during a firefight combat might mean the difference between life or death. The Heavy Weapons, Gunnery, various Exotic Weapons, and Armorer skills may also prove useful for mundane characters taking this role.

For a character taking a magical approach to the Fire Support role, such as combat mages, Spellcasting and Summoning skills are decisive, though all the Sorcery and Conjuring skills prove useful. Unlike the Awakened in other roles, Fire Support magicians benefit from having balanced Physical attributes too. More so than other magical types, magicians in this role benefit significantly from augmentations and implants that enhance vision and boost combat abilities.

Character Builds

This role can be approached in many different ways from the obvious to the esoteric. Fire Support specialists of all sorts are popular, and different approaches benefit from different advantages.

Mundane and augmented characters can benefit from a wide array of weapon choices and technological enhancements, both implanted and external, to fulfill this role. Appropriately modified and accessorized weapons are highly desireable, as are various types of vision enhancements and targeting aids be they implants or worn (smartlinks, thermographics, rangefinders, radar sense, etc). Augmented characters can expand their arsenal with a plethora of combat augmentations such as Reaction, Agility, and Initiative-boosting cyberware (and some bioware), implanted armor, and even attention co-processors.

Riggers represent an alternative mundane approach to this combat role; one relying heavily on armed and armored combat

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drones. Vehicles can also provide fire support, especially one with vehicle weapons (though this requires investment in Gunnery or Heavy Weapons skills). Riggers can deploy autonomous firing platforms around the battlefield, though mobile ones are generally preferable.

The most common approach to this role for Awakened characters is through Spellcasting. Magician characters benefit from a varied array of Combat spells providing different options, conditions, and areas of effect that can target enemies, shape the battlefield, as well as damaging equipment and causing other collateral damage. Magicians (and mystic adepts) can also summon spirits with the Elemental Attack power and provide fire support in that manner.

Adept gunslingers are exceptionally suited as Fire Support specialists, combining magical abilities and technological enhancements (e.g. smartlinks, weapon modifications, implants, etc). Attribute Boost, Combat Sense, Improved Ability (Weapon skill of choice), Improved Physical Attribute (Agility), Improved Reflexes, and Quick Draw are some favored adept powers for this role.

Essential Gear

For mundane (and adept) characters, the primary tool is the firearm, specifically any longarm, heavy weapon, assault rifle, or SMG. Smartlink and recoil compensation systems are almost a requirement for this role. Other weapon accessories and modifications (pp. 310–311, *SR4* and pp. 146–153, *Arsenal*) can significantly enhance the effectiveness of the character's chosen weapons. The character can also benefit from an assortment of ammunition types, to specialize her weapon for different threats.

Magicians in Fire Support roles may find it useful to pick up foci and fetishes focusing on their grimoire of Combat Spells (which should include a mix of Mana and Physical, Direct and Indirect spells, and some useful elemental effects to round things out). Illusion and Manipulation spells (especially environmental spells) can also pin down opponents and keep them out of certain areas.

The Fire Support specialist cannot shoot or spellcast at opponents if she cannot see them. Vision enhancements (both worn or implanted) such as low-light, thermographic, and even ultrasound and radar sense are a boon to this role (as can be good sensors packages on drones). A tacnet can offer similar benefits and facilitate the use of indirect fire.

Armor (particularly ballistic armor) is important, although too much armor can hinder the character's actions and reduce her ability to evade returning fire.

For riggers in this role, the best vehicles and drones for this role are those with high Body or Armor (or both), and a rigger adaptation, a good Command program or a high rating Pilot (with a good Targeting autosoft), depending on the favored means of control. Vehicles and mounted weapons can also be modified to improve performance (pp. 146–153, *Arsenal*).

Tacnets are also a valuable addition to the Fire Support role, as long as sufficient participants or sensors are available on the network.

INFILTRATION

The job of the shadowrunner is to perform quasi-legal or outright illegal actions, getting in, getting what they need, and getting out. Hopefully without getting caught; ideally without being seen.

Shadowrunners rarely pursue their missions in the open or meet their foes head-on. Most objectives call for stealth. Some require an advanced scout. These are the purview of the infiltration specialist. Whether it is stalking targets through wilderness or streets, sneaking into secure facilities, or otherwise physically intruding into other people's spaces, this role is called upon more often than most shadowrunners admit. This means Infiltration experts get to shine just as often as anyone else.

Infiltration specialists are like ghosts, breaking into inaccessible locales, passing unseen, gathering intelligence, and using the plethora of specialized technologies, skills, and techniques at their disposal.

Duties

The infiltration specialist is expected to be able to enter areas physically without being detected. Once there, she must also be able to perform the objective for which she snuck in, usually to find or plant evidence, open a path for other team members, steal an object, or even kidnap a person. The character in this role can open locks (mechanical and electronic), climb walls, hide, gather information, and shadow targets.

She must be technically-savvy, as well as stealthy and physically capable. Many infiltration jobs will require being able to deal with technological security measures, hacking into systems to retrieve data, breaking and entering secure facilities, and even shadowing targets through technological (or magical) means.

Sneaking By

Since this role deals predominantly with physical and technological intrusion, taking a physical approach is the most direct route for an Infiltration specialist. A good Agility attribute helps with most of the activities expected of this role, and sometimes Strength is useful when climbing or swimming to a target. Above average Intuition and Logic are also advantageous given Infiltrator skill sets.

Infiltrators profit from having a diverse skill set but need to be careful not to spread themselves too thin. The skills of the Athletics and Stealth Skill Groups are indispensable, along with Hardware, Perception, and Tracking. A common variant of the build opts for social engineering, con, and disguise to accomplish the same goals. This means replacing some of the aforementioned skills with Con, Etiquette, and Negotiation and focusing on Charisma and Intuition as primary attributes).

Combat Skills and related attributes may be a secondary priority if the character expects the worse and thinks its possible she might be caught.

Character Builds

Infiltration specialists can be designed from a variety of different builds and backgrounds, practically all character types are possible from the Awakened to the mundane, from the augmented to the highly-skilled.

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Mundane and augmented Infiltration experts complement a specialized skill set with helpful implants and technological aids. Many augmentations are well-suited to assist, directly or indirectly, ranging from those that aid physical concealment (Ruthenium coated dermal sheaths, muscle replacements, augmentations and toners, grip feet, etc) to the sensory enhancements (radar sense, low light, audio enhancement, etc) and less obvious enhancements (smuggling compartments, skin pockets, attention co-processors, tailored pheromones, etc). The diverse skill set that Infiltration calls for, more than other roles, favors characters with skillwires for Active skills and a wide array of Knowsofts.

Hackers and riggers can also make excellent infiltrators, though their skill sets will be less specialized and more diverse. On the plus side, they are not only technologically competent but they can also support their actions with infiltration drones more efficiently than the average character.

The most common mystical approach to this role is with an adept of the Invisible Way. In addition to the attributes, skills, and some of the equipment of the physical approach, an adept has access to magical powers such as Attribute Boost, Eidetic Sense Memory, Gliding, Great Leap, Improved Ability, Three Dimensional Memory, Traceless Walk, and Wall Running, any of which can be a tool for the job.

Magicians can also get in on the action. Most Illusion spells can be used to great effect, especially Invisibility (Improved or otherwise) and Silence, as can some Manipulation spells. Detection spells should not be overlooked; why scout out a place with one's body when one can do it with a spell? And a Ram or Wreck spell (with the appropriate specialization) can be used for a quick getaway. In a pinch, a spirit can use its Concealment power on the magician.

Technomancers are mostly limited to technological infiltration, but they are master infiltrators against Matrix security. Most of the time, a simple hacking job is good enough to get them by, but the echoes, skinlink and living ECM are especially useful in this role.

Essential Gear

As far as equipment is concerned, gecko tape gloves, a chameleon suit, and the breaking and entering tools (electronic and mechanical) are useful in this role. Additionally, many of the "runner" and "spy toys" from pp. 57–64, *Arsenal* can be of great benefit. Disguises in all forms from simple latex masks to alt-skin nanotech are also must haves for the Infiltration specialist. Maglock passkeys and sequencers are the basic tools of the Infiltration trade.

Weapons, particularly easily concealable, ceramic or polymer firearms are useful back-ups in case of emergencies but not essential. Non-lethal weaponry such as tasers, squirt guns, and gas grenades are common, as are silenced weapons.

Potentially useful augmentations are numerous depending on the approach preferred. The grapple hand, gecko hands, cyberlimb smuggling compartments, and other implanted tools should not be overlooked. Nanotech and nanoware are particularly useful in a variety of functions, versatile, and hard to detect.

Hackers can use hacking as a means of infiltration, as can technomancers, although their options are more limited when targets are wi-fi inhibited or benefit from strong defenses. More useful in this approach are microdrones and minidrones. Such drones can slip past defenses to eavesdrop or plant surveillance devices in secure locations. As with any drone-centric approach, a practitioner should have drones with a good Pilot rating, or a control rig, or a good Command program, if not a combination thereof.

INVESTIGATION

It wouldn't be a shadowrun without a little legwork. Intel is essential to the success of a shadowrun. Regardless of what the objective is, the less you know about it, the more likely you'll run into trouble.

B&E requires knowledge of the security installation and protocols in place. Wetwork requires a lot of information about the target. Smuggling requires knowledge of routes and the local law enforcement. Extractions require a profile of the extractee, his schedule, and habits. Even warfare benefits from intelligence on one's enemies. In every run, it's usually a good idea to have some idea about who the principal employer really is. An Investigation specialist might be an data researcher, an old-style gumshoe, an occult investigator, or a journalist, but their common focus as runners—unearthing useful intelligence on targets—is the same. Whether he operates in the real world, astral space, or the Matrix, the investigator is responsible for most of this "intelligence gathering" within a team—typically assisted by other characters and their contact networks.

Duties

The duties associated with this role are primarily to gather as much information as possible about any subject pertinent to the current run. At the same time, the Investigation specialist coordinates and sifts through whatever the remaining characters learn from their sources, aiding them to piece together the big picture concerning their employers, their targets, and the parameters of the mission at hand.

Investigation experts are also expected to perform any detective work that might be required during the course of a run, looking for clues, tracking down individuals, providing basic forensics, and generally investigating leads. This can involve anything from Matrix data searches and background checks to questioning gang members, or scouring a crime scene to poring through old dead-tree libraries in search of an obscure reference.

This role also covers counter-intelligence functions. For some, it is enough to prevent other interests from discovering what the team is researching. It is often useful to actively delay or deceive other parties, known or unknown, about the questions the Investigator has been asking; sometimes, this aspect of the role is as important as the actual detective work.

Digging in the Dirt

The mundane Investigation expert could be thought of as the stereotypical Chandler-style gumshoe, though, in the Seventies, just as often she will be versed in high tech surveillance, analytical software, forensic analysis, and social manipulation. A variety of technical resources can be employed to boost her natural talents.

Two attributes, Logic and Intuition, bolster the character's investigation skills, and a little Charisma helps interview

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witnesses and procure information. Depending on how up close and personal the Investigation specialist likes to get when extracting information, Physical attributes may also be of importance.

Skills from the Influence skill group are good for interrogating and extracting information from people more subtly, Perception helps ferret out clues, and Data Search is crucial for research. Any number of Knowledge skills round out this role (particularly Street Knowledge skills). Investigators may also find Combat skills, Tracking, Shadowing, and Disguise skills (as well as the remaining Stealth skill group) useful as secondary skills.

Also essential to this role is an extensive and diverse network of contacts and connections (including group and virtual contacts, introduced on pp. 124–129).

Character Builds

Mundane characters will tend to specialize in Social skills and back these up with appropriate augmentations and equipment (e.g. tailored pheromones, emotitoys,etc). Various free-standing sensors, surveillance equipments, and sensory enhancements expand the character's arsenal. Implants that augment sensory perception, such as a visual enhancement or an olfactory booster, assist the physical investigation specialist in her role. Investigators are often quite competent on the Matrix, and many invest in Matrix hardware. Alternatively. a mundane Investigator who is a proficient hacker may opt for a more mechanical approach and use drones to gather intelligence remotely—though this requires adding a rigging skill set to the character.

A magician's innate abilities make her an excellent investigator. An arcane investigator can scrounge clues on both the physical world and the astral plane (where clues can range from residual signatures, magic and emotional traces to full blown psychosomatic background counts). Detection spells are the greatest help with this approach, as are spirits with the Search power. Certain Manipulation spells can assist in interviews. The metamagical techniques of Divining and Psychometry can be good tools as well.

The adept investigator benefits from the same attributes and skills as other investigators, but has more at his disposal. In addition to the metamagics suggested above, an adept can use Cognition and even Attunement (Animal) in this role. The adept powers of Analytics, Eidetic Sense Memory, Enhanced Perception, Kinesics, and Three-Dimensional Memory are also useful; do not forget the power of Adept Centering and its ability to negate Perception Test penalties.

Mystic adepts benefit from the best of both worlds and can be exceptional investigation experts, though their scope might be more limited.

Essential Gear

Any sensor device with a high rating is useful in this approach. Sensors collect information, and Pilot programs with the Clearsight autosoft process the incoming data, which is stored on a tricked-out commlink. Pimped-out commlinks with data-collecting agents and high-rating Analyze, Browse, Edit, Scan, Sniffer and Track programs are imminently useful. The Edit and Browse programs can be used on saved data to perform further analysis. Even other team members with wirelessly-linked senses, such as those in cybernetic enhancements or accessories, can be used remotely by the investigator. When it comes to Matrix searches, a character in this role can use one or more agents to do her research and an appropriate suite of programs. She may even use a tacnet to coordinate data sources and sensors.

For protection, a weapon and personal armor are essential, but, unless the character intends to be a hardcore combatant, neither requires heavy modification. In fact, Investigators should favor non-lethal weapons (tasers, squirt guns, etc) on the principle that dead men don't talk. Since face-to-face encounters are often more productive and revealing than Matrix contact, Investigation experts may find a vehicle useful for getting round.

In terms of augmentations, all Investigators benefit from Logic and Intuition boosting wares, additionally implants that expand the character's sensory abilities beyond metahuman norm (including augmentations such as cybereye/ear enhancements, olfactory boosters, but also attention co-processors and nanoware neural amplifiers). Defensive augmentations may also prove a useful investment since Investigators are often on the front line when encounters turn sour.

If the character uses drones, aside from the specialized surveillance drones, micro and minidrones are particularly useful and can include improved sensor arrays (p. 138, *Arsenal*) and a variety of specialized sensors (pp. 323–324, *SR4* and p. 105, *Arsenal*).

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MAGICAL SUPPORT

The Awakened world boasts an astonishing variety of active dangers and passive obstacles that shadowrun teams must bypass in the course of their missions.

Magicians can perform in a variety of roles and functions on a team. The Magical Support specialist is specifically tasked with guarding and fighting against astral and magical threats. Whereas a combat mage in a Fire Support role will devote himself to combat, healing, and magical boosts that enhance his combat performance, the scope of the Magical Support role is intended to be far more vast and versatile in nature. While this role *can* be combined with some of the duties of the investigation, close quarters combat, and fire support roles, it primarily deals with resolving and countering the myriad types of arcane opposition shadowrun teams encounter sometimes via conflict, sometimes through deception, and sometimes through diplomacy.

The magical support specialist handles spirits to spells to wards and metaplanar menaces and everything else in between.

Duties

The duties of this role are varied, but center around magical threats and astral intelligence. It is, for the most part, passive, though fully capable of employing the tools of magic, the Magic Support specialist is expected to be equally competent at countering and defending against them. In many cases, the Magic Support character is the team's first and only line of defense against hostile magic and spirits and is therefore sometimes stereotyped as a defensive role, though this is not the case.

Where it deals with Sorcery, this role identifies and defends against hostile spells. In the Conjuring department, it deals with anti-spirit tactics. On the astral plane, duties extend to magical countermeasures, for example dealing with wards and implementing magical defenses, as well as astral overwatch and information gathering, through reading auras, and astral signatures and traces.

More than magicians in other roles, Magic Support characters explore the full potential and scope of their magical abilities and concentrate on testing them against the ultimate challenge: other magicians' abilities.

Character Builds

This role favors Awakened characters above all others. For mundane characters, aside from a strong Willpower and Charisma for attacks of will against spirits and innate Magical Resistance, there are few defenses against arcane threats. While it is difficult to approach this role from a mundane perspective, it is not impossible but simply not the most effective way of fulfilling this role's duties. Mundanes can temporarily hold their own using manatech devices, awakened ivy, or certain strains of FAB. Some magical compounds and awakened drugs can offer some assistance, but often have high prices or unpleasant side effects.

In contrast, just about any character with a Magic attribute can be an effective Magical Support specialist. High ratings in all the Mental attributes are important, though Willpower is undoubtedly the most useful. In terms of skills, all the Magical skills are important to some extent, though defensive skills such as Counterspelling can prove decisive to ward off incoming spells. Astral perception allows the investigation of recent events or of magical constructs and living auras. Spells and an adept's Killing Hands offer a means to combat spirits. The Magic rating of the magical support specialist does not necessarily need to be very high if he is not using this approach in other roles, but if he is, the more power the better. Using Conjuring to field spirits in both defensive and offensive functions can prove decisive in engagements when the character and group are physically outnumbered.

Some types of Free Spirits, introduced in this book (p. 91), may also prove effective Magical Support characters combining the aforementioned attributes and skills with their own innate powers.

Magical contacts, such as talismongers, magic groups, and other magicians, can prove both useful sources of information and gear but also potential allies.

Essential Gear

Aside from the various foci that magicians can employ to boost their abilities, gear that assists the Magical Support role includes magical lodges, spirit binding, and warding materials. For possession magicians, specially prepared vessels for their spirits are also advantageous. Manatech can offer some efficacy, but such implementations are usually strange, as in the case of Wyrd Mantis Essence, or unwieldy, like manacoffins or leech constructs.

While both cyber- and bioware augmentations compromise magical ability to some extent, several implants can prove useful for magicians in the Magic Support role including Initiative Enhancers, sensory enhancements and replacements, and various medical and healing assisting implants.

In terms of magic, useful spells run the gamut from Combat to Detection to Healing spells. Wards and various types of mana barriers are also useful in defensive situations, where they complement Counterspelling. Bound spirits are another invaluable resource, particularly at high ratings the character would not want to risk summoning in combat situations.

MATRIX SUPPORT

The role of the Matrix specialist is analogous to the Magical Support role in that it handles both primary defense against electronic intrusion attempts and offensive Matrix use including both hacking and Matrix-specific intelligence gathering on the Matrix.

On the one hand, this role incorporates anti-technology measures and is expected to be able to counter or neutralize enemy devices and sensors. It also usually handles encryption and signals security, keeping the team's lines of communication reliable and secure and electronic warfare tactics such as jamming, spoofing, and malware.

On the other hand, Matrix Support specialists are usually hackers (and to a lesser extent technomancers) in their purest and most versatile state—focusing exclusively on accomplishing Matrix and electronic superiority through stealth, combat, or subterfuge. Elite hackers are the mainstay of the Matrix Support role, though less specialized riggers and other augmented characters can also invest in this role.

Duties

There are a number of different specific duties this role entails. The specialist is expected to be able to hack into opposing nodes and devices, bending them to her will. Similarly, she must be able

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to repel the intrusion attempts by opposing hackers and keep her team's commlinks and other devices secure. She also tracks data and personas through the Matrix, ferreting out intelligence in the datastream that the team needs. She is responsible for the team's ability to communicate and must be ready to cut through enemy jamming or to add her own at a moment's notice. She is also responsible for providing active Matrix overwatch and support during the actual operations the team performs. Finally, it is not uncommon for the Matrix Support character to be called on to handle hardware and technological obstacles (such as security systems, maglocks, and other electronic devices), rather than strictly Matrix-based challenges.

Hacking It

This role is dominated by technological-oriented characters. This is best represented by the quintessential hacker or technomancer, who combines her own skills with her programs/complex forms to manipulate the Matrix. Since almost every Matrix action requires the use of an appropriate program or complex form, a Matrix specialist is dependent on his skills over his attributes (and Resonance attribute if it possesses one). That said, a high Logic is essential for Matrix Support characters who intend to program and upgrade their own software and maintain their own hardware. Needless to say, a high Resonance rating is decisive when it comes to technomantic manipulation of the Matrix.

While other characters may perform a number of e-warfare functions and hack using commlinks, a specialized hacker or technomancer with appropriately high ratings in skills from the Cracking and Electronics skill groups will have a distinct advantage in both skills and gear. Skillwires are an interesting choice for other characters to remain relatively competitive with specialist hackers in this role. Secondary skills that may be of use to Matrix Support specialists include the skills in the Influence skill group (for any necessary social engineering), Perception, Infiltrations, and at least one Combat skill (for those occasions where onsite hacking is a required).

Hackers and technomancers will find virtual contacts essential and particularly groups linked to the Cracker Underground (p. 82, *Unwired*) and technomancer guilds.

Artificial Intelligences characters (see p. 88) are also ideally suited for the Matrix Support role.

Character Builds

Hackers are the most common and accessible characters for the Matrix Support role. Their relatively cheap creation cost allows them to easily branch out into other roles or simply max out their performance in this role. Besides the ubiquitous tricked out commlink and sim module, various items of gear can prove useful to Matrix Support specialists including drones, jammers, intruder nanites, and various types of sensors. She may even want to invest in hacker-oriented enhancements.

Though initially less versatile than hackers in this role, technomancers can dominate the Matrix with enough Karma, through sprites and their own complex forms. As a technomancer progresses through layers of submersion, she can gain even more power and efficacy in this role, gaining new echoes and expanding her own innate Resonance. Unfortunately for technomancers, investment in implants generally compromises their Resonance-based abilities.

Surprisingly, adepts can possess a number of somatic powers that, whilst not able to affect the Matrix directly, can enhance the adept somatically and allow her to be exceptionally proficient in aspects of this role. Powers such as Analystics, Eidetic Sense Memory, Improved Ability, and Improved Reflexes are all potentially interesting to adepts in this role.

Essential Gear

The duties of this role are varied, but all pass through the Matrix Support specialist's persona (regardless of how that persona is generated). A hot-sim modified commlink with a full range of software (legal or otherwise) is essential. Software constructs, programs, and even viruses and malware will assist the Matrix Support specialist in his myriad duties. Agents, in particular, can prove useful tools and allow the hacker to "outsource" time-consuming and repetitive tasks.

Program suites and hardware nexi (see *Unwired*) are essential tools if the Matrix Support character wants to be a credible hacker rather than a script kiddie and develop/upgrade his own software. A simsense accelerator provides an additional boost if required.

Useful augmentations include cyber-, bio- and nanoware. In terms of cyberimplants, internal commlinks, simsense booster, datalocks, datajacks, and enchephalons can all round out a Matrix Support specialist. In terms of bioware, cerebral boosters and mnemonic enhancer are useful additions. Potential nanoware enhancement is available in the form of the various neural amplifiers.

While this role can be partially fulfilled by one or more agents, these lack the decision-making ability and creative thought processes to adjust and adapt their course of action.

NEGOTIATION

This role is more popularly called "the face." Public relations, smooth-talker, conman, grifter, or seducer, the face is the primary on any social interaction that requires negotiation and compromise with other parties. It is an essential role in a world where who you know and what they can do for you is as important as who you are.

In their line of work, shadowrunners constantly interact with other people, whose attitudes toward the team range from apathy to antipathy, and a specialized mediator and deal-maker speaking for the team can iron out problems and volatile situations before they become violent. On runs, the Negotiation specialist is the team's front man, the person who handles social encounters where interfacing with words is more appropriate than with bullets.

Social chameleons by necessity, those who specialize in Negotiations can change outward appearance and personality as other people change clothes, able to fit into any group and make the best of any situation ... most of the time.

Duties

All of the duties of this role involve contact with people outside the team, with the possible exception of teammates' own contact networks. Most often, the face handles negotiations with Mr. Johnson, whoever he or she (or it) may be, but the role is hardly limited to this. This role's duties also include social engineering, handling angry mobs of sentient critters, and any other encounter that requires tact, diplomacy, intimidation, parley, or outright lies.

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In practice, the face can also be the team's private fixer ensuring the best terms when negotiating payment, conditions, and perks. Consequently, she is also often responsible for other areas including managing subcontractors and procuring information or procurement for the team beyond their usual contacts.

On the Grift

Faces need to be empathic, diplomatic, and sensitive to social nuances. The Charisma attribute and the Influence skill group are the basic tools of every Negotiator. Perception, Etiquette, and the Intimidation skill are useful additions to the repertoire of any face. Professional and Street Knowledge skills (or their skillsoft versions) allow faces to better fit in and establish a connection with their targets.

Magic can be powerful in the hands of a Negotiator, allowing her to enthrall, influence, confuse, and outright command her targets with subtle Mental Manipulation and Illusion spells. The downside of such manipulations is that they usually leave traces, and, when the target realizes what has happened, he may come looking for reparation.

Adepts of the Speaker's Way are gifted with numerous powers that make them incomparable empaths, seducers, and fast-talkers. Common adept powers in this role include Astral Perception, Commanding Voice, Cool Resolve, Enhanced Perception, Improved Ability (any Social skill), Improve Attribute (Charisma), Kinesics, and even Animal Empathy and Linguistics. Adepts can also benefit from combining technological means with their magical powers.

Of all the character roles on a shadowrun team, the Negotiation role is the one that's most dependent on its contact network to perform its duties. Faces should possess a wide array of contacts with a variety of backgrounds.

Character Builds

Mundane faces can rely on high skills and Charisma to perform their duties. These can be further enhanced by a number of possible augmentations and technological aids (such as emotitoys). Some faces branch out beyond their niche by employing skillwires to diversify their skill options.

Magicians can use spells such as Analyze Truth, Increase Charisma, and many of the Mental Manipulation spells (though some are too direct and blatant for this role, which is more about influencing others than controlling them directly). Social adepts (and to some extent mystical adepts) are amongst the most powerful Negotiation experts, using powers that are both more subtle and provoke less resistance from their marks. Their magic-fueled, modified Influence skills in particular, when combined with high Charisma rating and technological boosts, can produce impressive results. Astral assensing can be a big help for both adepts and magicians in assessing the emotional cues and motivations of others.

Essential Gear

Recent advances have provided faces with numerous new tools. Emotitoys and sensors with Empathy and Lie Detection programs can make up for a lack of skill or boost the effectiveness of Negotiators. Privileged augmentations for faces include tailored pheromones, vocal range enhancer, genetic optimization (Charisma), and even certain biosculpting modifications.

Of course, the right weapons and armor can be equally impressive as an intimidation tool, for those characters opting to speak softly but carry a big stick.

TRANSPORTION

This oft-overlooked role is nonetheless of critical importance to a successful shadowrunning team. It is vital in extraction, smuggling, and offensive operations and an important part of most others. You're unlikely to escape a corporate security squad or drones on foot, and some targets are just inaccessible without an appropriate vehicle. The Transportation expert is key to this role.

Far more than merely chauffeuring other team members from point to point, this role ensures that personnel and material are where they need to be when they need to be there, that escape routes are laid out, and that vehicular and drone support is available for the team when needed.

It also has a strategic aspect: the transportation specialist must also be aware of geography, both static and dynamic.

Duties

The duties of this role include planning and coordinating movement from point to point for the team and its equipment. It also involves assuring that everything is where it needs to be when it needs to be there and providing security and fire support should it be needed.

The analysis of geography and approaches is another duty, particularly in urban settings, often performed in conjunction with an Investigation or Infiltration specialist. The Transportation specialist is also a getaway driver, responsible for getting the team in and out of an operation in safety. Transportation experts are also responsible for procuring the transport in the event that a stolen vehicle or drone is necessary on a job.

Behind the Wheel/Stick

Pilots of any kind benefit from a high Reaction attribute and at least one Vehicle skill (though ideally more). The central tool of this approach is the vehicle used, although a good specialist using this approach can pilot just about any vehicle she cares to use. Less obvious is the Transportation expert's need to be proficient in Cracking and Hardware skills to ensure his rides are protected from Matrix-based attacks.

The Transportation expert is also called upon to provide offensive and defensive vehicular support in a number of situations, whether running interference or escaping a hotzone. Without him, the team is limited to man-portable weapons and defenses. In this aspect of the role, combat drones are particularly useful.

Character Builds

The vast majority of Transportation specialists are augmented mundane characters. Riggers using control rigs, orientation systems, and various reflex and Reaction enhancements to enhance their vehicular performance to inhuman levels are the archetypal Transportation experts.

The magical approach to Transportation is typically to supplement technology with magical means. Adept powers can be used in place of most Essence-eating augmentations, particularly the Improved Ability (Piloting skill) power. Adept Centering, and Item Attunement metamagic techniques can further improve the

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adept's performance in this area. The spirit power, Movement, along with a number of spells can be used for those with Conjuring and Sorcery skills.

Technomancers, in contrast, often use their abilities to enhance the technological approach. Machine sprits and tutor sprites can be used to boost or even pilot autonomous vehicles. The Command complex form has the same utility as its corresponding program. The echoes Immersion, Macro, and Multiprocessing are good tools, along with the advanced echoes Acceleration, Advanced Overclocking, Mind Over Machine, and even Mesh Reality.

Build and repair skills are always valuable, since a well-maintained vehicle makes the difference between getting away, or getting caught. Accordingly, many Transportation specialists will need to invest in a spacious garage or facility to store, maintain, and customize their vehicles.

Essential Gear

The vehicles she commands are what defines the Transportation expert role. These may be customized and modified to suit the pilot's strengths and to enhance overall performance in a variety of situations. Vehicle modifications are a staple of the Transportation expert, ensuring that their rides are the fastest, most secure, most resilient vehicles for the job. Besides weapons, a Transportation expert should ensure her vehicles have the sufficient appropriate sensors and armor.

Why pilot a vehicle when it can handle itself? This approach relies on the Pilot programs of vehicles and drones to perform most of the duties of the role. This approach also applies to specialists who use the Command program to control their vehicles. In either case, high software ratings are an essential part of this approach, along with a good Electronic Warfare skill.

Among the augmentations that benefit this role are control rigs, simsense boosters, control rig booster nanoware, simsense accelerators, and a plethora of implants that impact Reaction and Initiative.

OTHER ROLES

The roles described above are the key roles on a shadowrunning team, but the list is by no means exhaustive. There are a number of other roles and duties performed by some or all of the members of a successful team. These roles require less specialization, however, and can be filled as secondary roles by those with other specialties.

Demolitions

The need to blow something up does not arise often. When it does, it is important to have someone competent handling the details. The duty of this role is to destroy things on a large scale, from vehicles to bridges to buildings.

Leader

Few teams have a leader. In fact, an escape from authority is what attracts many shadowrunners. Some teams have a member that steps up and becomes the leader. The central duties of this role are simply responsibility for the success and well-being of the entire team; a number of books have been written over many centuries about the specifics of this undertaking, and so they will not be detailed here.

Logistics

This role mostly handles expendables, such as ammunition and other supplies, and accommodations, like safe houses and meeting locations. Generally, each team member handles their own gear, and accommodations can be covered by either the investigation or transportation roles, but one particularly capable character (or a particularly organized player) can cover this role exclusively.

Medic

This is an important role in a job where violence is a regular occurrence. The medic's job is to keep the team healthy, or at least alive. Fortunately, in the 2070s, healing is just a medkit away, making anyone who is not allergic to technology capable of being a competent medic.

Tactical Coordinator

Most shadowrunners plan their strategies by consensus, but, when the team is in the field, it can be useful to have a central point of control to keep cohesion, even if the team does not have a leader. The tactical coordinator stays aware of the situation and directs her teammates to their best effect. This role can be tricky, especially in teams with members who resent authority.

CHARACTER QUIZ

Sure, you've got your character. You've got a couple of sheets of attributes, skills, gear, and other tools that will help that shadowrunner gain fame and fortune. But who is this person? Sure, you've probably already chosen a sex and a name, and definitely a metatype, but what about the rest of it?

No shadowrunner forms from thin air, and there's more to a story if there's more to the characters in it. Here is a brief questionnaire that can help you "know the score" about your character. Choose a few (or all) and answer them for your character.

- We are shaped by our heritage. Facial features, skin tone, height, build, metatype, even aptitudes are influenced by the genes passed from parent to child. Attitude, too, is taught by parents, informed by their own lives and their cultural heritage. Where does your character come from, what is her lineage, who were her parents, and what did she inherit from them?
- Parents can be proud of their children or regret ever bringing them into the world. Some are loving, and some are indifferent. All of them are only metahuman and have their own opinions of their children. Assuming they could speak, what would each of your character's parents say about her?
- Many people remember certain historical events for the rest of their lives. For those alive in the first decade of the 21st century, it could be the assassination of John F. Kennedy, or the Tiananmen Square protests, or the fall of the Berlin Wall, or the attacks of 11 September 2001. People remember where they were, and what they were doing when they first heard of these events. *Shadowrun* history has significant events as well, such as the assassination of President Dunkelzahn, the Crash 2.0, and the emergence of technomancers and artificial intelligences. Pick a few events from recent Shadowrun history and ask where the character was at the time, what does he remember about the event, and what was he doing at the time?

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- Very few people choose to become shadowrunners. More likely, they are thrown into the life by a chaotic and uncaring world. Even if she made a conscious decision to enter the shadows, her decision is influenced by the world around her. How did your character get into shadowrunning, and why did she take that path?
- People have control over their own living arrangements. From the child young enough to use crayons and tape all the way up to the elderly shut-in who plasters her walls with family photos and cat pictures, everyone makes their living spaces more personally pleasing. What is your character's living space like, and what has he added or changed to make it his own?
- Everyone has beliefs, and many have beliefs strong enough to be convictions. Some are religious, some are political, some are social, and some are just about why people are here. What does your character believe in, what are her convictions (if any), and why does she hold them?
- Everyone has aspects of their personality that grate on someone. Even the best of friends annoy one another from time to time. The flaws in a person's character are as important as the qualities. What do you dislike most about your character's personality?
- The Sixth World is considered by many to be spinning out of control. If anyone could exert control over it, it would be the "Big Ten" triple-A megacorps. These transnationals exert a lot of influence on everyday life in the 2070s. Which of the Big Ten does your character hold in the highest (or least low) regard, which does he like the least, and why?
- People make acquaintances and friends; we're hardwired for it. Humans are social animals. This is especially true in the shadows, where often it is not the power you have, but the power you can borrow, and not who you, are but who you know. There's a story behind each and every one of these relationships. What is the story with your character and her contacts?
- It's Sunday morning, and your character has no commitments until tomorrow afternoon. What does she do for the day?
- Your character has a specific skill set, a list of Active and Knowledge skills that define what she knows and her areas of expertise. How did she come to learn those skills, and how did she develop them to those levels?
- Everyone has their limits. People can be dark, but most people's instinct is to draw the line at certain actions and thoughts, and they keep to their own moral convictions. Is there a moral limit that your character enforces on the jobs she takes, and in what shadow work would she refuse to engage?
- If you have an Awakened or technomancer character, consider your character's tradition and streams. Even within the major established magical traditions and the recently emerged technomantic streams, there is room for personalization. Ask yourself what drew her to that particular paradigm, how does it effect the way she views the world and her magic, how does it translate into choice of mentor spirit or paragon, and how does it affect the appearance of the spirits or sprites you conjure or compile?
- While acceptance and bias vary from place to place, augmentations—be they bio-, cyber-, gene-, or nanoware—are increasingly common and available in the Sixth World. However, personal technological enhancement is rarely cheap, and many implants that runners possess are restricted. How did your character come to have the enhancements she has, how were they paid for, and what motivated the choices she made (if she did make the choices)?
- Life as a shadowrunner is by definition outside the bounds of "normal" life. Shadowrunners do not truly fit into the lives of ordinary people, whether they live in slums or mansions. What does your character think of ordinary life, mainstream culture, and those who abide by it?
- Everyone has nightmares. Sometimes, we forget the dream completely on waking. Sometimes, the nightmare haunts us or even recurs. If your character had a lingering nightmare or a deep-rooted fear, what would it be, and why does he find it so terrifying?
- People tend to attach sentimental value to items in their possession or people they are close to. They make an effort to keep these close by and safe. What is your character's "sacred object" or "close one," and how did they come to be so important to him?
- One of metahumanity's greatest assets is its ability to look toward the future and imagine a better life. Even small children have dreams about what they want to be when they grow up. What did your character want to become when he was a child, and what are his goals now?
- A person's appearance can say volumes about him. From fashion sense, to the colors he prefers, to the way he walks and speaks. Sometimes, his personality determines his appearance, and, sometimes, the appearance he chooses to present the world effects his personality. What does your character look like, and what inspired his choices?
- Everyone has a name, but a runner's street name is a representation of his connection to the shadows. Sometimes runners choose their own moniker, but more often it is given to them as a nickname or earned through some (mis)adventure. How did your character come to be known by his street name?

GAMEMASTER OPTIONS: KARMA FOR CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT

Having well-developed characters in the game can be of great value. A detailed character has deeper interactions with non-player characters and other PCs. It can make your job as gamemaster easier by offering seeds for subplots within your campaign. If nothing else, it enhances the role-playing aspect of the game, making the character someone more interesting than just another hired gun.

Players who put thought into their answers to the Twenty Questions are increasing the value of your game, and so you might want to offer something of value in return. A Karma bonus would be well-received and encourage other players to participate as well. One Karma per question is probably a bit much, but you could assign a question or two as "homework" between each game session, and so give the reward (and develop the characters) gradually over the course of the campaign. Alternatively, you could offer Karma in one lump sum at character generation for questions answered thoughtfully.

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. . . SURVIVAL TIPS . . .

Traveler Jones stepped out of El Toro, and flagged down a cab. Hopping into the back, he pulled off his rebreather, and told the pilot program, "The Mountain, and step on it."

Settling into his seat, he felt the cab move out. Then, he flipped his 'link over to P2.0, and took a look at the "Most Popular" selections. Topping the list was *Chase in Progress—'Runners in Fun City.* With a grin, he authorized the micropayment and opened a new AR feed to tune into the action.

A line at the bottom of the feed proclaimed, "Horizon Security in Pursuit: LIVE!" The main window showed an ork wearing the gang colors of the Steppin' Wulfs in a full out sprint past a boardwalk full of a carnival booths. Park guests and attendants were diving for cover in the background. A circular image appeared over a tattoo on the ork's arm. The image stabilized and another ARO opened to ask if he'd like more information on the Steppin' Wulfs.

Yet another ARO showed a ticking countdown of already captured insurgents. It seemed that he'd already missed most of the excitement—four had already been captured. The recordings of the takedowns were available at discreet pricing tiers. Reviewer ratings were already posted.

The active screen split to show two new feeds of Horizon security officers—dressed in the long coats and helmets of a British Bobby from the mid-twentieth century—converging on the ork ganger's location. Moments later, the screen opened another panel, showing a sniper tracking the ganger from a perch on a roller coaster's scaffolding. The officers pulled

Jones chuckled as the inevitable happened. The ork was soon surrounded and incapacitated by a flurry of stun batons. Within seconds, he was whisked away from the cameras, and the feed returned to the usual innocuous activities of the amusement park.

Seems like the kids are more raw every year, Jones thought. He flipped away from P2.0 and brought up his todo list. There, he added a note to suggest compiling a charity tutorial file on JackPoint. *Maybe it's time to give something back.*

Moments later, he added a memo to re-run his monthly check-up on his spare IDs. *Doesn't pay to get cocky. I don't want to get caught making the same sort of rookie mistake,* he reminded himself.

The cab rolled to a stop in front of the five-star hotel. Traveler Jones adjusted his AR glasses and double-checked that the chip was still in his cyberarm's hidden compartment. Exiting the cab, he authorized the payment and gave a smile to the human doorman. *Show time,* he thought as he headed in to make the drop off.

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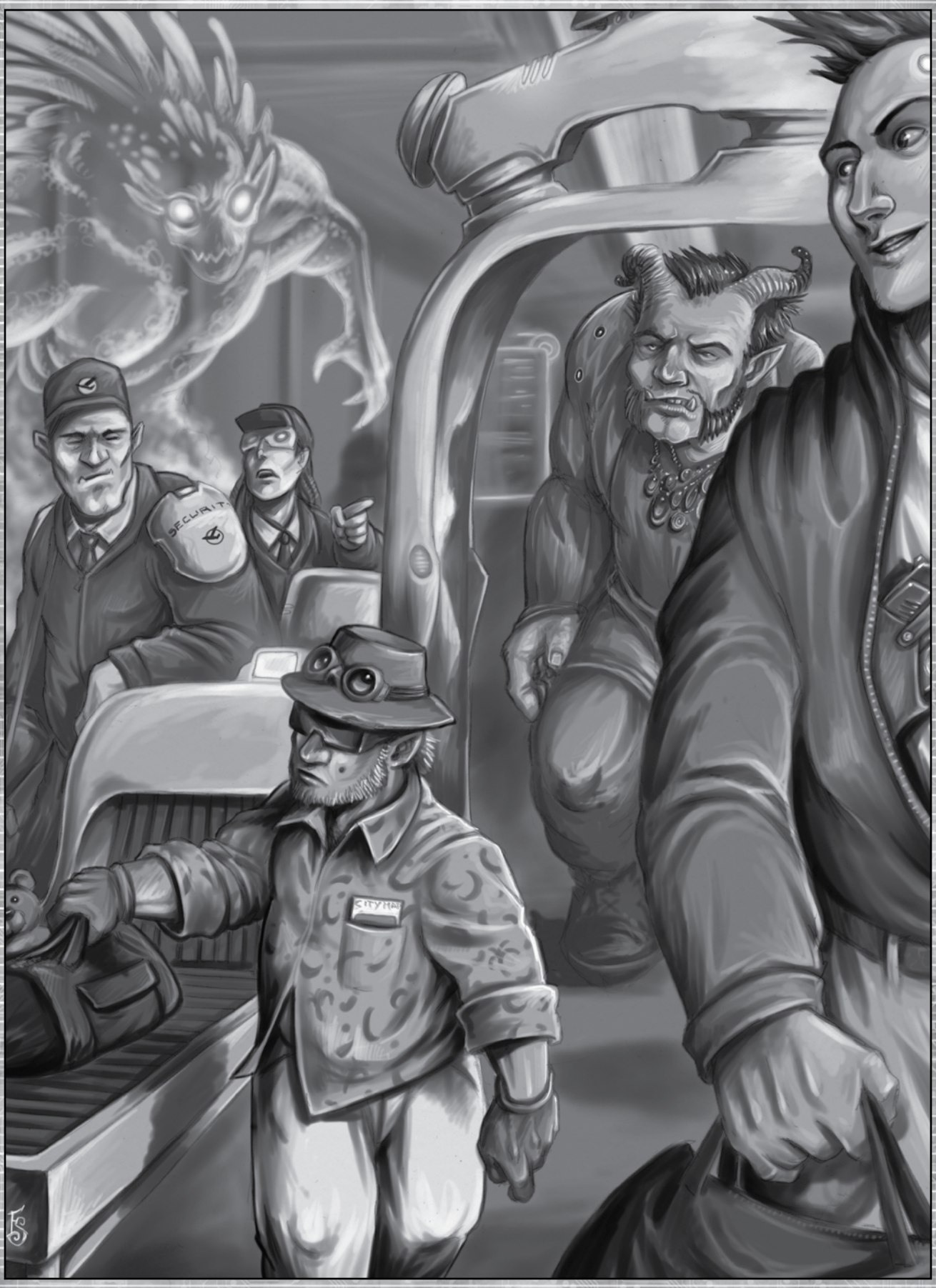

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› A while back, I was asked to put together a primer to everyday survival in the shadows for some of the wannabes on ShadowSEA. Something to give the clueless a fighting chance. I was lying low for a couple of weeks with nothing to do but catch reruns of Karl Kombatmage on the Classic Trid Channel, and I figured I might as well do some *pro bono* work. I hooked up with 2XL to put together the short primer that follows. Most of the folks on JackPoint don't need me telling them what the dangers are, but in the event that old 'Jack invites another of his greenhorn protégés onboard, I thought I'd cross-post the piece to Jackpoint's database. Any feedback anyone wants to offer will be worked into future updates.

› Glitch

STAYING OFF THE GRID

Posted by: Glitch

Maybe you've cracked an MCT zero zone or hacked a Renraku research net and you're feeling good about yourself. Now that the job is finished, you can take off your runner cap and go home. Slip right in to your civilian life, right? If that's what you think, you might want to consider another line of work. There was a time when a simple mask was all the anonymity that you needed. As long as you hadn't left a bloody trail of DNA and wore gloves, you were relatively safe. These days? Not so much.

It is a whole new world out there, and, if you're not careful, it won't be the cyberzombie or the hellhound that gets you. It will be information. You've heard the old saying, "information is power." Well, that's doubly true if you live in a total information society like ours. The only way you're going to stay out of cuffs long enough to enjoy your ill-gotten spoils is if you know how to stay under the radar and off the grid. Sensei Glitch is here to walk you through Anti-Surveillance 101, so pay attention and don't forget: you owe me a drink.

WHAT'S OUT THERE?

Three technologies make it hard for the unenlightened masses and the ambitious shadowrunner to stay anonymous:

Cameras and Sensors

Yeah, sensors are nothing new. Some sensor tech, like ultra-wideband radar, is shiny, expensive, and new, but it isn't a problem unless you're trying to crack a high security facility. What you *should* be worrying about are the small, cheap sensors scanning you everywhere you stroll downtown—the cameras in the malls and storefronts, at the checkout counter, and on the streetlight. With miniaturization, cameras and other sensors have become so cheap they're everywhere in public places.

Walk around downtown, and most of those annoying wage-eslaves bustling past are carrying at least one camera, maybe more. Some of them are recording and livecasting all of the time, capturing their pitiful lives for public spectacle.

In fact, in most sprawls, any area with a security rating of B or higher will have public spaces blanketed with the combination of police surveillance, corporate surveillance (from dedicated Aztechnology satellites monitoring the Seattle pyramid to the dinky wireless camera outside Joe's B-B-Q), and public surveillance. Corporate enclaves and upscale private homes also subscribe to this idea of blanket surveillance, with automated household systems running the show, and built-in sensors providing convenience, unparalleled functionality, and "peace of mind."

RFIDs

Your second invisible problem is RFIDs. There's no avoiding them. I said that sensors are everywhere, but RFID chips *really* are everywhere: in your clothes, in packaging, in your hardware, in your food, even in you! Moreover, each one is spilling its guts to the world like there's no tomorrow.

Things are getting hairy with corps introducing RFID "ticks" (programmed to jump on to your clothing) and scanning for telltale broadcasting. Don't get me wrong, RFIDs have their uses. They tell you your fridge is empty, they tell your clothing that you're cold, they tell the shop what you bought, they tell your employer that you arrived at your workplace, etc. To use a common phrase, they are ubiquitous. But, they're also a major problem for a shadowrunner, and, if you aren't careful, the little buggers will rat you out worse than any snitch.

Analytical Software and Data Footprints

The third danger is analytical software and your average datatrail. SINs, IDs, access IDs, and those oh-so-convenient electronic transactions leave a datatrail everywhere you go, with every purchase, every node you interact with, and every store window you browse. Average Joe's data footprint is huge, and analytical software is how the Man sifts through the dross.

Analytical software varies in speed, functionality, and versatility. At the low end is the software your local bodega uses. It monitors customer movements on camera feeds and RFID chips analyze potential buying patterns. Picking up fancy wine and chocolates? The store's analytical software checks your public profile and notes that your anniversary is today, and then pings you with suggestions for additional purchases: lingerie, candles, music downloads.

Somewhere in the middle ground is the typical city surveillance system, with (more or less) well-spaced trideo surveillance and dedicated agents monitoring the mountains of visual data coming in. Fortunately for us, there are plenty of holes with this system, and savvy shadowrunners exploit them all. The king of the hill is cutting-edge corporate analytical software, like LA's downtown ACPS, which has a real-time data analysis functions that measures crowd patterns, speech patterns, thermographic data, cyberware scanners, chemical sniffers ... the whole shebang. This type of system requires a huge investment, and equally huge maintenance, and control will invariably fall to the corporation footing the bill: in other words, *rare, rare, rare*. They don't bring out those guns unless they're throwing everything they have after you, and, really, at that point, you're already screwed, neh? No, just kidding. Various measures you can take will impact the usefulness of even the most sophisticated system, regardless of what Lone Star says.

› Scaring the kiddies good there, Glitch.

› Slamm-O!

› Well, that's just the lead in. I can be nice too, keep reading.

› Glitch

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EXPLOITING THE SYSTEM

Scared now? Ready to reconsider your career choice? Well, don't jump the gun. Things sound bad, and in an ideal world they would be bad. But, this is the real world, and it's a whole other story.

So, what's it really like, and what can you do? The system is not all-powerful. It has weaknesses, weaknesses that can be exploited with tricks that will help you.

Excess Information

The saving grace of a total information society is that there's simply *too much data* out there—or at least too much data to be sifted in useful time. Yes, a high-end agent will eventually track down what it's looking for, but, by then, the intel is of no use to anyone. The run is over, or the package delivered, and you—the freelance talent for hire—have slipped back into the shadows.

Agents are useful tools to sift through the dross, but they need search parameters, and if you've been careful to reduce your data footprint, there'll be little to follow up on. They don't have the intelligence or intuitive ability to spot details like a metahuman can, no matter how thorough their programming.

For instance, imagine you *are* filmed by civvies. Now, search agents need to find that *one* visual ID in the oceans of pointless videos uploaded to blogs, chatrooms, and social networks. It's like the proverbial needle in a haystack. The images, if they're even saved, might be posted on Connections!, or LiveCast, or some other bloated social network. The effort of sifting through the masses of images, blogs, and flamefests is monumental and potentially futile—there's no guarantee what they're looking for is obviously identified and correctly labeled.

And, even worse, getting the visual data from corporate, government, or police cameras involves enough red-tape to wrap around the globe a few times, or a massive hacking attempt on potentially hundreds of nodes. And that's before you get to the thousands upon thousands of public nodes: commlinks, cybereyes, or other recording devices. (And, even if they manage all that, they still have diddly-squat if they don't have anything to match it against. Or, as a Lone Star data analyst I met put it, "*Great! Another unidentified 20–30 year old Caucasian Human Male. That really narrows it down.*")

› You were layin' it on thick there for a minute. Sure, most megas can roll out the heavy-duty software. The sort of crap that can supposedly identify a Most Wanted by the way he sneezes. But, let's be real here, why would they bother in most cases? Analytical software is only as good as its reference database, and if you're any good there won't be a reference for you.

That, my friends, is why they still need people like me.

› Sticks

Data Balkanization

The second major factor working to your advantage is *data balkanization.* What this means is that even if the data is out there, there's no guarantee a corp can get to it—thanks to those wonderful things, the Business Recognition Accords. Yes, those delightful extraterritorial rights accorded to corporations of certain size (and the inherent privacy rights accorded to all corporate entities, regardless of size). People tend to forget that jurisdictions and extraterritoriality extends to the Matrix—and this applies as much to records as live trideo feeds from a security cam. When it comes to corporations, the motto is not "Share and Share Alike." Even law enforcement corps in hot pursuit won't be able to (legally) access another corps cameras and servers.

Do you really think that "Kiddy Land," a small shop in downtown Seattle owned by Aztechnology, is likely to give Knight Errant, a subsidiary of Ares, access to all their video feeds and other sensor data just because their shop cameras *might* have caught an image of some criminals sometime in the last 24 hours? No? Damn right. Of course, they'll collaborate if there's something in it for them, but the days when everybody turned over their trideo feeds to law enforcement at the wave of a badge are long gone.

› Of course, if you slip up badly, they'll be able to patch together a sequence of events and track you across multiple public domain feeds. There're still plenty of those, and most metroplex surveillance systems are set to accept corporate security clearances by default.

› Riser

› Which is why it's a good idea to stick to back streets and low income 'hoods, regardless of whether you're driving or on foot.

› 2XL

Data Completeness

A third factor is *data completeness*. Camera coverage in the Sixth World is by no means total. You might be caught by several cameras while walking downtown, but most of the time, only a small part of you— like the back of your head, part of your clothes, or your hat—is caught on camera, while the rest is obscured by other people and items. You might pass behind a street light, a crowd, or a car. You walk into a shop, but you walk out through a different entrance. To get all of this together is a complicated and time-consuming process, especially if you know these facts and exploit them.

All this applies equally to identity verification and data searches against you. If you have a SIN, even a fake one, then your details are "in the system." Thing is, there's no single database. There are dozens if not hundreds: banks, licensing bureaus, Lone Star files, internal revenue, DMV records. Few of them cross-referenced. If you have a SIN, though, it includes references to a number of these systems to allow quick verification. However, putting all these sources together without a SIN to go on is a daunting challenge.

A rare few countries have centralized data cross-referencing between different institutional databases, but these are not typically open to either the public or corporate scrutiny.

› Well, at least no more than they're accessible to a qualified hacker.

› Pistons

Data Veracity

The final factor to consider is *data veracity*. The Matrix is not just the greatest vehicle ever designed for information; it's the perfect vessel for misinformation. From fake SINs and credit histories to ID erasers and creative editing of biometric records, the Matrix is a gold mine for the creative forger. What this means

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is that you can conceal your real data under a torrent of falsehoods and misdirection. That is, of course, if you have the hacking talent necessary on tap. If it ever comes under scrutiny, you're one step (or a dozen) removed from reality.

Data veracity and integrity verification systems, like Web of Trust networking, are too difficult to apply to the open Matrix, because of the data balkanization mentioned above. So, seeding misinformation is a viable tactic; whether it's editing your date of birth and prior corporate affiliation out of your government records or having agents edit your daily buying and travel patterns.

If you don't know a hacker, befriend one. Someday, he'll save your life.

- Or a competent forger.
- Sticks

- Aren't the two one and the same?
- Pistons

- You have a point.
- Sticks

TRICKS OF THE TRADE

A good runner is proactive. He knows the exploits. He knows how to play the system against itself. So here are some tips on protecting yourself and exploiting the holes in the system. If you read and commit this to memory, maybe, just maybe, you'll stay alive long enough to develop your own tricks.

- Although I'm offering up some generic wisdom for the youngsters, anyone who wants to chime in with their favorite tricks, please do so.
- Glitch

Back to the Stone Age!

Sometimes known as the Drop-Out option: subtract yourself from the system and eliminate your data footprint. Most ID forgery rings also have "eraser" services, where they'll erase all those little bytes of data on you, and on your SINs, from the system. They aren't cheap, but they're worth every nuyen. Eliminate unnecessary records, consumer data, tax records, licenses, and false IDs. If you drop out of the system, there's nothing for the Man to find.

Reduce your dependence on tech in all aspects of your life—even those convenient household drones. Believe me, it's embarrassing to have several safehouses and get caught in one of them because your fridge gave you away by ordering food. You don't need a system that turns on the light for you. Do it yourself. A mental command with your sim-module is all it takes. You might even consider touching a physical switch! You don't need drones to bring you food. Do it yourself. Live in the Stone Age!

- It bears reminding—don't "throw away" an old fake ID, get it professionally erased. Or, better yet, replace your biometrics on file with a squatter's, wire the SIN to an old commlink and give it to the guy with a couple of hundred nuyen loaded. Then let him loose.
- Slamm-O!

- Radio signal scanners and tag erasers are cheap. Scan and Erase *everything* before you use it. Yeah, it might be a pain in the ass to scan your candybar and then have to erase the tag in it, but really, do you want Azzie corporate security wondering why someone's in their facility with a Horizon CaramelCluster bar in their stomach? Hmm?
- Pistons

- After a run, you should scan yourself too. Corps like to spray RFID tag "mists" onto intruders ... so make sure you haven't brought home any hitchhikers.
- Cosmo

Use technology. Don't be used!

For every technology, there is a counter technology. This is especially true in the Sixth World. You use the stuff regularly on runs. Don't stop using it when the run is over. And, for goodness sake, know what all those technical gadgets do and what they broadcast.

Never, ever use technology without knowing that you do. Take nothing for granted and be aware of the risks. People today are so used to certain items that they are not even aware of them any more. Being able to look up anything within seconds with your commlink and sim module is not the natural state of things. Don't get used to this. Try to minimize your contact with the wireless world and, if you have to use it, do so consciously. You're an outcast and should be able to live without technology, if necessary.

- At a minimum, you should have a very high firewall on all your personal electronic devices, not just your commlink. Operate in hidden mode and use a "public" commlink when you go out.
- Pistons

- Use a disposable commlink when you go to a meet with Mr. J, and toss it after the run. Double crosses happen. Don't make it easy for them.
- Cosmo

- Nothing says you can't walk around in public with an area jammer. Or, get fancy and use a camera neutralizer—you can even get them subtly disguised and built into clothing. Cameras have blackouts all the time, even in the higher-class neighborhoods. Ditto with a white-noise generator. As long as it only lasts a few seconds, no one will bother coming to find out why. Don't forget you're carrying one and have a leisurely picnic outside the Azzie pyramid though—right, Mika?
- Ma'fan

- EMPs can be very, very fun ... especially if you're being trailed and need to disappear in a pinch. Likewise, areas with low or impeded signals—sewers, tunnels, dense forests—are good for giving tracers the slip.
- Sounder

- Cyberware routinely sends maintenance reports or downloads patches. Disable the feature. Getting caught in the middle of a run because your move-by-wire system just sent its biannual maintenance report to its manufacturer is not funny.
- Kia

Simon Wentworth (order #1132857)

• Gridlink monitors and directs every car on the sprawl streets. It can be dangerous to disable it (since the system won't recognize that your vehicle is "there" and may just put another vehicle in the "empty" space). Better to make Gridlink think you're someone else—hacking the local DMV is fun and takes less time than registering your car/bike/aircraft/tank legally!
• Sounder

• When you do use technology, take nothing for granted. Do your matrix research yourself or have a hacker you trust do it. Don't always rely on agents; they're not subtle at all. If you're planning on extracting a hot research scientist, having an agent blundering around the Matrix querying every public datahaven about said scientist is gonna send up a big red flag.
• Pistons

• Most people believe what technology tells them. If you think the cops are following you, nothing gets them off your tail faster than an "officer down" call that is supposedly just two blocks over. Know the codes the cops and corp security use, and have your hacker go to town using them.
• Hard Exit

Extraterritorality is your friend. No, really!

The cops only have access to what they can get from public data sources. Lone Star has access to its datastores, maybe Interpol and Federal agencies they have co-op programs with, but not Knight Errant's or Aztech security's. It would take an act of the Corporate Court to get the Big Ten to share data on criminals, much less their own employees. Want to evade Shiawase pursuit? Change vehicles in the carpark of an Evo Metaergonomics department store—even if the opposition are in hot pursuit, they're on someone else's turf.

I've already mentioned data balkanization, but it bears repeating. Everyone hordes their own and won't share with their neighbors—at least not for free. This creates plenty of holes for you to exploit, and it isn't even limited to the Big 10.

• Physical extraterritoriality is easy to understand. Run away from Shiawase goons onto Aztech property, and the Shiawase goons will be screwed. Astral tails work the same way—a spirit following you onto corporate territory is liable to be killed by the guardian spirits of that facility or stymied by a ward. Matrix extraterritoriality is a bit harder to grasp, sometimes, but functionally the same. Someone doing a data-search on you can't poke their fingers into Shiawase databases and Horizon direct-marketing datahavens without hacking into them (and corporate hackers get into a *lot* of trouble when they get caught peeking in another corp's nodes). Likewise, consider hacking some low-level corporate nodes when you're on a run before hitting your main node—any traces you trigger will likely be stopped cold as soon as your datatrail crosses from their territory onto another corp's. This also works with certain governments. Nothing's quite so fun as hacking an Azzy facility from the Tir Tairngire grid … 'cause, believe you me, those Azzies aren't gonna be calling up their black-ops squad to go run into Portland without triggering an international "incident."
• Pistons

• I'd always suggest hacking via multiple grids, or satellite uplinks and corporate systems, before hacking into the store across the street from you. The more Matrix territories you cover, the less likely they'll be able to trace you.
• Slamm-0!

(Dis)Information is power

As it gets harder (and more expensive) to erase all your data and traces from the Matrix, one way to stay off the radar is the time honored solution of chaff. If you know *they* will be looking, just make sure what *they* find won't let them get a bead on you. Hide your digital tracks with excess, contradictory information or pay someone to do it. The next best thing to *them* not picking up your trail, is giving *them* a dozen trails to follow. There's a whole lot of info out there about you. You can make sure a lot of it is deceiving. Use multiple IDs and make sure they're linked to different places of residence, known acquaintances, dates of birth, shopping preferences, and criminal records. Even use different personas.

Same goes for real life. Hang at different places with different crowds. Mix things up. Disinformation is power.

• It only goes so far, but it's a good tip. Make sure to follow some of the other tips. Paying with certified 'sticks keeps your cred movements off the Matrix for the most part. Move every few months, keeping your alternative IDs active enough to not arouse suspicion when you need to rely on them.
• 2XL

• The same techniques used for forging SINs and IDs and hacking the support databases work here. Keep a running tab with a forger or the right hacker, and they'll make sure to keep the databases on your fake IDs up to date. Nothing tattles on a false ID more than your (fake) banking movements abruptly ending 2 months ago when you bought it.
• Pistons

Every single monetary transaction is logged, archived, analyzed, and cross-referenced. The only way to avoid somebody having a total profile of everything you like and do is by using several IDs (or using the Drop-Out strategy).

• Fake IDs and fake SINs work fine, but there's also certified cred or anonymous cred and ID tokens. If you shop online, you should consider only using an ID token. There are a variety of black-market banks that'll issue them. The real high roller institutions do too, but you've got to have a sizeable balance to get their preferred client services.
• Mr. Bonds

If you have to give a name for whatever reason, and you're sure that your SIN won't be checked, give the name of somebody who looks like you. Highjack IDs from social websites. If you use a latex facemask or nanopaste, don't cook up a fake identity from thin air—copy existing people. Try to adopt different styles of talking and walking. Be somebody else, especially if there's absolutely no reason for it. The more confusion there is, the harder it will be to find the clue that leads to the important data … and to you.

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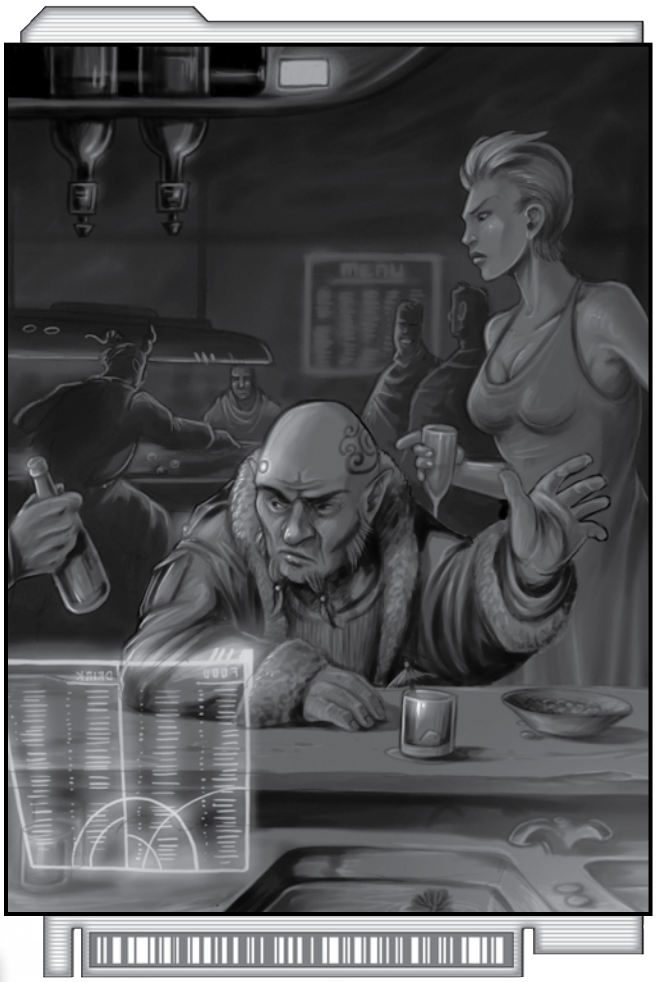

- Identity theft works even better. Hack your info into someone else's SIN and banking records and assume their identity for a while. Then, change everything back when you're done. I hear it drives the badges crazy.
- Sneaker

- Try to get SINs from different states and extraterritorial corporations to make life harder for inverse searches. Digital balkanization is as bad as geographical, and extraterritoriality can be your friend. You don't want to lose all the SINs linked to your real fingerprint just because you left one at a crime scene. Lone Star can run the SINs in the UCAS databases, but they can't touch any corporate databases ... again, Gaia bless extraterritoriality.
- Cosmo

- Having a license for all your toys and tech is a good idea. A fake ID as a licensed private investigator or personal security gets you permission to carry all sorts of goodies: jammers, restricted cyberware, restricted programs, and big guns.
- Sticks

Be Asocial!

Social networks are one of the biggest problems for privacy today. The amount of info people dump into their public profile (real or spin) is just the tip of the iceberg. People load up pics and vids to social websites, and they even tag them with the names of the people that appear. And that means *you*. Go to that hot club and your face may be all over fifty different blogs. Do like I do. When you're on a job, drop out of the loop and avoid friends and acquaintances altogether. Don't answer private calls. Don't visit your usual haunts. Don't talk to your drinking buddies . You'll be protecting yourself and them.

- Ew. You know, Glitch, metahuman contact is actually a basic need. Those CalHots you download aren't gonna work forever. If you choose to actually, you know, interact with metahumanity, you can use some nanopaste to disguise your features, a latex facemask (they're quite comfortable), or get a full body dye job and some temporary tattoos. Some adepts fair particularly well here, since there are several adept abilities that allow them to change their facial features and skin color to make them human chameleons. Heck, just some stage makeup and a fake mustache, and you too, Glitch, could touch a live person for once...
- Kat O'Nine Tales

- You could also disguise yourself as someone else when you go clubbing. Just don't go to their favorite hangouts.
- Snopes

Out of Sight, Out of Mind!

Getting spotted is one thing. Being identified is another. An important part of staying off the grid is remaining unseen. In AAA security areas and the nice middle class enclaves, there's always at least one security drone airborne and often patrolling spirits. There are areas in every sprawl where you're caught by 50 cameras, 10 microphones, and 5 cyber scanners every 100 meters. But, leave main street and touristville, and things change fast. An unprotected camera or mike is just tech waiting to be vandalized, hacked, or stolen. Scavenger gangs do it all the time, so much so, the city gives up on replacing them after a while. Of course, the slums and barrens are even better: There are fewer (or no) cops patrolling. Most importantly, nobody gives a shit who you are or what you do—and sensors? What are those?

- The best bet is to avoid the nicer neighborhoods, but, if you choose to live there, use a good fake ID that you don't *touch* on any of your criminal ventures.
- Kat O'Nine Tales

- Another option is to manipulate corporate extraterritoriality. If you live in a Evo apartment complex, don't do runs against Evo. They're not going to share tenant info with any other corp, so there's a measure of anonymity. Lone Star certainly can't come knocking on your door there. Whereas, if you have a nice home in a public housing development, Lone Star can waltz in and out without even asking permission.
- Dr. Spin

For those times when you have to break cover, disguise your ID. At the very least, on a run, you should wear a ski mask, though a hard mask is better—some of the more sophisticated programs can guess your features through fabric contours. But you can also go all out and use masking spells, old-school latex disguises or the new nanopaste stuff, and/or even alt-skin.

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- Pretending to be someone else, someone who looks like you, works great. Stolen IDs are a big business, but you can do it for free by surfing social websites. Nothing is stopping you from switching your commlink to transmit your doppleganger's information (name, address, favorite music). When you go out clubbing, use her name when you pick up a hot guy.
- Kat O'Nine Tales

- You can take this a step further and use nanopaste, altskin, or latex facemasks to actually copy an existing person. Copy their fingerprints, practice walking and talking like them. It can be fun to be someone else. And, it confuses the hell out of the cops. The more confusion there is, the harder it will be to find the clue that leads to the important data ... and to you.
- Fianchetto

- You know, most sprawl citizens wear breathers, and AR glasses or goggles are common. With a ball cap or hooded coat, you've basically got a full facial disguise—and you blend in with the rest of the metahumans in any sprawl. With a quick hairstyle change and some body dye, a padded jacket or some high-heeled boots, they can't even tell if you're Caucasian or Asian, human or ork. Doesn't work so well for Trolls and Dwarves, of course. Some fashions are even completely gender neutral, and you'd be hard pressed to tell if the person was male, female, or other.
- Hard Exit

- Some people like to switch genders for runs, through disguises or cosmetic surgery. Right, Hard Exit?
- Pistons

- Hey, all you've got to do is throw on some nanopaste and wear the right clothes, and the corp security cameras will see a broad shouldered Caucasian man, rather than a mixed-race female. Helps if you have the right build, of course, but there's alt-skin if you need help with that.
- Hard Exit

- Along the same lines, Magicians who can't use cleansing might consider muddying the scene—although distasteful, killing a few chickens or even rats creates enough of a temporary background count to last until a low-level spell fades. And, consider switching out equipment and clothing, even guns, frequently so they can't be used as sympathetic links. A disguise can make symbolic links almost impossible. If you're really feeling twisted, leave a false trail of viable ritual samples taken from a stooge or enemy...
- Lyran

Get over Yourself. Change Your Biometrics!

There's only one class of data you can never get rid of: your biometric patterns—or so goes the official line. The shape of your face, your gait, your retina pattern, your DNA, your speech pattern, they're all permanent. But wait, that's not true!

Modern surgery and implants make anything possible. If you think you've been made, get a new face. Modern chop shops offer ambulant treatment within hours. It's cheap, it takes little time, and it's out there. Use it. It's a little more costly to change your fingerprints, speech pattern, and retinas, but it definitely pays off. You pay so much for cyberware, you should invest a little into plastic surgery, too. Just never forget to pay a hacker to "update" your SINs afterwards.

- You can also easily use fake fingerprints, a voice modulator, and contact lenses. In today's Augmented world, you've got the perfect excuse to wear dark or shaded glasses—even if you have them turned off—to prevent any scanners from ever actually seeing your retinas.
- Ma'fan

- There are plenty of helpful augmentations. Voice modulators. Various genetic tweaks are great: genewipe, gene masque, things like that make any forensics you leave behind hard, or impossible, to use. And minor cosmetic modifications can be done with simple chemical cocktails, no surgery needed.
- Butch

Every Time You Kill a RFID, an Angel Gets Its Wings

Let me tell you a story about Ronald the Runner. Ronald went into a high security facility. He maintained total radio silence, used chameleon polymers to stay hidden, the concealment ability of a spirit protected him, and he was silent like a shadow. Forty-three minutes into the run, a security spider wondered what an RFID chip announcing the qualities of Silky-Skin™ underwear was doing in his high security lab. Ten minutes later, Ronald the Runner was caught. He had forgotten to kill the RFID in his underwear.

You don't want to end like Ronald. You don't want to involuntarily promote the quality of any underwear or any other products you might own. RFIDs give your location away, they give data about your purchases away, and they give away data about the state of objects you own. Kill every RFID chip you can find. Buy yourself an eraser and wipe the little buggers off all your gear.

- Tag erasers + Radio Signal Scanners = safe fun.
- Slamm-0!

- I know what your idea of "safe" is, Romeo.
- Netcat

- If I show you my HERF gun will you show me yours?
- Slamm-0!

Be Smart and Don't be Greedy

So, you pulled off a job at Corp X. Of course, you left some trace. Everybody leaves traces. The corporation will now look for you. The question is, how hard will they try?

Most likely, they know how the game works. Somebody that benefited from the run hired you. You're a deniable asset, kept in the dark, and will be dropping the goods and/or getting your paycheck from Mr. J. ASAP. Remember with the corps it's all about the bottom line—is tracking someone who evaded them worth the expense? If you stole something, they know you don't have it anymore. If you extracted somebody, you don't know where the person is anymore. If you destroyed something, there's no reason to find you at all. You're just the tool. Somebody else—Mr. Johnson—is responsible and now holds the goods.

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INCOMING FEED.....

SURVIVAL TIPS.....

As a rule of thumb, if security believes it'll take more than a few hours to hand off the goods/extractee/whatever, they'll take a shot at tracking you down. But, if that's not the case, and you play things right, Corp X will only ever have two reasons to come after you: revenge or deterrence. That's why you keep body count down and don't go looting mementos.

Nothing rats you out like trying to hock some Red Samurai armor you snagged on your last run. At that point, you've made nailing you to the wall a matter of keeping face for the Reds—and you've probably PO'd your last Johnson.

- If you make it more costly to find you (by using some of the methods mentioned above) than they'll realize by getting you, chances are they'll let it go. Profit is the be-all and end-all for the corporate mindset.
- Mr. Bonds

- Killing guards or personnel is a good way to up the risk-reward designation. It's not good for a corp's employee morale if they don't try to hunt down the scum who killed Bob-the-loveable-accountant. Likewise, don't take anything that isn't part of the job. If you earn a reputation for stealing extra during a run, word will spread. Don't kill guards if you don't have to. Don't destroy stuff if you don't have to.
- Hard Exit

- Why use bullets when a capsule filled with DMSO and narcoject works just as well and leaves the guards simply napping? Or tasers—which have the added benefit of being generally unrestricted and not drawing unwanted attention from the cops? If you're afraid someone can ID you, why not give them a laés cigarette or give them an aerosol spritz of laés? There are non-lethal ways to conduct business, and, generally speaking, the lower the body count, the lower the effort to track you down.
- Mika

TRAVEL AND SMUGGLING

Posted by: 2XL

Unless you've lived with your head under a magemask for the last decade, you've probably noticed that travel restrictions have become much tighter. This is meant to be a primer for the newer kids on the street, though if you pay attention, even some of the old-timers may learn a thing or two. Understanding how the other side lives is important if you want to stand a chance of blending in. Beyond the business opportunities that traveling executives offer, they can also provide cover stories for travel companions (read: escorts) or bodyguards. With that, let's take a look at the two main reasons wageslaves travel—business and vacation.

Whether it's to press flesh, schmooze, or woo the latest fresh recruit, nothing beats the impression of face time. The old customs of business have changed to accommodate digital meeting places and awakened spirit voyages, but a handshake and shared meal still give the illusion of humanity to corp types. Obviously, the costs involved in business travel need to be justified.

Occasionally, the labor mines allow wageslaves out on vacation. High paid and overstressed, they bury themselves in vacation

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hot spots. Common activities are sunning on beaches where the sim-starlets play or an outdoor experience in one of the manicured reserves. Either way, the trick is to separate themselves from work for a while. Many corporations are also investing in resorts with real-time connections back to their enclaves to allow for a working holiday.

» Currently there are chateaus in the Denver area that do just this. I've heard talk about an AR overlay on the slopes to allow for productivity to be maintained on the lifts.
» Kat O'Nine Tales

» Recently, there has been a push for virtual travel agencies. These corp sponsored groups see low-end workers for an hour-long consultation to help plan the vacation. For the next few weeks, agents run conditioning programs based on PAB technology. When the conditioning is finished, the employee comes back in for a brief consultation where the memory conditioning is triggered. A two-week long trip happens in their minds, firmly seated in memories, in less than five minutes of real time. Don't ask what other programming the corps are adding while they are in there.
» Snopes

Any of these options bring a need for paperwork. From ID scans when buying a ticket to passports and visas, the system is set to track who you are. All of this is the bread and butter of legit travel agents. In the shadows, though, you need to be ready to burn one of your IDs or leave the paperwork to those in the know. Many forgers can make a false passport or visa to link onto a fake ID, but that only gets you halfway there.

Mages are required to register their abilities in most countries, no surprise there. The stricter countries require blood or hair samples. These are preserved for ritual sorcery, which can put the kibosh on any high-profile jobs.

Cyberware poses its own unique set of problems for traveling. Imagelinks and artificial limbs can be explained away through defect or injury, but make sure that your identity has it in your background. The ultra-illegal 'ware needs to be left at home, or you'll end up answering a series of questions that don't have good answers.

Once you have your cover story and paperwork, you need to figure out how you are getting there.

Air

Sub-orbitals and high speed civilian transport (HSCT) are the fastest way to travel. With speed comes cost and added security. Corporations buy tickets in bulk and use their own transportation fleets. The plebes, on the other hand, can pay up to 5,000 nuyen for a suborbital flight between distant international airports like Heathrow to Auckland.

» Unless you like bleeding from your ears, keep the mojo to a minimum while in flight. Scraping the ionosphere can play havoc with your abilities.
» Ethernaut

Security in most airports consists of layered monitoring with travelers going through MAD scanners, chemsniffers, and the like. Gait analysis and facial recognition software runs against passenger manifests and known terrorist lists. The security response, in cases of perceived threat, ranges from rent-a-cops with gel rounds to SWAT teams in mil-spec armor. Lethal response is a rare beast due to the number of civilians, but be careful if you are caught away from the crowds. Airport security tends to shoot first and question your corpse later.

» Corporate-run airports have different guidelines. Wage-slaves can put just about anything in their checked luggage, with restrictions against weapons in the cabin. If you don't belong to the corp, expect to be a second-class citizen and expect in-depth security scans.
» Winterhawk

The latest entry in airborne smuggling is lighter than air vehicles and zeppelins. By outfitting standard zeppelins with vector thrust engines, designers have made a fast and quiet workhorse. Smuggling rings throughout South America have begun using these rather than braving the jungle and river ways. Sensor-baffles are woven into the fabric of the main balloon to minimize the silhouette and conceal the craft from listening posts and electronic detection. Though zeppelins are becoming more common, they will likely never take the place of t-birds.

T-birds, vector-thrust aircraft, fly the nape of the earth and stay well below radar. One of the best-known runs for t-bird jammers is between Denver and the CalFree State. Some of the best pilots in the world buzz in and out of canyons fully laden with any cargo worth more than the cost of fuel.

» Ghostwalker has the ZDF cracking down on all the smuggling in and out of Denver. More than one jammer has dumped their cargo and gone back on foot to get it. Runners with the right intel can score some cred by getting there first.
» Hard Exit

Maglevs

Here in Europe, trains have been an important method of travel for the last two centuries. Tracks are laid side by side with the super-highways making them the most prolific means of travel. In North America, nearly all the metroplexes are tied into the rail network, but a few small settlements are left to watch the train pass by. While the maglevs are noticeably slower than air travel, the price is also much more reasonable.

» Transcontinental travel in North America can be a huge headache—each nation has its own idea of who and what should be allowed. Even if you don't plan on getting off the train, you'll need travel visas through parts of the NAN.
» /dev/grrl

» That's one of the pleasures of the NEEC. Anyone with a passport from one of the participating countries is waved right through.
» Fianchetto

» Customs is getting better in the Americas. Tir Tairngire established customs checks at the stations. With luck, some of the NAN will realize how much faster it goes and follow the example.
» Sounder

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Because the tracks (and sometimes stations) are owned by different corps, ticket prices don't always correspond to the actual distance traveled. Seattle to New York costs about the same as Seattle to LA. On the other side of the pond, we face the same pricing inequities with it costing more to go from Paris Nord to London, than Paris Est to Prague. Many foreigners use the EuRail system for package pricing. Locals, and those who can fake it, can take advantage of the frequent traveler accounts to find cheaper fares.

Compared to the airports, train stations have minimal security. Chemsniffers are present in cargo holds to detect bombs, but they are generally far enough apart to not detect small quantities of ammunition. Passenger trains also have cameras and Panicbuttons available to alert the conductor to a problem.

- Budget cuts in the transportation field have led companies to automate the train systems, so the conductor is probably a pilot program. There's a rigger in a station over a hundred kilometers away in case of emergencies. They can lock doors, but immediate response to problems is rare. If you can't get past a locked door, you shouldn't be here.
- Mika

Ground Transportation

Here, the folks in North America have the upper hand over the Europeans. Buses are primarily cattle-cars for the disenfranchised and down on their luck in the New World. Similar to the maglevs, security in bus stations is minimal. Even cheaper and slower than the trains, buses are almost entirely automated with automatic debits from passenger accounts for matrix usage or convenience items.

- The Vory began taking an interest in smuggling on board buses a few years back, following the mafia's lead with the Teamsters. If you see a couple no-neck mouth breathers on board, it's probably a good sign that the cargo area has something illegal inside.
- Red Anya

Of course, buses aren't the only things driving on the superhighways. RVs, semi-trucks, and automobiles all move people around. Though cross-country driving takes longer and has just as many hassles with border crossing as the train, some folks still do it. Hidden panels and smuggler's compartments can make this a lucrative, if slow-going, proposal. Make sure that the appearance matches, though—the border patrol starts asking questions if the vehicle is weighed down with a few hundred kilos of weight that isn't visible.

Within the cities, automobiles are present, but, with the congestion levels and narrow streets, sub-compacts and PMVs—personal mobility vehicles—are more common. The police forces in several of the metroplexes have taken to patrolling on armored PMVs, providing an edge against criminals who are on-foot or in vehicles that become caught up in traffic.

Ships

While not a common form of transportation by any means, cruise ships have their place. For socially amenable smugglers, cruise liners actually serve as excellent smuggling vessels. They are slow and have a limited number of ports of call, but the security levels are comparable to trains. This means that if you have cargo that needs to cross an ocean without getting on board a sub-orbital, a boat is a good way to do it.

If dancing the mamba and never ending buffets aren't your style, fishing trawlers and cargo vessels provide excellent cover. These both visit many of the same ports that the cruise liners do, as well as stopping off at areas that don't interest the tourists. Steerage is generally available for purchase if you don't have the skills to work as one of the crew. Additionally, with the larger cargo vessels, the size of the ship means that you can stow-away and never see a living person if you stick to the hold.

Smugglers can be hired to put you down in a dinghy along the coastline. Almost every ship captain knows of a half dozen inlets where a boat with a ruthenium tarp or concealing spirit can set down. Smaller vessels can even move up river ways, dropping off passengers well past border patrols and customs agents.

- The Vory in Vladivostok do most of their smuggling underwater. Sergei Byelmodin established a power base built on the combined might of his men and several key figures in the Russian Navy. Several submarines have been decommissioned and now move cargo.
- Red Anya

BYPASSING THE MAN

Let's be honest. Sometimes, that troll on your team, with his move by wire system, doesn't know when to keep his mouth shut. Maybe, you are that troll. I'll go over some of the tried and true methods to get past the border patrol or airport security.

The simplest way is to leave the gear behind. Fixers and smugglers often know people around the world, and if you can grab the gear at the other end, it a) makes getting through security much easier and b) makes it harder to trace the job back to you. Sometimes, though, the gear you need is unavailable or can't be left behind, like your cyber. If you plan on doing any work outside your hometown, make friends with a good forger.

Forgery is part and parcel of smuggling. Whether it is your big brother's ID to get in a nightclub or a wholly fake SIN for those of us born in the slums, false identification has been used in all walks of life. Skilled forgers can insert data across a series of databases, bypassing the Web of Trust authentication systems used by most airports. For a fake ID to get past more secure systems and checkpoints, you will need biometric data from retinal scans to DNA sequencing added onto the ID.

- The best outfits I know for fake IDs are based out of Calcutta. Rumor has it that a few virtuakinetics from the slums have signed on to great effect. Drop me a line for an introduction.
- Smiling Bandit

- When possible, use someone else's biometrics. Having a friend at the morgue that can nab you samples from a John Doe is a huge asset. A little bit of blood and some creative cosmetics can give you the proper fingerprints and DNA samples to clear all but the best scanners.
- Ma'fan

If a new name, rank, and serial number won't cover you, a new face sometimes can. Advances in genetech and cosmetic surgery mean that procedures, which used to take months to

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recover from, can now be healed in a few days. If resources are tight, a bottle of hair dye, some nanotattoos, and a compact can create enough of a change that you won't look like the picture on every scream-sheet for twenty klicks.

A more advanced technique to get past security is a rope-a-dope. Rope-a-dope is an old boxing term from before the days of damage compensators. You show security what they want to see, this way they don't look past it to the truth. Pairing up with a street doc, you can find ways to explain your cyberware within a complicated medical history. Bone lacing isn't there to make you tougher, it's combating chronic osteocuspis. Likewise, your reaction enhancers are to help with a degenerative nervous condition. Most airport systems won't be able to detect bioware or gene therapy, so you can leave them out of your medical checklist.

On top of the rope-a-dope, you can add some makeup or props. Modern chemistry and a wheelchair can turn your cybered killing machine into an incontinent pile of flesh. Earning the sympathy vote for your face and making security expect the MAD scanners to go off will help get you past with minimal questions. A quick pat down to make sure there aren't any weapons hidden in the chair, and you are on your way.

» Disguises are great but fall apart quickly if a mage is standing at the checkpoint. Luckily, having a mage at every security station is too draining on resources particularly at backwater border crossings. Check before you go in, so that you can re-evaluate your plan if needed.
» Sounder

A SILVER TONGUE

As I hinted at with the rope-a-dope, a security system is only as good as its people. If you have the gift of gab, a little social engineering can get you out of a jam. Most security guards are underpaid and they are always on the lookout for some extra nuyen.

» Every public servants has larceny in his heart, otherwise they'd work for a corp instead of feeding at the public trough.
» Mika

» Saeder-Krupp's internal security audits are still famous. "Draconian security measures" takes on a new meaning when a Great is at the top of the food chain.
» Winterhawk

Bribery generally consists of putting cred in the hands of an official. Other gifts are fine too—I have a gunrunner friend who regularly "loses" a case of rifles in the CAS just as deer season starts. The trick is to find the soft point in your mark's morality and push. While greasing palms is fast and simple, the problem comes with leaving a trail of people who know you. A good disguise can keep you from needing to constantly look over your shoulder.

» If you're trying to decide how much squeeze to pay—500 to 1,000 nuyen can get you past most stations. Plan ahead and keep some walking money for social lubricant.
» Mihoshi Oni

For times when you can't let anyone know you came in, conning is appropriate. A con job is never something you do on the spot. Planning, a few props, and friends can always help. The trick of the con is to use a busy station or checkpoint. Rush hour is your friend here. Guards are going to be used to waving vehicles through. Keep giving the guard as much information as you can. By overwhelming security with verbosity, they become distracted and don't see your true purpose.

» Successful cons range from two or three people up to a full dozen. You need to plan for every contingency and even work out your emotional responses. It can be as demanding as recording simsense.
» Dr. Spin

When other talking fails, fast-talking is your last shot. Unlike the con job, which takes several people, fast-talking is a one on one activity. If you are faced with multiple guards, try to separate them or work with the one in charge.

» Pick-up artists are great at fast-talking groups. Ignore the target at first, make small talk, and then transition to the moment. I can give some private lessons.
» Traveler Jones

» And how is your love life going?
» NetCat

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• That's besides the point—I'm taking some time for me.
• Traveler Jones

• Sure you are...
• NetCat

LAST CHANCES

Without the socially inclined or the creative minded, your options to get past a manned security checkpoint are coyotes, mules, and corpses.

Coyotes are specialized smugglers who get people across borders. The techniques they use range from hidden compartments in unassuming vehicles to secret passages under or through hostile borders. Often coyotes will only cross a specific border, knowing various routes based on the number of people who are crossing, and what they are bringing with them.

• If you are going to transport a vehicle or bulky cargo, make sure to let the coyote know in advance. Driving a step van through a sewer is rough.
• Sounder

• Denver smugglers have the most compact number of borders around. The line between traditional smuggler and coyote gets blurry in the Mile High City.
• Hard Exit

T-bird jammers and long-haul smugglers are for those trips that need to cross multiple borders. You are getting what you pay for with these guys, and that doesn't include any amenities unless you negotiate them. The best place to network with smugglers is at so-called "rigger stops." Just as shadowrunners have their bars, riggers have shadow truck stops.

• Smugglers rarely work alone. Those that do tend to contract labor for their extra services. Sometimes, you can hire on with a smuggler for the length of a trip.
• /dev/grrl

• I got stabbed at my first rigger stop by some scumbag who wanted my spot on the crew. Watch your step.
• Marcos

Though mules are uncommon for runners to use, I'm adding them in for completeness. Mules carry your gear for you. These proxies never know enough about their employers to betray them. The primary benefit to mules is that they are cheap. You pay a squatter 100 nuyen to carry a bag across a border. Obviously, mules aren't the best choice, but the economy of scale keeps them in use. The smaller syndicates make extensive use of mules—some even contract with the local governments for a percentage to be caught. The government gets good press as being hard on smugglers, and the syndicates get what they need.

The last organic option is one that never gets any good press. Corpses have been used for smuggling since the dawn of time. If you can find yourself a nice corpse—Tamanous and the morgues are generally good for them—it is a morbid but simple process to fill the chest cavity with whatever you are smuggling. The process works best with organic and biological components, to avoid questions about why five dozen commlinks are in a dead man's chest. An added benefit with corpses is that the casket can provide hiding places for any inorganic parts that you need to move. Hidden panels can be built in behind the padding and lined with solid materials to avoid detection.

• The creepiest thing I ever saw was a chop shop where they installed empty cyberlimbs and torsos into corpses. Of course, once they are implanted, you just fill 'em up and ship 'em out. Stone tablets don't smuggle themselves.
• Elijah

Beyond corpses, you and your teammates can be incubators for anything you need to smuggle. Portable goods, like optical chips, can be hidden in any cavity on your person. Likewise, data stored onto a security tag and embedded in your thigh is as secure as you are. The tag stays hidden, and no one is ever the wiser. Specialized containers ranging from super-conductive polymer suppositories with lubricant to chemical resistant latex pouches designed to be swallowed and regurgitated on the other side can be found at most black markets. The same things with different packaging can be found in your local Stuffer Shack or adult emporium.

• One of my counter-intel troops got caught behind enemy lines with stolen data. She decorated the optical chips and strung them on a gold chain and hoops. When Rodriguez returned to base, she took out her earrings and handed over her necklace—all the data was still intact.
• Black Mamba

HARD TECH

So far I've focused on getting past manned stations and checkpoints. In cases of small train terminals, bus stops, and weigh stations, the only security is automated or remotely monitored. As you can't fast-talk a computer system, specialized skill sets and gear are required.

Hacking cameras or modifying weight readouts can keep you a step ahead of monitoring agents. System architecture and sculpting varies wildly from one location to another. Spoofing the signals by looping previous data through the node has helped more than one smuggling team scoot by with no one the wiser. In general, though, it is easier to hack a single device's datafeed than the entire node.

• Security teams have caught on to that loophole. A lot of systems have peripheral units as dedicated slaves. Intercepting the signal and editing data is possible but rough.
• DangerSensei

• Hardware mods to scales can lighten everyone's load. If you are part of a convoy, make the change before the first truck hits and put it back when you're done.
• Rigger X

If you know what route you are going to be taking, getting as much information as you can is helpful. A friendly hacker can look at the system architecture and tell you what to expect. Likewise,

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a few bribes at the municipal planner's office can show where the assessors measure loads for taxes and tariffs.

» Beyond the tech, a few well-placed spells can solve the problem. Make sure no one is watching, though. In the absence of a mage, bound spirits will regularly be left to watch for astral activity.
» Ethernaut

MAD Systems

MAD systems use a variety of different technologies to find contraband. All of them are based on transmitting pulses of electricity or radio waves into the target and measuring the response. Bypassing them depends on what exactly you are bringing. Ceramic components easily get past MAD scanners, and that's one reason the Raecor Stinger is popular among smugglers. If you can't build the item out of ceramics, then methods of shielding the item from the MAD system need to be used. The simplest way is to encase the item in plastic—this works like shielding power cables or your speakers so that the trid doesn't get wobbly when you watch it. Unfortunately, the more metal in the item, the heavier the shielding has to be, which means that it can get bulky quickly.

Electromagnets and low-frequency jammers can also blanket out the signal coming from MAD scanners. I don't recommend walking through the security checkpoint with an electromagnet strapped to your chest. Instead, having a teammate who isn't traveling with you, or a mule, stand nearby to disrupt the system can be beneficial. Small electronics can also be hardwired with a remote trigger to do this. Build the trigger into your commlink, and, when you call grandma to wish her a happy birthday, the anti-MAD system is triggered.

Cyberware Scanners and X-rays

Millimeter wave scanners and x-rays both look beneath the surface and try to ascertain the true nature of an object. Organic material like bioware will blend in with your normal body tissue and is not a problem, but the ceramic knife taped to the small of your back will show up. In these cases, deception is the primary escape. By hiding items inside of more complex systems, the scanners and guards watching the readouts can be fooled. Electronic devices are best for this, as they already have tightly packed circuits and materials to block scans. Smuggling compartments built into cyberlimbs use the same technique. Additionally, many improvised explosives are built to look like a micro-transceiver or holo-projector.

Chemsniffers

Hermetic sealing is a must have for any explosives or ammunition that you are smuggling. Custom airtight cases for electronics can be designed with space for disassembled weapons and explosives. When concealing chemicals within other items, you should scrub the item clean to remove trace residue. Advances in laser technology also allow for a sealed container to have chemicals burned off, eliminating the trace amounts that chemsniffers need. Packing the items around other fragrant items may keep a dog from smelling it, but won't stop a chemsniffer.

AWAKENED SOLUTIONS

When it comes to defeating Awakened security measures or moving magical goods, you need a little mojo of your own. Warding the inside of a container can keep prying wage mages from seeing the fact that your cargo container has a gross of assault rifles instead of the farming implements listed on the manifest. A buddy of mine even learned how to "stretch" his aura over a few items that he didn't feel like declaring.

» Security types use manacases and manasheaths to keep mages from tracking down their property. They can be used the other way, hiding magical goods from security.
» Mika

Let's not forget the more direct uses of magic. Spirits to hide your vehicle and make you go a little faster are worth all the money you have to pay to keep them around. Mages can also hand wave guards into believing that your paperwork is fine or help see around the corner. If you don't have one on your team, their services can be pricy but are almost always worth it.

SURVIVAL TIPS GAME INFORMATION

The *Survival Tips* chapter is intended to ease Shadowrun players, new and old, over and around the sometimes apparently insurmountable hurdles the Sixth World setting presents. The fiction presented above and the material below are consistent with the default *Shadowrun, Fourth Edition* setting. However, the impact and indeed pervasiveness of surveillance, border controls, security checks, and general passive obstacles runners will encounter in any given game is up to the gamemaster and the group's playing style. If, as a player, you're unsure of the extent these issues will impact the game you are playing in, ask your gamemaster.

OFF THE GRID

Surveillance is often an issue in *Shadowrun* games. Sometimes it is hard and tedious, for both the gamemaster and the players, to think about every aspect of personal security and privacy. It is only possible to be a shadowrunner if the runners get away and are not always tracked and imprisoned afterwards. If the gamemaster and the players have different ideas of how important this aspect of the game should be, this might lead to problems. It is a good idea to decide, before a campaign, which aspects of "staying off the grid" are emphasized and which are neglected. A player should know of the possibility that a camera downtown with expert system software might identify his character after he shoots a Lone Star cop in an alleyway without wearing a mask. As mentioned in *Tricks of the Trade*, there are reasons for both very strict and quite lax handling of the topic.

Shadowun provides players and gamemasters alike with a wide variety of surveillance and counter surveillance tools in the realms of real world electronics, the Matrix, and magic. In principle, an appropriate countermeasure can overcome each surveillance measure. The following section highlights some of the most common surveillance measures and their counters.

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Physical sensors

There are two basic ways to counter electronic sensors like cameras, laser beams, fingerprint scanners, and radar sensors. The most direct is to hack their controlling nodes (p. 221, *SR4*) and control their output, erasing any trace of the runners or looping the data output from the time before the runners arrived. This transfers the problem of physical sensors to the realm of Matrix security, which is often easier to handle if a good hacker is present. However, it might be tedious to hack every single sensor node, if taking control of the security node is too dangerous.

The other way is to fool the sensors by altering the physical reality. This might be a simple latex or nanopaste facemask for a camera, an artificial fingerprint or retina for the respective sensors, or insulated clothes for thermal sensors. Unfortunately, all these things have to be prepared beforehand, which leaves the most potent weapon against physical sensors: magic. Physical illusion spells like Improved Invisibility, Silence, Physical Mask, and Trid Phantasm (pp. 201–202, *SR4*) are able to fool almost every sensor out there. The drawback, though, is that patrolling magicians and spirits can easily detect these measures.

Magical Patrols

Magical security is often one of the biggest problems for runners. This is mostly because the creator or summoner immediately feels any attack on a ward or the death of a spirit, not to mention the presence of a sense link between every spirit and its master. However, there are some ways to get around patrolling spirits and wards.

The easiest way to avoid them is to use physical disguises. A patrolling spirit will not sound an alarm if it does not recognize the sarariman moving through the corridor as a runner in disguise. Illusion spells only work if they are covered by the Extended Masking metamagic (p.60, *Street Magic*), or the spirit will simply see the spell in astral space. One of the best ways to dispose of spirits without notifying their master is to cast the Influence (p. 203, *SR4*) spell on them and order the spirit to go to Antarctica.

The runners can easily ignore wards if they do not have any spells sustained or foci active. This is sometimes not an option if the runners rely on spells to fool physical sensors. In this case, the spellcaster has to fool the ward (p. 124, *Street Magic*) to allow the spells to pass the ward. To do this, the magician has to know in advance the signature of the ward's creator or that of a person allowed to pass the ward.

Matrix Security

The best tool against detection in the Matrix is a good Stealth program. A better way, however, is to not have to hack in in the first place (see *Social Engineering*, p. 91, *Unwired*). Obtaining valid passcodes before the run is often easier than one might think. Even a low-level passcode from, for example, cleaning personnel, should not be ignored. Even in the Matrix, it's a good idea to wear a disguise. At worst, it will do nothing. At best, it will sow confusion and buy more time.

A good hacker should always know that her first priority in a run is to not set off an alarm. If the Matrix of a facility is on alert, the physical intrusion will most likely get much, much harder.

GETTING ROUND BORDERS AND SECURITY

The gear in the following section assists in countering some of the most common security measures at border crossings and customs checks. Note this does not in any way diminish the need for other essentials such as having a valid SIN and travel documents (or good forgeries arranged through a fixer or a forger). In many countries, bribery and intimidation might be possible, but, in most industrialized nations, it's almost guaranteed to get you into trouble.

Characters interested in forging their own documents may want to review *The Forger's Art,* pp. 95–96, *Unwired*.

Anti-MAD Systems

Low-frequency jammers and electromagnets, anti-MAD systems distort the magnetic fields used to detect metallic items. This results in a direct degradation of the system and reduces the rating of the scanner. High-energy jammer fields are detectable and highly illegal; while most border guards won't have short-range EM sensors, airports and spaceports normally do.

Jammer, hand-held: Similar to a directional jammer, a hand-held anti-MAD jammer reduces the rating of devices in a direct line of sight. Most users will trigger it just before an individual passes through the MAD sensor and deactivate it afterwards. The rating of effected MAD systems is reduced by the rating of the hand-held jammer. The hand-held jammer has an effective range of 10 meters and must be recharged after three minutes.

Jammer, single use: This omni-directional jammer is designed for short-term disruption and burns out the internal

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circuitry after being triggered. Generally designed as a small orb roughly five centimeters in diameter, the single-use jammer reduces the rating of all MAD systems in a 10 meter radius by the rating of the jammer.

Renraku Infiltrator: This micro-skimmer drone has a very short life span due to the amount of energy required to disrupt the MAD system. When deployed, it immediately flies to the nearest source of magnetism, generally the MAD, and begins degrading the signal. The Infiltrator reduces the effective rating of the MAD system by 2. The drone must be recharged after five minutes of use.

Static: Static nanites are used to provide resistance by coalescing around the magnetic poles of a MAD system and blocking the system from transmitting across the gap. Once bound to a system, they permanently reduce the rating of a MAD system by 3 unless removed.

Chemsniffer Defenses

The most reliable solution against chemsniffers is a vacuum seal assisted by some trace-elimination system. Vacuum sealers come in all sizes, ranging from counter-top versions used by homemakers to industrial versions designed to seal cargo containers.

Vacuum Seal: A countertop system to hermetically seal plastic pouches. The system is capable of sealing (Rating x 2) kilograms of material per packet. Explosives and ammunition packaged this way are treated as hermetically sealed and contained in plastic (see *Scanners* p. 254, *SR4*).

Ares Low Intensity Laser (LIL): The LIL burns off chemical residue on the outside of a container. All modifiers for chemical detection based on large quantities of explosive material are halved (see *Chemical Detection Modifiers,* p. 254, *SR4*).

Anti-MAD Systems	Avail	Cost
Jammer (hand held)	(Rating x 6)F	Rating x 500¥
Jammer (Single Use)	(Rating x 6)F	Rating x 500¥
Static	16F	3,000¥

Chem-Sniffer Defenses	Avail	Cost
Vacuum Seal	2	Rating x 100¥
Ares Low Intensity Laser	7R	1,250¥
NanoCleansers	15R	3,500¥ p/can

Modification	Capacity	Cost
Hollow Cyberlimb	Base + 50%	70% Base cost
Hollow Cybertorso	Base + 75%	50% Base cost

NanoCleansers: NanoCleansers are a variety of nanites packaged in a 5-application aerosol can. A spy-toy, these hard nanites are a variety of smart corrosives programmed to target particular surface molecules and eliminate traces—including explosive or volatile chemicals/compounds, drugs, and even DNA. One application covers 1square meter of surface area, and destroys all surface traces.

Magnetic Diffusion Shielding

Designed from super conductive metallic fibers, magnetic diffusion shielding (MDS) disperses the energy of a MAD sensor around an item. This creates a blind spot within the sensor's field and hides an item from MAD scanners.

Case Lining: Shielding an entire case or compartment will entirely protect the contents from showing up on a MAD scanner. This feature is available for the shielded compartment vehicle modification (p. 144, *Arsenal*).

MDS Sheathing: Designed to conceal specific items independent of their surroundings, MDS sheaths can be woven into nearly any size or shape. Because they are designed to be opened and closed to slide an item in, the sheath is not perfect. The rating of the sheath raises the threshold of the scanner test. Due to the bulk of the sheath, there is a +1 dice pool modifier per point of rating for visual Perception tests to notice the item.

MDS Subdermal Sheath: This modification for synthetic limbs, functions like MDS Sheathing and helps conceal limbs and smuggling compartments from MAD scanners. The MDS Subdermal Sheath is incompatible with skinlink.

Post-Mortem Modifications

Cyberware implanted into corpses generally does not have any of the internal workings necessary for it to be functional. Rudimentary circuitry and articulations are left to maintain appearances for the better cyberware scanners.

Hollow Cyberlimbs: Most obvious cyberlimbs are removed from an individual before burial or cremation, but Tamanous and other organizations, which perform such post-mortem modifications, can replace them with hollowed synthetic limbs. Standard Perception Test rules for identifying a synthetic limb apply.

Hollow Cybertorso: Due to the massive implications of removing a cybertorso to the integrity of the corpse, it is generally not removed from the body before burial, though internal organs are. This allows for the usage of standard or synthetic cybertorsos as a post-mortem implant. A close inspection—and Perception + Intuition (2) Test—will show that the skin and muscle tissue has not properly grafted to the cybertorso. For this reason, corpses used in this manner are often clothed after filling the compartment.

Magnetic Diffusion Shielding	Avail	Cost
Case lining	8F	500¥ per 10 cm^2
MDS Sheathing (Rating 1–3)	(Rating x 5)F	(Rating x 300)¥ x 1 square m
MDS Subdermal Sheath (Rating 1–3)	(Rating x 5)F	(Rating x 3000)¥ p/limb.

Name	Handling	Accel	Speed	Pilot	Body	Armor	Sensor	Avail	Cost
Renraku Infiltrator	+1	2/10	10	3	0	0	1	12F	3,000¥

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. . . ALTERNATIVE CHARACTER CREATION . . .

Freezing rain poured down on the people of Seattle. Anything with a working hindbrain was inside or under cover. The Dual Ruke stood inside a nondescript Auburn warehouse, dripping wet, shivering, blinking under the glare of the security lighting and surrounded by a team of well-armed shadowrunners. He wished he'd taken half a tranq derm or something to calm himself down. His cold sweats had nothing to do with the chill.

This was the real deal.

"Ain't much ter look at, is he?" asked the muscle-bound ork leaning against a crate to his left. "You got a gun, omae?"

Ruke fumbled for his Colt when the dark-skinned elf behind him whispered, "Don't."

"Allow me," she said, reaching into his shoulder holster, drawing out the gun and tossing it to the ork, who checked its action and spit a wad of tobacco juice into the corner.

"Not a bad piece." The ork handed it back. "You any good with it?"

"Doesn't have to be if he can hack the IC," Hard Exit retorted. Ruke gave the scary-looking blonde woman a thankful glance, which caused her to scowl. "Provided he *can* hack the IC. What do you say, boy?"

"I'm no FastJack, lady," The Ruke started warming up to his pitch. "But, I'm a real tech-head. I can customize any hardware or firmware you've got and crack any IC this side of the corporate cores."

"Want him to answer my question. You good with that thing, Ruke?" the ork reiterated.

"When I run the 'soft."

"Ain't no good, then. Don't learn when you're on the chip, boy. We take you on, I'm gonna have to take you down the range." The ork took another pinch of tobacco and set it between cheek and gum.

"But can he hack it under pressure?" The elf woman was next to him again. "Maybe we need a little test."

Wish I knew how the chica does that, Ruke thought, startled again by her ghostly movements.

"There's a thought," said Hard Exit. "First things first, though. You virgin Ruke?"

"¿*Que*?" he blurted, a blush spreading across his cheeks.

"Implants, *hermano*. Are you on the wire?" Hard Exit purred. "Augmentations: chrome, supermeat, genetweaks."

"Oh." *Duh.* "I'm wired for skills, dedicated expert system too. Renraku NonLinear AC v1.03—with the firmware update—and a Mentokko VI simsense accelerator. Never needed much. I've got a coupla drones."

"Not bad. Who paid for it?" the ork asked.

"None of your business, *colmillo*." Despite the ice water dripping off him, The Ruke was getting hot. "Unless you want to tell me where you got your work done?"

"UCAS army," shot back the ork "An' a little work here and there."

"Chiba," Volunteered Hard Exit. "Former employers picked up the bill."

"Au naturale,"the elf chimed in ... from somewhere behind him.

"Team thing, Ruke," Hard Exit said. "Gotta open up a little, gotta be able to trust you. Tell you what," she smiled "we got us a little run tonight, and we need a hacker. Consider it your entrance exam."

The Dual Ruke smiled back at her, "Lead the way, boss-lady."

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ALTERNATIVE SYSTEMS

The standard Build Point system of character creation from *SR4* is a rich system that offers a lot of options to players. It can be quite detailed though, bogging a player down in math and moving around Build Points.

As optional alternatives, this chapter presents two new character creation systems: the Priority System and the Karma System. The former simplifies character design into a set of predefined steps and values for the various options available, while the latter makes character creation consistent with in-game character improvement using Karma.

Each of the three systems has its advantages and disadvantages, and each favors different approaches and preferences with regards to character design. Players are encouraged to explore all of them and adopt the system they feel most comfortable with, though gamemasters should discourage exploitation of the nuances in results between different systems.

Neither of these systems is intended to produce the *exact* same character build as the Build Point System or as the other alternative system, but the characters they do produce are balanced with one another.

THE PRIORITY SYSTEM

The Priority system simplifies character creation by splitting up the creation process into sections or categories with predefined values.

Each character is given five categories that define him: Heritage, Talent, Attributes, Skills, and Resources. These categories are assigned Priorities, one per category, from A (most important) to E (least important). Each Priority (A through E) can be assigned to only one category, and each category *must* be assigned a Priority. Each category then has its own rules for developing that aspect of the character, based on the Priority assigned to it.

The Priority system is designed to remove some of the complexity from character creation and, as such, does not cater to some of the more complex character options, such as bonded spirits, foci, mystic adepts, or registered sprites. For characters with more complexity, it is recommended that either the Build Point system in *SR4* or the Karma system on p. 41 be used.

PRIORITY SYSTEM CHARACTER CREATION

The Priority system character creation is divided into five steps, each detailed separately below. Players should feel free to move backwards and forwards between steps until they're comfortable with their chosen priorities; however, in the interest of speeding character generation, this system is relatively compartmentalized and less versatile than the basic Build Point system. While the creation process is presented in steps for ease of reference, players are free to take between them in any order after choosing Priorities.

Sarah sits down to make a Shadowrun character, a med-school dropout named Hieroglyph. She knows that she wants a magician, so her Talent will be high. She assigns her Priorities as follows:

Heritage:	*D*
Talent:	*A*
Attributes:	*B*
Skills:	*C*
Resources:	*E*

Step 1: Assign Heritage

The Heritage category describes some of the fundamental traits that define the character, including its metatype. When assigning a Priority to Heritage, keep in mind that not all metatypes are available at all Priorities. Refer to the Priority Table above.

Depending upon the priority Heritage is granted, it also provides a number of Special Attribute Points, which can be used to raise Edge, Magic, and Resonance attributes. The Heritage Priority Table (p. 39) lists the Special Attribute Points that each priority offers to each metatype. An entry of "–" indicates that the metatype is not available at that Priority.

Once you have chosen a metatype, note the minimum attribute ratings for your character as listed on the *Metatype Attribute Table* (see p. 70 and p.73, *SR4*), along with any other abilities of the metatype. Also note the Special Attribute Points listed on the table. All characters start with an Essence of 6.

Special Attribute Points

Your Special Attribute Points can be spent to increase Edge and Magic or Resonance. Your character starts with an Edge of 1 (2 for humans). You may buy additional Edge using Special Attribute Points, at the cost of one point per rating. You may also save them to spend them on raising your Magic or Resonance special attributes, if you have them, at the same cost (see *Step 2: Assign Talent*, below).

New Metavariants and Racial Options

If you want your character to be one of the metavariants introduced in *Runner's Companion*, choose the base metatype for that metavariant, but note the number of Special Attribute Points

PRIORITY TABLE

Priority	Heritage*	Talent*	Attributes	Skills	Resources/Contacts
A	Any metatype	Magician or Technomancer	20	38/2	250,000¥/8
B	Any metatype	Adept, Magician, or Technomancer	17	30/2	140,000¥/6
C	Human, Dwarf, Ork	Adept or Technomancer	15	24/1	70,000¥/4
D	Human	Adept or Technomancer	13	20/1	15,000¥/3
E	Human	Mundane	12	18/0	5,000¥/2

*These Priority categories also grant Special Attribute Points. See the category descriptions for more information.

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given by the Priority *one step lower* than the one you assigned. For example, if you choose an (elven) dryad with Heritage A, you would get 2 Special Attribute Points (rather than 5).

If you wish to play one of the sapient critters from this book, use the Sapient Critter column on the Heritage Priority Table, regardless of which critter you are playing. These require Priority A or B.

The other remaining character options in this book (including the Infected, AIs, and Free Spirits), are not compatible with the Priority system. If you want to play one of these, you should use the Build Point or Karma systems.

HERITAGE PRIORITY TABLE

Priority	Human	Dwarf	Ork	Elf	Troll	(Optional) Sapient Critter
A	8	5	6	5	4	2
B	5	3	3	2	1	0
C	3	0	0	—	—	—
D	1	—	—	—	—	—
E	0	—	—	—	—	—

Sarah assigned Heritage D, because while she wanted a human, she also wanted a little extra Edge. She writes "Human" under Metatype on her character sheet, and notes that she has 1 Special Attribute Point to distribute. She could save the Point to increase her Magic later, but decides that Talent A will give her plenty of Magic, and so spends her Special Attribute Point on raising Edge from 2 (minimum for humans) to 3.

Step 2: Assign Talent

The Talent category covers the abilities of magicians, adepts, and technomancers. If you assign a Priority of D or greater to this category, your character may be either Awakened or a technomancer—you may only choose one or the other, though.

If you choose to have an Awakened character, the *Talent Priority Table* lists what kind of character is available at each Priority, and what the character's base Magic rating will be. For instance, in the case of Priority B, you may choose to be either an adept or a full magician, while at Priority C you can only be an adept. If you choose an adept, purchase your adept powers as normal (p. 187, *SR4*). If you choose a magician, your character may start with the number of spells listed for the Priority taken. If you want a mystic adept, see the *Tweaking the Priority System* sidebar. You may increase your Magic rating by spending any Special Attribute Points saved from the Heritage Priority, to a maximum Magic rating of 6.

If you choose to have a technomancer, the Priority chosen will determine your character's Resonance rating, as well as a number of Complex Form Points (CFP) he possesses. You may purchase Complex Forms at a rate of one Complex Form rating per CFP. For example, Edit 4 would cost 4 CFP. Note that no Complex Form may have a higher rating than the technomancer's Resonance rating, and that a technomancer may not start with more Complex Forms than twice his Logic rating. As with Magic, you may increase your Resonance rating by spending Special Attribute Points from the Heritage Priority, to a maximum Resonance rating of 6.

After you have selected a magician or a technomancer, choose a tradition or a stream (respectively) for your character.

Hieroglyph has Talent A, and Sarah already knows she wants a magician. She writes "Magician" in the Qualities section of her character sheet, and notes that her character's Magic rating is 5. She selects the hermetic tradition. She decides that Hieroglyph's time in medical school should influence her spell selection and so chooses the spells Increase Reflexes, Heal, Stabilize, Stunbolt, Stunball, Antidote, Influence, Catfall, and Camouflage.

Step 3: Assign Attributes

This category describes the character's Physical and Mental attributes. Your character starts with a set of minimum attributes, based upon her metatype. You may then add the Attribute Points (AP) granted by the Priority assigned to the Attributes category to the ratings of the character's attributes, at 1 AP for each one-point rating increase.

Each attribute has a maximum rating based upon your character's metatype. Only one of your Physical and Mental attributes may be increased to this maximum rating; all other attributes must be at least one less than this cap. Note that this is not to say that you must have an attribute at its maximum rating, only that you may.

Attributes had Priority B for the new character, so Sarah distributes 17 points among Hieroglyph's Physical and Mental attributes, which each start at the human minimum of 1. While she could max out one attribute, Sarah wants more of a balanced character. Accordingly she distributes her 17 Attribute Points, raising her attributes from the starting human rating of 1 to: Body 3, Agility 2, Reaction 3, Strength 2, Charisma 3, Intuition 4, Logic 4, Willpower 4.

TALENT PRIORITY TABLE

Priority	Magic	Technomancer
A	Magician (Magic 5, 9 spells)	Resonance 5, 35 CFP
B	Adept (Magic 5) or Magician (Magic 3, 5 spells)	Resonance 3, 23 CFP
C	Adept (Magic 3)	Resonance 2, 9 CFP
D	Adept (Magic 1)	Resonance 1, 3 CFP
E	—	—

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TWEAKING THE PRIORITY SYSTEM

The Priority system is intended to be a simpler system than the basic system presented in *SR4*. It produces characters that have around 400 BP, but it trades a certain amount of detail for speed and simplicity. While it is not recommended that you create a character with the Priority system and then "sell off" some aspects for Build Points (if you do, you should probably start with the BP system in the first place), you may wish to give a Priority-generated character more breadth. Here are some guidelines to help you.

Qualities

You may purchase qualities as long as the cost in BP incurred by Positive qualities are equal or less than the bonus BP provided by Negative qualities. The 35 BP limit remains in effect.

Mystic Adepts

If you wish to take a mystic adept instead of an adept or a magician, simply choose a Talent Priority that grants the Magician quality, take one additional spell, and follow the rules for mystic adepts from there.

Other Talents

If you wish to have a character with Astral Sight, Spell Knack, or Spirit Knack, choose Talent D, assign a Magic rating of 1, and you may not spend Special Attribute Points to raise it. If you want Latent Awakening or Latent Technomancer, simply treat it as a normal quality and take Talent E.

Contacts

If you would like more diverse contacts, then instead of simply choosing the appropriate number of contacts with Connection 3 and Loyalty 2, take the number of contacts you would have received, multiply that by 5, and spend that many BP on contacts. For example, a character with Resources C would be able to spend 20 BP on contacts.

Random Character Generation

If you like, you can create a character randomly. For each category, roll 1D6, taking a result of 6 as A, 5 as B, 4 as C, 3 as D, 2 as E, and 1 as "roll again." Do this for each category, re-rolling any result of a Priority that has already been assigned. Once all the categories have been assigned Priorities, create the character as normal.

If you want more randomness in the character generation, a similar method can be used for assigning metatype, Attribute Points, and talent choice. It is not recommended that skills or gear be purchased at random.

Step 4: Assign Skills

The Skills category describes what the character knows how to do. Each Priority grants a certain number of Skill Points, listed as the number before the slash in the Skills column of the Priority Table. Each Skill Point can be spent to raise the rating of an Active skill by one.

You may also use Skill Points to increase the rating of a skill group, in the same manner as an Active skill, but you are limited in the number of skill groups your character may have. The maximum number of skill groups your character may have is given after the slash on the Priority Table.

Note that you may either have a single skill at Rating 6 or two skills at Rating 5, and all other skills are limited to Rating 4 at character generation. Similarly, skill groups may have a maximum starting rating of 4.

Your character also gains an additional number of free Skill Points equal to twice the sum of her Intuition and Logic attribute ratings; these free Skill Points may only be spent on Knowledge and Language skills. You may also spend your normal Skill Points on Knowledge and Language skills, if you wish.

Do not forget that your character also gets one free Language skill as a native language.

Hieroglyph has been assigned Skills C. Sarah has 24 Skill Points to spend on skills. She notes that one of those "skills" may be a skill group, and since it's such a good deal, she buys the Sorcery Skill Group for 4. She also takes Summoning 3, Banishing 2, Binding 2, Assensing 3, Perception 3, Dodge 3, First Aid 3, and Climbing 1.

Additionally, she notes that she gets (INT+LOG) x2 free Skill Points for Knowledge skills, so she distributes 16 points. She chooses Magical Theory 4, Medical Knowledge 4, Parazoology 2, Iconography 2, Cryptology 2, and Linguistics 2. She also chooses English as Hieroglyph's native (and only) language.

Step 5: Assign Resources

A character's Resource category describes what he has at the start of his career. It includes contacts and money for gear, lifestyle, and other assets. The Priority Table lists the amount of nuyen gained for each Priority in the Resources column. Purchase gear following the normal rules (p. 84, *SR4*). Do not forget to purchase a lifestyle, either as a whole (p. 261, *SR4*) or using the *Advanced Lifestyles* system (p. 149). Remember that Essence reduction effects Magic and Resonance (p. 62, *SR4*).

Additionally, a character's Resource Priority gives him a number of free contacts, listed after the slash in the Resources column of the Priority Table. These contacts each have a Connection rating of 3 and a Loyalty rating of 2. Alternatively, you may use the rules for contacts given in the *Tweaking the Priority System* sidebar.

Since Hieroglyph is a college drop-out, Sarah assigned her Resources E, giving the character two contacts and 5,000¥ in starting equipment. She writes down that her contacts are Zeke (a body mod shop owner) and Mr. Chai (the owner of a grocery store that lets her sleep in a disused storage room), both at Loyalty 2 and Connection 3. She buys a lined coat, fake SIN (Rating 2), contact lenses (w/ low-light, flare compensation, and image link), one flash-bang grenade, a first-aid kit (Rating 6, "the only rating," she tells the gamemaster), a CMT Clip commlink (w/ Vector Xim OS), earbuds, a magical lodge (Force 1), and one month of a Squatter lifestyle.

Sarah polishes Hieroglyph's back-story, using the Twenty Questions from this book to help round out her character. She then shows it to her gamemaster and gets ready to play.

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INCOMING FEED.....

THE KARMA SYSTEM

This section provides a second optional character generation system based on Karma instead of Build Points (BP).

In *Shadowrun, Fourth Edition*, Karma is normally used for character improvement. It allows characters to upgrade skills and attributes as well as initiate, submerge, quicken spells, bond foci, learn spells, learn and improve complex forms, and purchase or buy-off certain qualities, among other things.

In a Karma-based character generation system, players start out building their characters with Karma—not BP. Essentially, improving the character from scratch. This makes Karma a default measure for players and gamemasters to compare relative experience between characters and allows a smoother transition between character generation and character advancement.

Karma-based character creation is a bit more detailed and intricate than the Build Point or Priorities systems and may not be suited to all players or games. Given the exponential cost of increasing ratings, the Karma system will tend to produce more diversified and less specialized characters.

KARMA CHARACTER GENERATION TABLE

Improvement	Karma Cost	Improvement	Karma Cost
Metatype (shapeshifter type, etc.)	0*	Improving an Active skill by 1	New rating x 2
Improving an attribute by 1	New rating x 3	Improving an Active skill group by 1	New rating x 5
New positive quality	BP Cost x 2	New spell	5
New Specialization	2	New complex form	2
New Knowledge/Language skill	2	Improving a complex form by 1	New rating
New Active skill	4	2,500 nuyen	1
New Active skill Group	10	Bond a focus	See *Focus Bonding Table*, p. 43
Improving a Knowledge/Language skill by 1	New rating	Contact	(Connection + Loyalty) x 2

*See Step 3: Purchase Attributes

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Starting Karma

Characters for a typical *Shadowrun* campaign should be built to a 750 Karma total. Gamemasters can adjust this total up or down to suit their tastes. Low-level campaigns might find 500 Karma more appropriate, while high-powered campaigns with expensive character options like shapeshifters, sapient critters, free spirits, drakes, and the Infected might generate characters with 1000 Karma or more.

Build Point Conversions

For Karma-based character conversion, the costs for metatype (or other character options, such as shapeshifters, free spirits, AIs, etc.) and qualities are equal to twice the standard Build Point cost (BP x 2) in Karma. When buying gear, each point of Karma can be traded for 2,500 nuyen.

KARMA SYSTEM CHARACTER CREATION

The following is a step-by-step breakdown of how to build your character with Karma points. The process is nearly identical to BP-based character generation given in *SR4*, except using Karma and the Karma Character Generation table and with slightly different limits.

Experienced players may choose to shuffle these steps around a little, making sure they spend their Karma on the most important aspects of their character first and then going back to fine tune details and spend the rest of their starting Karma—which is perfectly fine. Just be careful to keep track of how much you spend and what you spent it on!

Step 1: Choose Your Metatype or Other Character Race Option

First you must choose metatype or other alternative character concept (i.e. shapeshifter, AI, sasquatch, etc.); there is no associated cost for metatype or race in Karma-based character generation, but the BP cost should be noted as it is important for Step 3, below. The *Metatype Attribute Table* (see p. 70 and p.73, *SR4*) or the relevant table in the section describing the new character races in this book provide your character's starting and maximum attribute ratings.

Step 2: Select Qualities

Positive qualities have a Karma cost equal to twice their BP cost (so BP Cost x 2). Negative qualities return bonus Karma equal to twice their BP bonus. Normally, characters cannot spend more than 70 Karma in Positive qualities nor gain more than 70 Karma in Negative qualities. Note that the Infected qualities and similar racial qualities are an exception to this rule and do not count against the amount of Karma you may spend on or earn back through taking qualities.

If the character wishes to be Awakened or a technomancer, the qualities that grant Magic or Resonance may be taken at this point as well as any complementary qualities such as Mentor Spirits and Paragons.

Step 3: Purchase Attributes

Next, purchase the character's attributes (including special attributes) using the costs given in the Karma Character Generation Table. Characters begin with the minimum attribute ratings defined by their race/metatype. The maximum Karma a character can spend on their attributes at character generation is half their starting Karma (rounding up) plus *twice the listed BP cost for their metatype or alternate racial concept*. Characters cannot begin the game with more than one attribute at their natural maximum. Characters begin with an Essence of 6. The metatype maximum rating for Edge is 6 (7 for humans); other character races may have different Edge maximums (refer to their descriptions).

Step 4: Purchase Your Skills

Next, consult the Karma Character Generation table for the costs of raising skills and skill groups. Starting characters may only have one skill at Rating 6 (with the rest at Rating 4 or less) or two skills at Rating 5 (with the rest at Rating 4 or less). Skill groups may be purchased to a maximum of Rating 4 at character generation. Characters get their native language at Native rating for free.

Step 5: Convert Your Karma to Nuyen

Next, purchase the character's lifestyle and trappings. Each point of Karma is equivalent to 2,500 nuyen. A maximum of 100 Karma can be converted into nuyen in this fashion. Equipment with a Rating higher than 6 or an availability greater than 12 cannot normally be purchased.

Step 6: Purchase Magical and Resonance Resources

Characters with the Adept, Astral Sight, Magician, Mystic Adept or another quality that lets them use foci may bind any foci they purchased by paying the Karma costs listed in the Focus Bonding Table. Spellcasters may purchase a number of spells up to their Spellcasting or Ritual Spellcasting (whichever is higher) skill x 2. Technomancers may purchase a number of complex forms up to their Logic x 2.

Magicians may start the game with bound spirits by paying 2 Karma per service owed. The number of services owed may not exceed the character's Summoning skill, and its Force is equal to the character's Magic rating. The character cannot have more bound spirits than her Charisma attribute.

Technomancers may start the game with registered sprites by paying 2 Karma per task owed. The number of tasks owed may not exceed the character's Compiling skill, and its Rating is equal to the character's Resonance. The character cannot have more registered sprites than her Charisma attribute.

Step 7: Select Contacts

Each contact has both a Connection rating (1–6) and a Loyalty rating (1–6). The Karma cost of contacts is equal to (Connection + Loyalty) x 2.

Step 8: Spend the Rest of Your Karma!

If there is Karma left over at this point, go back and see what you can do with it! Any unspent Karma leftover when character creation is finished is lost. At the gamemaster's discretion, players may start the game with up to 5 Karma that they did not spend at character generation.

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Step 9: Finishing Touches

Apply the modifiers from your character's implants, adept powers, and equipment to her attributes and calculate her Condition Monitors and Initiative (and Matrix Initiative and Astral Initiative as appropriate).

Step 10: Calculate Starting Nuyen.

Roll on the Starting Money Table (p. 86, *SR4*). You may add +1 to your dice roll for each 100 nuyen you did not spend during character creation, to a maximum of three times the number of dice rolled. Multiply the result by the appropriate factor listed, and the result is your character's starting nuyen.

FOCUS BONDING TABLE

Item	Karma Cost
Symbolic Link Focus	1 x Force
Sustaining Focus	2 x Force
Counterspelling Focus	3 x Force
Banishing Focus	3 x Force
Binding Focus	3 x Force
Weapon Focus	(3 + Weapon Reach) x Force
Spellcasting Focus	4 x Force
Summoning Focus	4 x Force
Anchoring Focus	6 x Force
Centering Focus	6 x Force
Masking Focus	6 x Force
Shielding Focus	6 x Force
Power Focus	8 x Force

TWEAKING THE KARMA SYSTEM

The Karma system offers all the options available to the default Build Point system, while remaining integrated with in game Karma-based character improvement. Consequently, gamemasters may choose to allow starting characters to use Karma for any and all purposes that they normally would in-game (to initiate, to join a technomancer guild, to quicken spells, etc.). The gamemaster should retain final judgement in the matter and should consider the ramifications of some advanced abilities this option might unlock at the start of play.

Marissa wants to make a new character for the latest Shadowrun campaign, something a little different—a sasquatch street druid called Sacnoth. Her gamemaster tells Marissa that they're using the Karma-based character generation system, and she has 750 Karma with which to create Sacnoth.

First off, Marissa purchases the Magician (Druidic tradition) and Mentor Spirit (Oak) positive qualities for 40 Karma, reducing her total to 710. To buy some more points, Marissa takes the SIN (5 BP version, citizen of the UK) and Incantation Geas negative qualities, bringing her Karma total back up to 740. As a sasquatch, Sacnoth begins with the Uneducated negative quality for no Karma.

Now it's time for buying attributes. The basic cost for a sasquatch character is 40 BP; this allows Marissa to spend up to 455 Karma (one-half of her starting Karma plus twice the BP cost) on Sacnoth's attributes. Intuition is of prime importance to druids, so Marissa decides that's the attribute she wants to max out; Willpower and Charisma are also important, so she takes those up as high as she can. Finally, she spends another chunk of points to increase her Body to 10—after all, what's a sasquatch that can't take a few hits? The total cost of her attribute increases is 327 Karma, bringing her total down to 413.

Attribute	Value	Karma Cost
Body	10	102
Agility	4	27
Reaction	4	27
Strength	5	0
Charisma	5	42
Intuition	6	60
Logic	4	27
Willpower	5	42
TOTAL		**327**

As a sasquatch, Marissa's character starts out with Magic and Edge attributes of 1 and an Essence of 6 (for now). Sacnoth's Initiative is derived from adding Reaction and Intuition together, resulting in 10. Marissa increases both Magic and Edge to 4 by spending 27 Karma each, bringing her total Karma down to 359.

Now Marissa buys Sacnoth's skills. Starting off with her maximums, Marissa decides Sacnoth will have two rating 5 skills—Assensing and Astral Combat, critical for a dual-natured sasquatch—one rating 3 skill group, Sorcery, and Enchanting 3. The Conjuring group skills Banishing, Binding, and Summoning she buys individually at rating 4 and takes specialties in each of them. That takes care of Sacnoth's magical skills, so now Marissa rounds her character out with some basics: First Aid 2, Perception 3, Survival 2, Tracking 2, and Unarmed Combat 2 (Subdual +2).

For knowledge and language skills, Marissa starts out with the Perth-Athabaskans Sign Language as Sacnoth's Native language, and makes the sasquatch fluent in French Sign Language (Jive+2) at rating 4. To reflect the sasquatch's background (and mindful of his lack of formal education), Marissa takes Botany 3, Druidic Lore 4, London Big & Tall Stores 2, Magic Background 3, Medical Theory 3, Astronomy 3, and Sapient Critters 3.

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Skill	Karma Cost
Assensing 5	32
Astral Combat 5	32
Astronomy 3	7
Banishing 4 (Plant Spirits +2)	24
Binding 4 (Plant Spirits +2)	24
Botany 3	7
Druidic Lore 4	11
Enchanting 3	14
First Aid 2	8
French Sign Language 4 (Jive +2)	13
London Big & Tall Stores 2	4
Magic Background 3	7
Medical Theory 3	7
Perception 3	14
Perth-Athabaskans N	0
Sapient Critters 3	7
Sorcery Group 3	35
Summoning 4 (Plant Spirits +2)	24
Survival 2	8
Tracking 2	8
Unarmed Combat 2 (Subdual +2)	8
TOTAL	**294**

After spending the 294 Karma points on skills, Sacnoth has 65 Karma remaining.

Cashing 5 Karma in for nuyen, Marissa uses the 12,500 nuyen to purchase a basic commlink (Meta Link running Vector Xim with a sim module, Virtual Surround Music, a sasquatch-sized monocle with image link, sasquatch-sized headphones, and sasquatch-sized AR Gloves), a handful of linguasofts (English 2, French 2), a shoulder pouch of food and tools (equivalent to two survival kits), and four months of a Low Lifestyle (a sasquatch's lifestyle costs 30% more than normal). This brings her down to 60 Karma remaining.

Marissa can select up to 6 spells for Sacnoth at 5 Karma each. She chooses Camouflage, Clean Water, Armor, Heal, Stun Bolt, and Nutrition. After this, Marissa just has 30 Karma left.

For contacts, Marissa chooses as Sasquatch Bartender (Connections 4, Loyalty 4) and a Neo-Celt WizKid Gang Member (Connections 3, Loyalty 2). This comes to a total of 26 Karma.

With 4 Karma left, Marissa goes back and converts 2 of them to nuyen to buy a rating 4 magical lodge (a collection of heavy stones carved with ogham letters) and rating 2 binding materials, and spends the last two points to specialize her Botany skill for Gathering, giving her Botany 3 (Gathering +2).

With all her Karma points spent, Marissa finishes the character by calculating his starting Condition Monitors, answering the Character Quiz, and rolling for his starting nuyen.

Urgent Message . . .

A WORD TO GAMEMASTERS

The three methods of character creation are balanced, but not equivalent. If your players spend extra time figuring out the optimum character builds or, worse, argue over which has the better character, simply remind them that every member of a shadowrunning team contributes to the whole, and refer them to *Team Roles*, p. 8.

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. . . ALTERNATIVE CHARACTER CONCEPTS . . .

Hannibelle's nose twitched as the nasty, artificial odors of the sprawl gave way to a rich miasma of disinfectants, oils, spices, and different varieties of cooked and uncooked flesh. Something in the air made the pit of her stomach growl as she walked through the doors of the Takonashi restaurant. The elf maitre d' didn't even blink at a ghoul in evening dress—at least her nanopaste disguise seemed to be working.

"*Mademoiselle*? This way please." The elf said, leading her into the restaurant.

She followed, discreetly scoping out the place in case of trouble, wishing her ruined eyes could see more in the dim light; she could barely make out the kitchen door on the back wall. The place wasn't quite packed yet, which was good—too many bodies could disorient her with their smells. Each table was a closed booth, the hum and rumble of white noise generators and conversation almost blocked by sound-absorbing walls. A handful of professional security types stood guard, their auras and scents revealing some chrome and perspiration but not much else. A dwarf adept babysitting a little warded bubble returned her gaze on the Astral; she flashed him a wink as she went past.

The booth was in the back, near the kitchen, and dark. The maitre d' politely ushered Hannibelle in. Neither she nor her Johnson needed the light.

"'Belle, I hope you don't mind," a voice came to her out of the darkness. "But I've already ordered for the both of us."

Cologne almost masked the subtle taint of carrion-breath. To her astral eyes, Chester Griffith looked every inch like the richest ghoul in the UCAS. The details of his suit were lost to her, but his aura looked clean and healthy. No dull gray astral scars betrayed any attempt to hide his features with cosmetic surgery, however. Obviously, Chester had also been eating very well.

"Mr. Johnson," she said. "While we wait, why don't you tell me what the job is?"

"There are some things that are best handled face to face," Griffith replied. One hand held up a plastic envelope across the table. "Yesterday, a certain research biotechnician from Biogene Pharmaceuticals named Charles Manning suffered an accidental infection. Unfortunately, Dr. Manning panicked and fled the facility. Your job is to find Dr. Manning and retrieve him for us." Griffith set the envelope down on the table in front of her. "Before your competition does."

"My competition?"

"We have reason to believe Biogene has hired a centaur skip-tracer. I need not remind you, but the first twelve hours of the transformation are crucial, and it would be best if Dr. Manning was in our care."

The waiter set two plates down on the table and left. Hannibelle's mouth watered at the smell, but prudence reigned over appetite. Hannibelle looked at her plate of raw meat and felt her stomach rumble. She unfolded the linen napkin and placed it in her lap.

"Do you think we have time to eat first?" she said.

"Of course."

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METAHUMAN AND SAPIENT DEMOGRAPHICS

• The controversy spawned by the emergence of technomancers and artificial lifeforms has sparked a slow-burning global debate on objective criteria for the evaluation of sapience. This could lead to an accord on whether a non-human species or construct (like an AI) might potentially qualify for civil rights and possesses criminal responsibility (ie. can be legally charged and punished). As a result, UNESCO, along with the UNIAI (UN Initiative on Awakened Issues) and the UNIDS (UN Initiative on Digital Sapience) commissioned a trans-disciplinary review of racial diversity and sapience for the UN panel examining the issue.

The complete report—which was compiled over several months by a number of reputable scientists and sociologists, government policy panels, NGOs, and corporate think tanks—summarizes current knowledge quite extensively and elaborately. I'll spare you the 4600-page read and instead copy and paste the most interesting bits as a precís. Feel free to chime in with your own views.

If, by the end, you're thinking the report is slightly biased in favor of metahumanity, you'd be right. 10 of the 15 members of the panel who picked the researchers hail from the Green/Awakened bloc.

• The Smiling Bandit

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Précis of a report from the International Committee on Human Rights.

Historically biology has tried to classify species and subspecies based on evolutionary lineages within a species, drawing upon both genetic background (genetic ancestry, non-visible traits) and expressed visible traits such as skin color, hair type, and facial features. In modern times, however, technological development has nullified the geo-physical barriers that enabled subspecies divergence (due to lack of genetic exchange for extended periods of time), and many, if not all, are crumbling under the assault of social mobility and population pressure. Miscegenation and mixing of populations is not a new consideration and is a significant contributor to the dilution of genetic ancestry and hereditary racial traits in the past hundred years in both the first world and developing nations. And yet, in our rapidly changing global society, too many people still erroneously cling to outdated concepts. The public still categorizes certain population groups as subspecies (also called races), even though the validity of these biological classifications is often questionable as definitions are entangled with cultural, linguistic, or religious categorizations and not based on biological characteristics.

In the past sixty years, the scientific community's certainties about the very nature of the human being have been challenged numerous times. Likewise, our understanding of what constitutes intelligence and sapience has also fallen into flux. Long-standing beliefs about human evolution have been brought into question, and though immense progress has been made in deciphering the enigmas now before us, many questions promise to remain unanswered for the foreseeable future.

With this in mind, the scientists and academics involved in this report applaud the UN's initiative. To all those who participated, it represented an unparalleled opportunity to study, review, clarify, and perhaps revise current theories regarding racial diversity in metahumanity and its subspecies. We also share the hope that this study may provide a scientific foundation for an international review of the status of developing sapient species with whom we share the planet.

METATYPES

Classification of our very own species has become increasingly difficult as a result of metagenetics and metahuman expression. This has led to the adoption of the term "metatype" to define and identify one of the five basic variations of the *homo sapiens* species based on its dominant metahuman genome: dwarf, elf, human, ork, and troll. (For ease of use, these will be referenced in this report by their common names rather than their scientific designations).

Similar to geographic or ethnic races, metatype divergence appears to be the result of hereditary metagenetics, triggered—if current thaumaturgic theory is correct—by ambient mana levels. Metagenes, otherwise dormant in the genome, express as phenotypic and metabolic traits unique to each metatype. Generally, this trigger occurs prenatally during embryonic development. Instances of expression during puberty and early adulthood still occur but are increasingly rare (and then exclusively among orks and trolls).

Contrary to ethnic races, metagenes seem immune to recombination, miscegenation, and dilution. Although members of different metatypes are able breed with one another, the child always expresses only one of the parent's metatypes—or is born human (as a result of conflicting metagenes suppressing expression).

• While simple demographics indicate that the percentile distribution of basic metatypes is relatively uniform across different continents today, there are exceptions. It's been speculated that environment-based natural selection has winnowed certain "unsuitable" metatypes from the prevailing ethnic group in certain regions. This would explain why the Aborigine population does not count any trolls or dwarves.

• Elijah

METAVARIANTS

To complicate matters further, over 20 ethno-geographical metatype variants or "metavariant" populations have been identified. These range from micro-populations numbering in the low thousands to tens of thousands in other instances.

While ethnic metahumans, such as Korean dwarves, Native American elves, Maori trolls, or African orks exist, these ethnic genetic traits have been mapped to the general, *homo sapiens* section of the genome shared by all metatypes. What the term "metavariants" refers to, on the other hand, could be viewed as ethnic variations of the metagenetic parts of the genome or metagenome (which differ between metatypes).

Metavariants resemble the baseline metatype from which they derive in many regards (i.e. general physical build, certain genetic and metabolic markers, life expectancy, etc.). However, many metavariants diverge significantly from their baseline metatype with regards to the meta-traits expressed (i.e. the meta-phenotype,

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so to speak). These divergent traits are believed to reflect natural adaptation to the requirements of the environment that fostered the development of a particular metavariant (see *Metavariant Variations (Average Heights and Weights)*, below).

If this is indeed the case, the obvious conclusion is that the biological mechanisms behind metavariant divergence from the basic metatype—a cocktail of geophysical isolation, environmental adaptation, and selection over an extended period of time—are similar to the mechanism that produced *ethnic* races.

The adaptation hypothesis also explains why certain metavariants are the dominant metatype expression within specific insular and isolated regions or eco-systems (for instance, the Japanese archipelago or the isolated biotope that is the Amazonian rainforest).

Urgent Message...

METAVARIANT VARIATIONS (AVERAGE HEIGHTS AND WEIGHTS)

Metatype/ Metavariant	Avg. Height	Avg Weight
Human	**1.75 meters**	**78 kg**
Nartaki	1.75 meters	86 kg
Dwarf	**1.20 meters**	**54 kg**
Gnome	0.80 meters	37 kg
Koborokuru	1.10 meters	42 kg
Menehune	1.10 meters	42 kg
Haruman	1.20 meters	49 kg
Elf	**1.90 meters**	**80 kg**
Dryad	1.75 meters	63 kg
Night One	1.90 meters	80 kg
Wakyambi	2.30 meters	145 kg
Xapiri Thëpë	1.70 meters	57 kg
Ork	**1.90 meters**	**128 kg**
Hobgoblin	1.80 meters	98 kg
Ogre	1.70 meters	101 kg
Oni	1.90 meters	128 kg
Satyr	1.60 meters	69 kg
Troll	**2.50 meters**	**300 kg**
Cyclops	2.70 meters	421 kg
Fomori	2.35 meters	224 kg
Giant	3.00 meters	467 kg
Minotaur	2.40 meters	265 kg

One of the most oft-cited examples in this support of this theory is the oni metavariant of the ork metatype which is the prevalent expression among the *robustus* species in the Japanese archipelago. Studies clearly indicate that all other native ork expressions tested (predominantly *baseline* orks) have genetic markers indicating genetic drift and imported metagenes dating back no more than 20 generations. Since metagenetic heritage cannot be genetically diluted (only damaged as observed in the case of *changelings*, see the subsequent section), the oni traits have preserved their dominance.

The opposite is also true, which explains the rare instances of "Native American" or "European" oni on record. In all the case studies examined, these are invariably associated with a more or less remote ethnic Japanese ancestor (who may even have passed down the dormant ork/oni metagenome before the Awakening enabled expression). Given the transnational migration and globalization trends of the past century, such situations have become more common, and the occurrence of certain localized metavariants is no longer limited to its area of origin anymore—though the natural incidence is far lower outside these regions.

One problem with the natural adaptation theory is the relative lack of fossil evidence and archaeogenetic samples of the evolutionary development of metatypes and their divergence from archaic *homo sapiens* (believed to have happened in the Middle Pleistocene—300,000 to 30,000 years before our time) and from the baseline expressions. This fact has generated much controversy in the scientific community over the years, but the debate has calmed over the last two decades as the occasional bit of archeological evidence has surfaced.

› Truth be told, none of the brain-trust has figured out how metatypes developed. There have been a remarkable number of archeological and pararcheological discoveries in recent years. But this is nothing new. The Awakening shed new light on a lot of unexplained finds dating quite far back (such as the extinct homo floresiensis of Indonesia and the giant skeletons unearthed in the Americas since the 19th century). And then there's the stuff that's never made public: The metahuman skeletons and preserved mummies found in glaciers, volcanoes, and deserts but scooped up by the usual suspects like the Atlantean Foundation, the Apep Consortium, and even the Draco Foundation and never disclosed.
› Elijah

› There is a growing body of evidence to support the theory of the cyclical nature of ambient mana proposed by Ehran the Scribe amongst others. If it's proved true, the roots of these races might very well date back to a previous cycle that allowed the expression of metagenes. That is, if metagenes are even a natural evolution. In my mind, the fact that they don't dilute and mingle like the rest of the genome suggests they might not be natural.
› Axis Mundi

› What are you on about?
› Snopes

› Just wondering. Maybe the first metahuman wasn't born. Maybe he was created ... Food for thought.
› Axis Mundi

// section deleted //

Medical studies on the procreation of metavariants have also indicated that children of different metavariants of the same

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metatype either express the paternal or the maternal metavariant-type. Crossbreeds between different metavariants or baseline metatypes and metavariants appear to be impossible, though the reason for this exclusivity is currently unknown.

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The following section discusses the different metatypes and their current known metavariants, phenotypes, and differences in greater detail:

HUMANS

By conservative estimates, humans represent about 68 percent of the total current *homo sapiens* population. They are by far the most widespread and most common of the metatypes. According to several sociological studies, they also occupy a disproportionate number of positions (>75%) in government and the economy in industrialized countries—a potential indicator of latent anti-metahuman bias in otherwise tolerant societies.

Human life expectancy has risen to averages of 60 years globally and 90 years in the first world, while birth rates have stabilized near zero growth globally.

While *homo sapiens sapiens* has long been considered the most stable and least diverse of the various metatypes, developments have led us to question previous certainties regarding metagenetic predisposition in baseline humans. The Sudden Recessive Genetic Expression (SURGE) phenomenon, the Ganges events, and most recently the virtuakinetic phenomenon all suggest the genetic potential of baseline humans still contains many mysteries. The Ganges events, surmised below, suggests the need to reconsider phylogenetic classification.

Nartaki

Among the diverse magical phenomena visited upon the planet in 2061 were a series of mass SURGE events in India. Thousands of revelers were bathing in the holy waters of the Ganges were effected when a massive mana pulse flowed down the great Ganga manaline. Perplexing scientific observers, many of the victims of these SURGE events expressed metatraits which bore striking parallels to Hindu folklore and mythology.

Among the effected, one group was quickly singled out. A large number of individuals expressed the same common traits—a pair of additional arms and unusual skin hues. These were quickly named Nartaki (literally, "dancers,") by the locals in deference to the deity Shiva whose festival they were celebrating.

We now believe that the Ganges events, which have recurred a handful of times since, obfuscated a human goblinization event, triggering a unique metagenetic predisposition in several thousand baseline humans. All studies reviewed seem to indicate Nartaki possess life expectancies in line with humans and share most common traits with the Indian ethnic phenotype. In fact, their only non-human traits are the obvious ones: they possess blue, red, or golden skins tones and two pairs of upper limbs (arms) which originate from unique, flexible joints at each shoulder (making them one of the rare 6-limbed mammals).

The Nartaki share no similarity and no common metagenetic markers with any other existing metatype, and so have tentatively been classified as the first human metavariant (until such time further as phylogenetic evidence suggests their classification as a metatype in their own right). The total population is believed to number less than five thousand.

Their striking resemblance with mythological representations have naturally elevated Nartaki, sometimes called *dhan'ya* (literally, "touched by the gods"), to the high *Brahmin* varna (caste) within the Indian Union, and only a rare few are found outside the subcontinent.

- Nartaki are quite the oddity in India and particularly in the shadows—their distinctive looks and rarity draw way too much attention.
- 2XL

ORKS

Orks or *homo sapiens robustus* metatype are the second most common metatype in the world according to recent statistics, though birthrates have plunged in industrialized countries over the past few years. Several sociologial and medical studies into the matter have proved inconclusive, but it seems safe to suggest that such a drop off is unlikely to be natural.

While numerous, orks face widespread social and structural discrimination in many parts of the world, and large numbers live in precarious conditions in industrialized nations. The prejudice and high birth rates are at least partially responsible for the development of extended family groups and insular and clannish culture in many first and second generation orks. The trend is towards change and emancipation among younger generations, driven by cultural and social empowerment phenomena like the Or'zet movement and the Orxploitation pop culture trends.

Orks are the most metagenetically diverse of the metatypes. *Robustus* metavariants differ massively from the common baseline orks in appearance and nature. It bears noting that the common use nomenclature for many of these metavariants is in fact a result of bias and discrimination as much as a physical descriptor.

The common features among all ork variants are: short gestation periods of about 6 months, multiple births per gestation, accelerated maturity cycle, and short life expectancies.

Recognized ork metavariants include hobgoblins, oni, ogres, and satyrs. Two other micro-populations of *robustus* metavariants await phylogenetic classification and fall outside the scope of this report.

Hobgoblins

Naturally slighter and shorter than most ork variants, hobgoblins have less body mass than other *robustus* and usually have less body hair. The greenish tint of their skin, uncommonly sharp teeth, prominent ears, tapered chins, and dark beady eyes give them a naturally fiercesome appearance and are responsible in no small part for the prejudice that often singles out hobgoblins (an unfortunate name that only underscores such prejudice). The vast majority of hobgoblins are of Arabic or Central Asian descent and preserve relevant ethnic traits.

Hobgoblins are widely reputed to be quick-tempered and possess a strong sense of personal honor which demands that they avenge any insult or disrespect against them. Whether this latter trait is cultural or the result of some genetic predisposition

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or hormonal cause for asocial behavior is unknown. A recent joint study by the Charles University (Prague) and the Ataturk Polytechnic Institute (Istanbul), points to high levels of corticoid steroid hormones in biochemical blood-testing as a potential biological reason for their innate aggressiveness and asocial behavior.

› At least you get to blame your personality on your genes, eh Clockwork?
› Netcat

Hailing from the Middle East, the Balkans, Transcaucasia, and Turkestan, contemporary hobgoblins share prevalence dominance in the region with baseline orks. The local hobgoblin population has endured decades of social marginalization, active repression, prosecution, and even death. Hobgoblins who chose to remain in these regions tend to gather in insular neighborhoods, ghettos, and villages. They often share a dislike for fundamentalist sects or hardcore Islamists. When combined with a hobgoblin's stereotypical quick temper, this has lead to religious and familiar schisms and serves as ammunition for anti-metahuman factions and hate groups, especially on the Arabian Peninsula.

› Hobgoblins had it even worse than other metahumans when Goblinization hit the Middle East. Many were strung up as demons by Sharia and tribal courts. Others didn't even get a trial. Children were smothered in their sleep by their parents. In one instance, an entire village of Iranian hobgoblins were put to death by religious zealots while the government turned a blind eye. Lots of them had to flee, which is why you see so many in Europe and beyond. I for one think their "sunny" disposition is more than warranted.
› Goat Foot

› No surprise then that many hobgoblins throw in with moderate groups like the Islamic Renaissance Movement and are drawn to the more open-minded Islamic sprawls such as Istanbul, Cairo, Damascus, or Sarajevo. Places where they don't have to fear being stoned to death because of what they are.
› Fianchetto

Ogres

The ogre is a common and widespread ork metavariant in Europe. Like hobgoblins, ogres are not the prevalent ork type in Europe (which would be the baseline *robustus*) but do represent a significant portion of the population (>30%).

The European ogre is on average shorter and squatter than most orks and has smoother skin and less body hair. They possess pronounced jawlines and larger mouths, which early on fueled inflammatory claims that they might be cannibalistic—accusations with no basis whatsoever in fact. Ogres do, however, possess the extraordinary ability to metabolize a greater spectrum of edibles in their stomachs to generate energy, as several studies with volunteers have shown. Since this often generates more energy than ogres actually need, ogres have the tendency to be corpulent, often displaying large bellies and a flabby build.

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Though the area of origin has been blurred due to the lack of geophysical restrictions in Central Europe (except for the Alps and the British Isles) and a lot of transnational migration in the past, genetic heritage studies indicate that ogres originate from areas of France and Germany. A female ogre is often called an ogress, despite the derogatory undertone.

Oni

The native ork metavariant of the Japanese archipelago—named *oni* by their compatriots, after their resemblance to demonic creatures of Japanese folklore—possesses a fearsome appearance. Oni boast bright red, blue, or orange skin colors, slightly protuberant eyes, enlarged pointed ears, curving horns, and the large builds associated with the *robustus* metatype. Aside from making them highly visible, these traits are also seen as naturally intimidating by many of those who come into contact with them, especially among the Japanese, who actively avoid their company—which in turn has led to widespread social and workplace segregation in Japan. Portrayed as treacherous and hostile in Japanese folklore and modern media until very recently, oni have had to endure decades of ostracism and even exile quarantined on the island of Yomi.

Things have only just begun to change with Emperor Yasuhito elevating a number of oni to the Imperial Household Guard. In fact, the changing dynamics of Japanese society and the popularity of changelings in youth pop culture (worldwide), have worked in the onis' favor.

Oni are the dominant prevalent form of *robustus* in Japan (>75%), with other expressions likely the effects of immigration on the insular genepool. Outside the archipelago, oni are present in many Japanese ethnic communities and in some countries as a genetic legacy of historical Japanese occupation (among them Korea, China, and Indonesia).

Satyrs

The occurrence of the satyr metavariant seems to be native to the Mediterranean region (particularly Greece, where they are the dominant ork metatype). A number of unusual traits distinguish satyrs from common orks: a slender physique, hairy lower bodies, goat-like legs with cloven hooves, and small horns which are often, though not always, curled. While they tend to appear smaller due to the shape of their legs, they can be quite impressive in stature. Their outward appearance aside, biologically satyrs share many of the metatype traits of robustus: short gestations, numerous children per gestation, light sensitive eyes, and a diminished life-expectancy.

Their unique traits and the obvious similarities to mythological representations have baffled scholars for decades but seem to validate the theory that goblinization events have taken place in the past in the region. While common public belief and media coverage have fallen prey to the stereotypes of satyrs as "children of Bacchus," rabid hedonists, and artistic freewills, actual demographic studies on satyr career paths have not shown any higher affinity for artistic professions than for any other metatypes.

The Greek immigrant diaspora during the twentieth century is believed to be behind the occasional appearance of satyrs in Australia, North America, and several European nations.

ELVES

Metahuman demographics show that the elven metatype is the third most widespread globally, with genetic studies hinting that elven expression occurs in all, even the most isolated, anthrospheres. In terms of geographic distribution, the elven metatype is evenly present in one form or another on all continents and among all ethnic phenotypes. Additionally, its metavariants show the least variation of all metatypes. While some, like the night ones, stand out more than others, the actual physiological deviation from the baseline elf is usually minimal.

Elven expression dates back to UGE and, in rare instances, even before 2011. The elven metagenome is one of most studied in modern genetics, given the particularly desirable classic elven metatraits of lithe and tall physiques, enhanced night vision, and, of course, envious longevity.

Of the known elven metavariants, three are commonly known, and one has been recently recognized: dryads, night ones, *wakyambi*, and the *xapiri thëpë*. In all cases, known total populations of elven metavariants are rarely more than a fraction of the *nobilis* metatype, and there are no dominant regional metavariants.

Dryads

The dryad is an uncommon elven metavariant that does not seem to be geographically native to any one region, but rather a genetic "quirk" of the elven genome. Members have been encountered within all populations on all continents, with a slightly higher expression registered in non-urban environments.

Although they resemble normal *nobilis* in most physical regards (albeit shorter in build), dryads seem to possess a preternatural quality that effects all those around them. Though studies have failed to identify a physiological origin to this effect (ie. no enhanced phermone signatures, no active paranatural ability) or even record any evidence of the ability, individuals who come into contact with dryads seem enthralled by their "obvious charisma," "radiant beauty," "fey-like grace," and "innocence"—even when, objectively, the dryad is aesthetically unremarkable (quotes from Mikos and Laurean, *Glamour and the Dryad Expression,* Université de Paris, 2065).

Another peculiar somatic trait unique to dryads—like the mythological entities that inspired their name—is a form of attunement with their environment. Their biorhythms and even health seem bound to and respond to environmental changes in their immediate area. The nature of this enhanced sensitivity is not fully understood, but is being studied by several institutes, however, the particular rarity of this metavariant restricts the study of such a phenomenon outside "controlled" environments.

- It is believed that this symbiosis occurs even when the dryad is not Awakened. Some sort of weird empathic resonance between the metagenes in the body and the ambient mana. The Dunkelzahn Institute for Magical Research and the Astral Preservation Society are two parties looking into this, but mostly the eggheads are just throwing out ideas and waiting for something to stick...
- Winterhawk

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Night Ones

A night one is a Northern-European *nobilis* metavariant which shares all the common physiognomic traits of the basic metatype with one notable difference. night ones are characterized by a layer of vellus hair (a type of very fine, short fur, not unlike a jaguar's). This downy fur is indistinguishable from skin at a distance, but makes this metavariant quite striking at close range, given the vivid colors of the vellum—ranging from black to violet to blue, with some rare examples of green and very deep orange. Their hair and eyes are often a tint of their skin colors, though individuals with silvery or white hair have been observed.

Additionally, night ones follow a nocturnal biorhythm (sleeping at day and being active at night) and are hypersensitive to sunlight. Their apparent adaptation to a life in darkness (dark fur tones, night vision, and a sharp sense of hearing) has earned them the derogatory designation of "Night" or "Dark Elf" in some areas.

Though genetic markers suggest night ones derive from Northern European stock, they can be found in many areas of Europe, Asia Minor, and North America. The nocturnal lifestyle that many naturally adopt does impose some limitations to employment in many normal economic enterprises but has not, on the whole, effected socially integration.

While unusual, night ones are rarely singled out as the targets of hate crimes.

- Have a friend who hangs with a night one in Hamburg that says the whole nocturnal thing can be a serious hassle. You'd think in our line of biz it'd be an advantage, but there are plenty of jobs that require daylight work.
- Red Anya

Wakyambi

As with other elven metavariants, the *wakyambi* are a rare subgroup native to Southern Africa. Wakyambi are noticeably thinner and taller than other elves—many growing to the height of a troll and a rare few even taller. Despite their height and weight, their bones show no evidence of frailty, and they reportedly move with an unexpected grace for someone that size. They invariably exhibit very dark black or brown skin and tightly curled hair typical to African phenotypes. Their pointed ears are also less pronounced, so much so they might be mistaken for a human were it not for their size.

This illusive metavariant tends to congregate in isolated tribes in the savannah, and very little is known about their social and cultural habits. No significant study or genetic testing has been made of the wakyambi metavariant, and their possible origins remain shrouded in mystery. What little biological and medical information exists has been gleamed from isolated individuals and the corpses of dead wakyambi.

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According to African folklore, the wakiyambi are members or descendents of the fabled "Heaven People" (also known as Cloud Folk and other names among different tribes) that have bestowed numerous gifts on common humans over the millennia, for their own mysterious reasons.

One surprising detail that has come to the fore, and the wakyambi themselves rarely address (though it seems to tie into the folktale of neighboring tribes), is that the metavariant's skeleton shows evidence of a rudimentary tail which may have degenerated over time.

› The way they're selling it in the report, wakyambi almost seem like backwater primitives. Don't believe it for a minute. The wakyambi are private and reserved, but they do keep tabs on what's going on in the world. In fact, they have a tradition similar to the Aboriginal Walkabout where young wakyambi are sent out into the world for a few years as a rite of passage to discover themselves and their calling.
› Elijah

› Ever seen Miko Nabuto of the Lakers? He's a wakyambi. Poetry in motion, omae.
› Slamm-0!

Xapiri Thëpë

The *xapiri thëpë* (meaning "spirit people" in the dialect of the Yanomani Indians) are a *nobilis* subgroup native to the rainforests of the Amazonian basin. Though they rarely leave their secluded jungles (a reason why they were discovered only recently) due to their fear of urban environments and their attunement with nature, some have been spotted in Metropole, Manaus, and other Latin American cities such as Bogotá or Caracas in recent months.

Surprisingly, the study group's contacts with the Amazonian establishment suggest they have been aware of this metavariant for quite some time, and kept its tribal existence a state secret in order to preserve them from outside interference. Total population is believed to be under 10,000 individuals mostly living in tribal groups (though figures are purely speculative until further studies are conducted).

According to the studies now released by the Amazonian government, xapiri thëpë are slightly shorter than the average elf and apparently share the longevity genes and remaining metatraits associated with baseline *nobilis*. Peculiar to the metavariant are the irregular deep green patches on its epidermis that enable it to convert sunlight into energy and that augment its camouflage in its native jungle environments. While the photosynthetic organelles that compose these patches (which expand with age) appear to have been endosymbiotically introduced to at some point in the metavariant's evolution, they also seem to be the root of a serious intolerance to a variety of pollutants.

› What they're trying to say is that, according to a study undertaken by the University of São Paulo, these organelles were foreign elements such as organic material or even parabotanic tissues (and genes) fused into symbiosis via magic.
› Glasswalker

› You sure? Do you know where I can get a hold of that study? Melding two living organisms that way sounds way beyond current thaumaturgic theory. I'm intrigued and I've got a few friends who will be too.
› Winterhawk

› Check your email 'Hawk.
› Glasswalker

DWARFS

The archetypical stocky, barrel-chestred, and bearded common dwarf is the most predominant of all *pumillonis* variants, and finds easy acceptance in most contemporary societies thanks to its non-excessively egregious appearance and non-threatening stature. Dwarfs are present on all continents and among almost all ethnic groups (with a few notable exceptions).

Imminently social and gregarious beings, sociological studies show that dwarfs face the least obstacles in social insertion of all the metatypes aside from humans. Strangely, the same cannot be said for its known metavariants, who are frequently more penalized as their metatrait expression tends to be more extreme and glaring. Physiologically, dwarf metavariants show a high variability, but the diminished stature, extensive body and facial hair, robustness, and extended life expectancy that characterize the metatype are consistent in most of the metavariants.

Note that several pro-metahuman groups, such as Mother of Metahumans (MOM), have flagged intra-metatype racism as a potential problem and cause of conflict since a significant number of baseline dwarfs view their distant cousins as freaks.

Koborokuru

Japanese dwarfs, known as *koborokuru* or *koro-pok-guru* (literally "people under the leaves of the butterbur plant") are named after underworld dwellers of Ainu mythology.

Koborokuru are the prevalent dwarf species on the Japanese Isles (>85%), and they stand slightly shorter than common dwarfs and possess extensive body hair. Less stout than their Western counterparts, they are quite agile, seemingly more flexible, and comfortable with their compact builds and short legs when in motion. Despite the outward differences, they possess many common metatraits with common dwarfs: heat sensitive vision, short stature, stocky build, slightly pointed ears and extended longevity.

Tragically, though the Ainu (one of the indigenous peoples of the Japanese archipelago) respect koborokuru as embodied kamuy (spirits) of the mountains, the fact remains that this metavariant has been subject to both ethnic and anti-metahuman persecution by the dominant Japanese culture for decades. Entire generations were raised in effective exile, growing up in terrible living conditions. While huge steps have been made in the past decade to right this injustice, today's koborokuru remain understandably clannish and self-reliant. They tend to live in familial groups and in metahuman neighborhoods, a situation fostered by persistent racism literally looking down on koborokuru as inferior and primitive beings.

Koborokuru are relatively rare outside of Japan, but they have been encountered among large ethnic Japanese communities abroad.

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Menehune

Menehune (pronounced meh-ne-HOO-neh) or "Children of the Land" are named for the original "little people" of Hawai'ian mythology. They are, however, not simply native to the Hawai'i islands, but the dominant dwarf species in Transoceania (including Micronesia, Polynesia, and Melanesia). Possibly due to a strong presence of Japanese stock in Hawai'i, the second most common dwarf species is the koborokuru.

Physically, Menehune are almost the same size as baseline *pumillonis*, but possess luxurious body hair, large blunt noses, bushy eyebrows, stringy hair, and thick, wiry muscles. As one would expect of island natives, they are well-adapted to their ocean-locked environments. Additionally, menehune boast eyes able to focus underwater, granting them perfect vision when diving. This is possible thanks to a nictitating membrane, that is vestigial in other *homo sapiens* species.

Menehune are well-integrated and very social. As a group, they actively participated in the Hawai'ian independence movement and are afforded all the respect and privileges of a native Hawai'ian in the archipelago. Racism and bigotry among native Hawai'ian's of any metatype is rare, though occasional problems arise with foreigners.

According to Hawai'ian folklore, the mehehune's ancestors came from the lost continent of Mu, which is speculated to have existed somewhere in the Pacific Ocean.

- Interesting trivia: the word "menehune" can be also translated to "slave" in the Tahitian language—this may hint at why the ancestors of today's menehune originally immigrated to Hawai'i.
- Elijah

Gnomes

Gnomes originate from Central Europe and Asia Minor, though even in these areas they are a minority among dwarf populations. Whether this is due to gene pool dilution, or because gnomes are a relatively recent addition to the local anthroposhere is unknown.

Gnomes are distinguished from other dwarfs by little body hair (no beards and pubic hair) and small, childlike physiques (heights range from 70 cm to 100 cm, with body mass typically two thirds of a common dwarf's). Their petite physiques mean hands and fingers are proportionately smaller which proves a significant handicap in modern urban environments designed with metahumans averages in mind. Despite this, gnomes are highly sociable and appear to take discrimination due to size in stride. Furthermore, surveys conducted post-Crash indicate that gnomes have benefited immensely from the advances in wireless networking and computing. The new technologies have empowered them by enabling greater freedom in conducting their normal lives (via commlinks, agents, and autopilot-driven vehicles).

Charles University of Prague has also recently produced some facts to back the traditional belief that gnomes possess some form

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of natural immunity to magic and sorcery. Clinical tests suggest that, while not totally immune, gnomes have proven to be more resistant to the effects of magic. Studies and testing into the root mechanism are ongoing and little is currently understood about the phenomena.

› I have it on good authority that the great dragon Schwartzkopf, lecturer at the University, has personal interest in the matter. According to my source, the Benandanti have been looking for a link between the geographic origins of the gnome subspecies and this mysterious ability with little success so far.
› Ethernaut

Harumen

Native to the Indian subcontinent, harumen are a monkey-like local dwarf metavariant. While occurrences of this particular metavariant date back almost to the Awakening, they often occurred in undeveloped and backwater areas of the subcontinent and were mistakenly identified as a type of sapient paracritter—and more recently as a changeling expression. Recent genetic mapping at Chennai University, however, offered incontrovertible evidence that this is in fact a subspecies of dwarf apparently originating from the southern reaches of the subcontinent.

Less stocky and barrel-chested than the typical dwarf, harumen are far more agile and nimble than other *pumillonis* variants and possess slightly elongated limbs. Named for their resemblance to the ape god Hanuman, harumen also boast flattened noses, prehensile tails, and elongated feet and toes developed for climbing. While both tail and legs are profusely haired, the rest of their body (including the face) is not.

Harumen enjoy a mixed reputation in the Union and neighboring countries. While their association with the popular deity Hanuman grants them a certain respect and reverence from the common Hindu, they are just as often seen as troublemakers, thrillseekers, and wildmen (as far as our studies suggest, unjustifiably so). Their peculiar metatraits have also sparked a heated debate among Hindus about the haruman's place in the Wheel of Life and the rigid Hindu caste system. This relegates many to a social no-man's land which they seek to escape by emigrating outside the Union.

Harumen are a minority variant even in India, where the dominant form is the basic metatype.

TROLLS

The rarest of the metatypes, trolls (*homo sapiens ingentis)* are also the least widespread of the metatypes. Not only are population numbers significant lower than the remaining metatypes, but some areas of the globe and ethnic groups evidence below average occurrence of troll expression (for instance, among native South American ethnicities) or none at all.

Metavariants of the *ingentis* species are easily recognizable, given their sheer size, which stands out no matter how much their appearance differs from the baseline metatype.

An *ingentis*'s physique and often intimidating metatraits (such as horns, tusks, and significant dermal deposits) are one of the primary causes for social discrimination. Due to resemblance of these metavariants to menacing creatures from mythology, they are often more feared and subject to even more prejudice than normal trolls.

There are four recognized troll metavariants: cyclops, fomori, giants, and minotaurs.

Cyclops

A variant of Mediterranean trolls and native to the Aegean Sea and Islands, a cyclops is often slightly larger and even more heavily muscled than the average troll. However, evolutionary adaptation to the warm climate and seabound environment of the Mediterranean archipelago grants most cyclops a bronzed skin, little body hair, and a lack of the metatype's usual dermal deposits.

Cyclops typically possess only one horn and may have none at all. Their identifying feature is the large single eye located in the middle of their foreheads. While the bigger size of the eye allows them to make reasonably accurate depth judgments based on one-eyed (monocular) depth perception cues, cyclops lack binocular vision cues (from two eyes), such as stereopsis and parallax (and therefore have inferior hand-eye coordination). Current understanding of cyclopean neurophysiology indicates they even lack the cerebral regions and neural wiring to process binocular cues—limiting the usefulness of ocular prosthetics.

› Despite this lack of coordination, they are formidable opponents even by troll standards though they are slow-witted, stubborn, and short-tempered bastards. The Greek mobs are always eager to employ them as thugs and knee breakers.
› 2XL

Today, despite occasional racism, cyclops are seen in many sprawls around the Mediterranean from Barcelona, to Marseille to Istanbul. Their hulking and intimidating presence and sheer physical power mean they are in high demand as sailors, stevedores, security personnel, bouncers, and a number of other positions focusing on manual labor.

One unexpected peculiarity detected by this study is that cyclops register an unusual imbalance between male and females of almost three to one.

Fomori

Fomori are a troll subspecies native to the British Isles. Several studies have established a tentative link between Fomorian expression and Celtic family ancestry. If this is indeed the case, it is likely that formori are not in fact native to the British Isles but rather the result of historical migration. While perhaps once dominant, today the population seems to have diluted to the point where fomori are on par with baseline trolls in demographics, with larger concentrations in Wales, Tir na nÓg and the Southeast of Britain.

Fomori are smaller than typical trolls and lack the extensive dermal bone deposits—this has earned them a misleading reputation as the "frail" cousins of the *ingentis* species when in fact they tend to be physically more powerful. In fact, fomori benefit from being less intimidating and comparatively more attractive to other metatypes and are statistically less likely to be targeted by racial prejudice. Both these factors facilitate social insertion and

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integration, leading to much lower numbers of disenfranchised and maladjusted individuals.

Another peculiarity of the fomori metavariant is exposed by British Administrative Bureau statistics which indicate a higher than average incidence of magical talent among the fomorian population (as much as 4% higher). A controlled study undertaken by the Oxford Royal College of Thaumaturgy in 2048, however, indicates that fomori seem to be demonstrably more resistant to spell effects and magical powers than the average metahuman (with the possible exception of gnomes). The mechanisms and reasons (both genetic and evolutionary) for these apparently contradictory traits are still unknown.

› Among fringe biologists, these findings have led to the obvious but highly contested hypothesis that fomori physiology evolved to counter some sort of persistent arcane threat by trading in physical toughness for some sort of innate magical resistance. If that is really true, one should ask oneself: what kind of arcane mayhem and persistent threat may have inhabited the British Islands during those times?
› Axis Mundi

› Dragons come to mind. British folk tales are riddled with them and there're at least two Greats shacking up in the UK—three if you count the Sea Dragon.
› Winterhawk

Giants

Nordic or Germanic trolls, also called giants, are slender and taller than the standard metatype. The average giant stands three meters tall and lacks both the horns and dermal bone deposits common to *ingentis*. They share the trolls heavy-set physique and musculature, but possess luxurious facial hair and a leathery skin (almost bark-like in texture) unique to the variant.

Native to the Scandinavian Union, the Allied German States, and Northeastern Europe, giants have even more issues than baseline trolls with fitting into normal society due to their size. Surveys have proven that the acceptance of this metavariant is extremely low compared to baseline trolls even within the populations of the countries where they occur naturally. Despite institutional and corporate attempts, such as the initiatives sponsored by Evo corporation's Metaergonomics subsidiary, which attempt to facilitate integration and improve quality of life by size-adapting clothing, vehicles, housing, and consumer products, giants are all too often faced with unemployment and forced to live among the fringes of society or in the drop-out communities not uncommon in Scandinavia.

› Among the stuff Metaergonomics adapts for the troll market: guns. You know "speak softly and carry a big stick" and all that. Real humanitarians the folks at Evo.
› Kane

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Despite public and private efforts ingrained discrimination has shown little decline. Though troubling, it is no great surprise that a 2070 EuroPol report shows a growing number of disaffected giants arrested for involvement in criminal activities. A strategy meeting between Charisma Associates and ScandUnion authorities earlier this month, promoted by UNESCO, has led to a 5-year proposal for media engagement to further advance public perception of giants within society.

- For as-yet-unknown reasons, giants seem to have a greater than average tendency toward genetic reversions (one of every four female infants born to giant mothers is human). This has led to a lot of interest from anti-metahuman groups of all people. They're interested in studying giants to find the metagenetic key to "curing" humanity of metagenome "mutations"... and you can bet people like Alamos 20k will have no compunction about vivisecting a giant to get it.
- Nephrine

Minotaur

Minotaurs are an unusual variant (or mutation) of the troll metatype prevalent in the Mediterranean (especially Greece and Turkey) and Asia Minor, though smaller populations exist throughout Southern Europe (i.e. Spain, Portugal, southern France, the Italian Confederation) and beyond.

The minotaur phenotype is characterized by slightly shorter, stockier builds; pronounced, flaring nostrils; wide-set eyes; long, symmetrical horns; and extensive body hair. Genetic fingerprinting and biochemical mapping have debunked any similarity to animal *bovinae*—shooting down several urban myths and racially-motivated claims. Although horns are not uncommon among the *ingentis* species, minotaurs can actually use theirs to attack.

- While some well-known minotaur pit-fighters use their horns as part of their fighting style, most minotaurs you encounter in Greece truncate their horns' to prevent bystanders from getting hurt. Moreover, it's become quite popular to sport unique jewelery set into the horns.
- Kat O'Nine Tails

While minotaurs suffer from the same prejudice as other troll metavariants, studies suggest that they enjoy a reputation as reliable, hard workers, though bullish and strong-willed. This balances out their often-flamboyant and outgoing nature. Both contribute to explain their popularity and relative acceptance in many physically demanding professions, particularly in the Mediterranean region where populations are more accustomed to their presence.

- Wave a red flag in a minotaur's face at your own risk.
- 2XL

THE CHANGING FACE OF HUMANITY

The thrust of the current report is to provide a global overview of the known sapient species, races, metatypes, and their variants. As such we must endeavor to address not only the widespread metagenetic expressions, but also unique metahuman "offshoots" and minority expressions that nonetheless constitute a not-insignificant portion of the global population (2% of overall populations in industrialized nations, source: UNESCO's World Development Report 2070). There is no doubt in the minds of the contributors to this report that our scientific definitions and certainties are constantly being challenged, that the face of metahumanity itself is changing, and that national and transnational policies must change with it.

In a day and age when sapience is no longer restricted to (meta)humanity, or even biological life, new definitions have to be sought to classify sapient beings and their innate rights and status if they are to be integrated and productive members of society. Continuing to postpone ratification of such policies (be they regarding the rights of HMHVV-positive or self-determination of digital intelligences) is courting disaster.

The following sections of our report will focus on the current anomalous metahuman metagenetic expressions under study. Later sections will focus on non-metahuman species.

CHANGELINGS

Changeling is the common use term for metahumans afflicted by SURGE (Sudden Recessive Genetic Expression). *Per definitionem*, changelings are metahumans that have inherited one or more aberrant metagenetic traits from their genetic lineage. No matter how strange and different their appearance might be at first glance, genetically they are very close to normal metahumans.

Changelings are neither a race nor a metavariant. Each is, in a sense, literally "a freak of nature," a metagenetic mutation produced by molecular abnormalities in both the mundane genome and metagenome. Unlike metatypes, whose functional metagenome leads to a correct alignment of the astral shadows that govern the expression of defined metatraits characteristic to all the known metatypes (and their metavariants), changelings possess aberrant metagenes that are partly dysfunctional, mutated, or damaged (or all of the above).

The aberrant recessive metatraits that define changelings are normally dormant but can be triggered in a manner similar to Goblinization in the presence of intense mana fields or surges. Such spontaneous expression, designated SURGE, was first encountered in 2061, when the proximity of Halley's comet placed the Gaiasphere in flux, causing localized spikes in ambient mana levels.

All current studies suggest that the mechanisms underlying these genetic aberrations are in fact natural and environmental. Over millennia of genetic drift, natural selection, assimilation, miscegenation, dysfunctional repair systems, mutation by environmental factors (such as radiation, pollution and chemicals), cross-genetic input (viruses, gene therapy), and possibly magic (or the absence thereof), certain DNA sequences and related astral shadows in changelings have become anomalous and/or damaged.

While, typically, this silences those specific gene expressions, and effected individuals develop phenotypically as a mundane metahuman (regardless of their residual metagenetic predispositions).

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The aberrant sequences do express in an unpredictable manner when triggered by exposure to intense mana fields. Since the genes expressed upon SURGE are incomplete or damaged, these sudden expressions are rarely without genetic complications or metabolic disorders (studies indicate allergies are particularly common, as are deformities and physical impairments).

It is significant to note that changelings have been detected among several non-metahuman species as well.

› I got caught in a manastorm outside Sydney back in 2067. Suddenly, the hacker hit the concrete and started convulsing, blood spitting out of all her orifices, tissue stretching and rupturing, some seriously crazy shit. We thought we'd stumbled on some bioweapon or something. Fortunately for hackhead, the spellslinger tagged it as SURGE before we got round to putting her out of her misery. I'd seen Goblinization on the trid before, but, omae, this shit was freaky.
› Traveler Jones

Changeling Demographics

Changelings can express from any of the known metatypes; though demographics show that elves, dwarfs, orks, and trolls (including their metavariants) are less prone than mundane humans. This is likely due to previously expressed and dominant metatype traits silencing the aberrant DNA. While about 1 percent of the global population qualifies as changelings, frequency of new SURGE expression has decreased significantly though it has become obvious that expressed traits are hereditary and potentially recessive.

Demographic distribution is relatively even globally, though localized concentrations do occur due to variations in the gene pool (often in coincidence with high magical background) or the appearance of so-called "changeling quarters" or enclaves in certain cities.

SURGE CLASSIFICATION

As a rule, SURGE expressions are unique and entirely contingent on an individual's genetic background—which explains why two changelings are rarely the same genetically, even when they express similar phenotypic metagenetic traits.

Sudden Recessive Genetic Expression generally occurs in one of two ways. While most changelings were created during the mana fluctuations of 2061–62 through a Goblinization-like metamorphosis, that phenomenon has diminished as of late-2062. It has become evident in the last decade that changeling "traits" can also be inherited and may thus express during fetal development—though only if one of the parents has already expressed. Studies show that transmission in this manner is only guaranteed if both parents are changelings, otherwise there is a 50/50 chance that inherited traits are not expressed. Due to the variation in metagenetic traits inherited, our limited knowledge of underlying metagenetic dynamics, and how they are triggered, as well as the unpredictability of expression patterns, SURGE has been academically classified in three categories based on the degree and complexity of traits and metamorphoses.

Class I SURGE

Class One changelings are essentially metahumans with only a partial or incomplete phenotype, or who have acquired metatraits that don't belong to their metatype. Typical metatraits include pointed ears, horns, and tusks, but also low-light or thermographic vision.

Inexplicably, some metagenetic traits have been detected that do not possess a known analog in contemporary metatypes or metavariants. This has fueled speculation that they might belong to metatypes that have become extinct or have yet to emerge.

Class II SURGE

Class Two SURGE is believed to be caused by residual gene sequences that are present in most metahuman genomes (so called pseudogenes), but that are re-activated due to a glitch or cross-reaction with aberrant metagenes. Other hypotheses speculate that these traits are expressed by actual metagenes that mutated or that have been incorporated into the metahuman genome (for instance by a virus) but originate from an animal. The latter hypothesis is supported by the fact that many Class Two traits are associated with animals that have distinct evolutionary paths from mankind.

It is currently unclear whether certain sapient critters, such as shapeshifters, are able to produce offspring with metahumans that may have transferred certain genes to metahuman ancestors and lineages.

Typical Class Two metagenetic expressions include mammalian, fish, amphibian, reptilian, and other animal or even saurischian and ornithischian traits (such as fur, scales, tails, or even functional organs such as gills and eyes).

Class III SURGE

Class Three SURGE is categorized by the most severe and radical mutations, sometimes leading to the death of the victim (the strain of fetal expression has been known to cause miscarriages). No known studies into Class Three SURGE have produced a viable working theory to the dynamics of this expression, with some subjects exhibiting traits previously thought impossible without systemic breakdown (even with the most sophisticated current gene therapies).

Class Three changelings tend to combine a number of non-human physiognomic and biological traits into a functional gestalt: leading to "animal people" (or "furries" as they sometimes derogatorily called), human-plant hybrids, and other phenomena inexplicable by current science. Strangely, while the random expression of such potentially radical traits *should* result in a non-viable entity, an unidentified mechanism seems to harmonize Class Three metagenetics and reorganizing physiology as necessary. This may indicate SURGE metagenetics are not as random as originally believed.

A good example of such a gestalt in Class Three changelings are the so-called "ganesha" changelings, named after the Indian elephant god whom they resemble. They are basically elephant-headed humanoids, with huge tusks, elephant-like grey skin, large ears, and a prehensile proboscis (or trunk). Astonishingly, this combination of traits mean ganesha "incarnates" have never been object of hatred and social marginalization within Indian society.

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• The few ganeshas and cat people got the luck of the draw—they're cutsey and can play off people's preconceptions. Other man-animal hybrids such as lizard-men, cat-women, man-bears, she-wolves and whatnot, aren't as lucky. These changelings are often tagged as "beastmen," "were-creatures," freaks, hunted, or just beaten up because of their feral appearance and resemblance to shifters or HMHVV-infected. Spirits forbid you SURGE into something insectile—pretty much a death sentence.
• The Smiling Bandit

Integration

While SURGE and changelings were met with mistrust, prejudice and fear ten years ago when they emerged—not unlike technomancers were and are still perceived by many today—prejudice and xenophobic reactions have since seen a general decline in most industrialized nations. The same cannot unfortunately be said for developing nations and primitive tribal cultures.

A recent study by UCLA and the Horizon Group claims that changelings, through their popularization in some fringe media and alternative youth culture, are responsible for the renewed interest in gene technologies and paved the way for the cultural and social acceptance of transhuman enhancement, biotech and genetic augmentation, and non-metahuman sapients (be they non-human or non-biological). Appropriately, the advances in biotechnology and genetics, and the gradual adoption of many of these previously fringe trends by mainstream media and society, have in turn changed the way many people see all but the most extreme phenotype changelings in the past decade.

Although changelings, due to their unique genetic disposition, still stand out phenotypically, today's changelings don't fear segregation or prejudice any more than any other metahuman. The presence of changelings in pop culture (trideo, commercials, music, simsense) has long since embedded their presence in people's minds.

• Oh please, drop the blinkers. In the '60s, many changelings had no other choice than to prostitute themselves and make pornchips for people with certain "appetites" because no one would employ the freaks. They may have been heralds of today's transhumanist trends, but that's as much due to their exploitation as fashion or pop idols as idolization by their loyal fans. Let's face it, their appearance is still an invitation for harassment and violence in all too many places.
• Goat Foot

DRAKES

Drakes (*Homo sapiens draco*) are an extremely rare species. What little is known from the few individuals tested is that they appear to be normal metahumans who have the innate ability to assume a small dragon-like form, called dracoforms. How this is accomplished and how this puzzling and dramatic ability was introduced into the metahuman genome is a mystery that continues to elude researchers. All indications suggest an innate magical ability to fully transform from one being into another; externally similar to the ability of certain Great Dragons and shapeshifters to assume metahuman form. Unlike either of those, though, these are not paranatural animals with the ability to appear metahuman, but metahumans capable of magic transformation.

Drakes remain exceedingly rare and are a recent phenomena; many dragons, corporations, and other organizations have shown a great interest in studying them or recruiting them—whether this interest is benign and scientific or serves another purpose is difficult to say. What we can state is that little or no data has been shared with the wider scientific community by these parties.

Scientists have tentatively categorized drakes as the rarest of SURGE mutations.

• Drakes aren't a SURGE manifestation. They just confused with them because they Awakened around the same time.
• Frosty

• Speaking from experience?
• Sticks

• No, but I did meet one of the first drakes to Awaken. Good enough?
• Frosty

• I've dug into this and all I've uncovered is that every drake begins life as a regular metahuman until something clicks and they begin a process known as dracomorphosis—a period where the drake unconsciously engages in sudden, drastic, bewildering shifts between their metahuman form and dracoform. This can last hours or days and only really ends when the drake masters his ability to change forms.
• Axis Mundi

• Sooo...any human can become a drake?
• Sticks

• No, it's inherited...inheritable...genetic, bloodlines and things.
• Frosty

• How is this different from SURGE again?
• Nephrine

Since drakes are metahumans, they are eligible for citizenship in most nations and megacorporations by default. Certain governments, corporations, and organizations are highly suspicious of *Homo sapiens draco* and have implemented unofficial policies to restrict their advancement to the upper echelons of power.

HMHVV INFECTED

One of the single most controversial and difficult issues before us is recognizing and addressing the status and rights of the different types of HMHVV-positive individuals. Of all the metahumans mention so far in this report no others are as maligned or suffer from greater misunderstanding. It is telling that only 35 nations around the world afford equal rights and citizenry to HMHVV infected, and those only to some. This leads to exclusion, segregation, racial violence, and the perpetuation of negative stereotypes which, while justified in some instances, are by no means extensive to all Infected equally. There are significant differences between a quasi-feral dzoo-noo-qua and a human vampire.

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WHY THE INFECTED?

The Infected are metahumans transformed by one of the many Awakened retroviruses of the Group XIII genus *ghilani*; popularly referred to as the Human-Metahuman Vampiric Virus (HMHVV). Presumably, these viruses had lain mostly dormant since the last age of magic, with early expressions possibly providing evidence for legends of cannibalistic werewolves, vampires, and other strange transformations. Afflicted metahumans display paranormal powers and appetites that resemble legendary monsters from around the globe. They are not, as commonly thought, the "living dead" or animated corpses. Science and thaumaturgy have proved that these post-(meta)humans are biologically alive and generally sapient, though the psychological trauma and brain damage that sometimes accompanies the change can cause them to revert to a feral state.

There is not one species of HMHVV but a multitude of closely-related and mutating species, each of which may afflict a different metatype (or even some non-metahuman primates, such as sasquatches). Like other retroviruses, each species of HMHVV transcribes its RNA into DNA, which is integrated into the host's genome—unlike other retroviruses, this apparently triggers multiple Awakened genetic structures resulting in a rapid bodily transformation reminiscent of Goblinization or SURGE. A 2070 research paper on the subject (Minase and deMolay, Shiawase) suggests that the exact genes activated by HMHVV are actually pseudogenes (so-called "junk DNA") theorized to have been left by other retroviruses which worked their way into the germ line thousands of years ago and which comprise up to 8% of metahuman DNA.

The different HMHVV viruses were haphazardly organized into classes and strains and are still referred to as such in older publications and among laymen, but the current accepted organization now divides them into three distinct subgenera.

Vrykolakiviridae (HMHVV I) retroviruses are only spread through transmission of bodily fluids (amounts necessary vary and simple contact is not always a guarantee of infection) in conjunction with a vampiric attack. The actual retroviral transformation is triggered when the victim's life energies are depleted; the dispersal of the victim's aura is apparently halted and partially reversed by the virus. The transformed metahuman possesses vampiric or cannibalistic dietary requirements depending upon on their metatype. Each metatype is vulnerable to particular species of *vrykolakiviridae*, and there is substantial disparity in expression. These are the viruses responsible for creating vampires, wendigo, nosferatu, and the like.

Moneriviridae (HMHVV II) are more virulent; transformation typically begins immediately upon transmission of bodily fluids, though it can take some time to become apparent. If a troll, the host develops Jarka's Syndrome, the afflicted of which are called *fomóraig*. Human hosts on the other hand develop Criscione's Syndrome and are known as *loup-garou*. Other metatypes are not known to be affected by *moneriviridae* at this time, but retroviruses of this subgenus are known for their high rate of mutation with some of them having "jumped species" to affect other primates, notably the sasquatch.

Wichtiviridae (HMHVV III) is the most virulent and prevalent representative of the *ghilani* genus, with universal pestilence among all metatypes and transformation following infection. Unlike the other subgenera, those Infected with *wichtiviridae* species always express in the same way—they develop Krieger's Syndrome. Those afflicted with Krieger's Syndrome are commonly known as ghouls.

The Harz-Greenbaum blood series can determine if a character is one of the Infected, or at least a carrier for one or more of the retroviruses.

WHO ARE THE INFECTED?

As post-metahumans, the Infected occupy dubious legal status. After decades of denying them as citizens, or even metahumans, most members of the New European Economic Community, as well as the UCAS and the CAS, now recognize known Infected citizens as a special case of medically disadvantaged metahumans and dangerous citizens, and allow them to retain their citizenship, though their SIN is automatically converted to a criminal SIN and placed on local police watch lists (which, in some jurisdictions, requires them to wear tracking devices). Because of this disenfranchisement, their dietary requirements—many of which force them to break the law in order to survive—or having being born Infected, the majority of the Infected population in these countries remain SINless.

Most other nations treat the Infected as dangerous animals at best, with some offering bounties on confirmed kills.

Ghouls are the most populous of the Infected, which is a small wonder as they are also the most infectious species. There are ghouls on every continent, with especially high populations in areas of low sanitation such as sub-Saharan Africa, the rural Indian subcontinent, and Latin America.

Africa boasts the only ghoul homeland**,** the Awakened nation of Asamando on the Gold and Ivory Coast of West Africa. The nation is organized around a primarily communist/dictatorial model around a Queen figure, with the more intelligent ghouls caring for and overseeing their more brain-damaged fellows as they work in the nation's gold and diamond mines. Corporate investment from DeBeers and Saeder-Krupp, along with political agreements with the surrounding tribes and micro-nations, has so far preserved the ghoul state. It is notable that the majority of these ghouls belong to the local sasobonsam metavariant.

In North America, an ongoing campaign for ghoul rights (and, to a lesser extent, *loup-garou* rights) has coalesced around the Ghoul Liberation League (GLL) and the Metahuman Rights Coalition (MRC), multi-racial organizations that lobby for recognition for ghouls and other Infected. The GLL has received significant political support in recent years, including the passage of a special organ-donor law in fifteen metroplexes that allows citizens to donate their bodies for ghoul consumption upon their death. In counterbalance to these progressive efforts are the 162s, a large network of ghoul gangs whose violent tactics are often applied to the pursuit of criminal activities such as organlegging, kidnapping, and body disposal.

The ideological split between the GLL and the 162s stems from the "Ghoultown Massacre" in Chicago. The Cabrini Green low-income housing project had been willed to the ghouls of Chicago by Special Order 162, the Cabrini Refuge Act, in 2053. Unfortunately, the ghouls became trapped in the Containment

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Zone when the insect spirit menace broke out. Two charismatic leaders arose in Ghoultown: the peaceful Tamir Grey and the more militant Blaine Hammond. Tamir Grey, and the majority of his followers, died during Operation: Extermination when Ares Macrotechnology unleashed magic-draining bacteria into the Containment Zone that killed most of the Ghoultown enclave.

Fomóraig and **loup-garou** exist in sufficiently few numbers, and typically in such a pitiable state, that they have little social or political impact. Fomóraig in particular are rarely found outside the British Isles, and the governments of Great Britain and Tír na nÓg appear to have an unspoken policy of restricting them to their native swamps and fens, where they live a primitive existence.

Vampires, **wendigo, dzoo-noo-qua, goblins, banshees**, and **nosferatu** are the rarest of the Infected, but also the most problematic—due to their dietary requirements. Most of the world's governments recognize these Infected as a threat to metahuman life and health, to one extent or another. While a few countries now allow legal registration of some forms of vampiric Infected (who are allowed limited freedom in exchange for constant tracking) and some extraterritorial megacorps are rumored to employ these Infected, just as many greet reports of newly-Infected with strike teams or issue bounties.

Their negative social image is reinforced by the tendency for many of these Infected to form cabals—particularly wendigo and nosferatu. Rumors suggest that even the Ordo Maximus, a prominent British Hermetic fellowship, has been infiltrated by one such group.

Bandersnatchii are a special case, being transformed from non-metahumans to begin with, and are generally regarded as dangerous animals. Sasquatch communication is difficult on the subject, as it often involves extensive metaphors and historical parables. They do not protest the hunting of bandersnatchii, but they rarely assist either, out of fear of contact with their Infected kin.

WHAT ARE THE INFECTED?

There are many expressions of HMHVV, and more are discovered or created as the viruses continue to proliferate and mutate—not to mention the possibility of scientists attempting to deliberately engineer new versions of HMHVV. The following are a selection of the most well-known and documented Infected, and are available as options during character creation or infection afterwards.

Bandersnatchii

(*Pesevastus pilosis monerus*)

These are sasquatch infected with a species of HMHVV II; individuals develop teeth suitable for rending and tearing prey, tatty-looking pelts, longer limbs, and a form of adaptive coloration. They are much more aggressive than sasquatch, but prefer to attack from stealth. Bandersnatchii are carnivorous and cannibalistic.

Banshees

(*Homo sapiens nobilis vrykolakas*)

Elves infected with a species of HMHVV I become banshees. Aside from an exaggerated gauntness and more prominent incisors, they are virtually identical to other elves. They gain a number of paranormal powers. Some noble elven families in the British Isles consider Infected relatives as cursed for some karmic debt, an area of ongoing anthropological research. Banshees are hemovores and, like vampires, cannot hold down normal food.

Dzoo-Noo-Qua

(*Homo sapiens ingentis vrykolakas*)

Dzoo-Noo-Qua are trolls infected with a species of HMHVV I. Their transformation increases their dense dermal bone deposits (in the form of plates, nodules, horns, and spines), commonly giving dzoo-noo-qua a deformed and asymmetrical appearance, and increases the vascular system in their eyes, giving them a constant bloodshot look. The powerful paranatural abilities they develop make them some of the most physically intimidating of the Infected. Dzoo-noo-qua are omnivorous, but prefer raw meat, and are cannibalistic.

DIETARY REQUIREMENTS

Urgent Message...

The single most disturbing and problematic issue facing acceptance and integration of the Infected in contemporary society is their dietary requirement of metahuman blood or flesh. Studies suggest that HMHVV-positive individuals must consume at least 1 percent of their body weight of appropriate biomaterial each week or begin to suffer the effects of malnutrition. This dietary requirement is due to a combination of natural and paranatural requirements: the physical digestive systems of the HMHVV infected are specialized or mutated by their transformation; vampires and banshees in particular lack most of the symbiotic bacteria that break down food and must subsist entirely on blood. All Infected show a distinct carnivorous preference in their diet.

In addition to these physical requirements, the peculiar Awakened nature of the Infected requires the living energies of a metahuman aura in their food for optimum health, and sometimes large influxes of mana siphoned directly from the aura of a living metahuman or other sapient creature; these are believed to be essential sustenance for the virus itself. Cloned metahuman flesh and blood, including bioware, can satisfy some of these dietary requirements. Force growing immature clones may provide an expensive but viable mid-term answer to the need to segregate HMHVV-positive individuals. Obviously the ethics of this option are highly controversial and several national bioethics committees have come out against the practice already.

Concerted parascientific research continues to attempt to synthesize a viable substitute for the HMHVV infected to subsist on; the Yakashima corporation in particular has received generous grants from the Draco Foundation and Aztechnology towards the development of a spell that can permanently alter animal meat to mimic the astral traces of a metahuman aura, but none of the test products are ready for live-testing.

Simon Wentworth (order #1132857)

Urgent Message...

INFECTED METAVARIANTS

The ghilani viruses are highly prone to mutation, and different species around the world have different behaviors, powers, weaknesses, and appearances.

The Abat is a vampire metavariant native to the Phillipines, noted for its fear of sea water and penchant for sucking on the viscera of its victims. Similar is the Amalanhig, Filipino/Malaysian vampire which uses a proboscis-like structure on the underside of its tongue to draw blood from the victim.

The Busaw is one of two West African ghoul metavariants, most often seen in ork and troll tribes, with more extensive dermal deposits and a dislike of salty foods; the latter may account in part for the predisposition to goiter in busaw populations. Sasobonsams are the other native African ghoul metavariant, and the most populous; they develop extremely elongated (if fragile) arms and legs, enabling them to walk and run on all fours.

Gaki are a ghoul metavariant mostly restricted to the Japanese archipelago, with unconfirmed sightings in the republic of Korea, the Kingdom of Hawai'i, and the Chinese states. It is distinguished by its fluorescent eyes and its purportedly high percentage of magical ability.

Penanggalan are a very rare Southeast Asian vampire metavariant whose astral form reportedly consists of just its head and pulsating organs; these Infected are supposed to require a great deal more blood than their kin, and must pickle their bloated bodies.

The Sukuyan is a Caribbean vampire metavariant that often preys on ships and (according to legend) drowning sailors. They are the subject of a small but lucrative slave trade among the Zobop syndicate; it is rumored the boccors find the sukuyan very pliable to their traditional zombie-drugs.

Urgent Message...

Addendum by Henri Gilbert, UNESCO Secretary and Panel President

THE CURE FOR HMHVV

There is no current "cure" for the Infected. No magical spell, genetic treatment, retroviral cocktail, or combination of the above has managed to halt or reverse the transformation once it has begun, and once complete it is impossible to alter the subject's genetic code without the death of the subject. Still, research into the nature of *ghilani* and its variants continues.

Rumors suggest that Shiawase Biotech has been working for years to develop a vaccine to prevent the virus from crossing the germ line in vampires, allowing them to procreate as normal humans. The Ordo Maximus is said to have squashed a thesis by Martin de Vries, Th.D., which suggested that the total separation of the Infected's spirit from its body might allow the astral and physical problems to be addressed separately. Many elven nobles subscribe to the idea that a banshee must "walk the Circle," or complete a set of spiritual tasks and astral quests, in order to purge themselves of the curse.

These are but a sample of the many "cures," none of which are proven to exist. Until such time as solid evidence is presented to the contrary, the committee believes there is no cure for the Infected, nor any vaccination to prevent it.

Fomóraig

(*Homo sapiens ingentis monerus*)

Trolls infected with a species of HMHVV II become *Fomóraig*. Like their cousins the dzoo-noo-qua, they develop heavy calcifications and dermal deposits in their skin, particularly subcutaneous "chestnuts" of bone, around which form sebaceous gland complexes that constantly secrete a corrosive, acidic fluid. Other changes include rudimentary gills along the neck and six prominent incisors. A shaggy and irregular mane of dark brown or black hair is common. Fomóraig are considered native to Tír na nÓg, and are omnivorous, but prefer raw meat; like ghouls, cooked meat makes them sick.

Ghouls

(*Homo sapiens wichtus*)

Metahumans afflicted by a species of HMHVV III become ghouls. The most common traits to all those afflicted with this virus are a loss of all body hair, the development of a scabrous hide, the development of filmy cataracts and lesions in the eyes, a pallid complexion (dead-white to ashen grey, depending on the ghoul's original ethnic group), and slightly enlarged jaws and hands, with the nails typically hardened into claws. Ghouls are exclusively carnivorous and cannibalistic.

Goblins

(*Homo sapiens pumilionis vrykolakas*)

Dwarfs infected with a species of HMHVV I. Transformation consumes all body fat and causes the loss of all body hair, leaving an extremely emaciated appearance, with the skeleton clearly visible and the skin often taking on a sickly, almost glossy sheen. Their ears become longer, larger, and slightly pointed, while the salivary glands increase output, typically causing goblins to drool uncontrollably. Goblins are omnivorous with cannibalistic tendencies.

Loup-Garou

(*Homo sapiens sapiens monerus*)

Humans infected with a species of HMHVV II transform into loup-garou. The loup-garou's most common characteristics are a covering of short grey-black hair; lips drawn back from their teeth and receding gums, giving the illusion of elongated fangs; and bloodshot eyes. They often appear to be in considerable pain. Loup-garou are keyed to an internal 28-day cycle (not, as popularly stated, tied to the moon), during the four-to-six-day peak of which they become extremely aggressive. The cycles of individual loup-garou who meet are rarely aligned, but prolonged cohabitation between mates or in a pack will cause their cycles to synchronize. Loup-garou are carnivorous and cannibalistic.

Simon Wentworth (order #1132857)

Nosferatu
(*Homo sapiens sapiens sanguisuga*)

Nosferatu are humans infected with a very rare species of HMHVV I; they represent the least populous of the Infected. Aside from the loss of all or most hair on the head and body, pale complexion, and slightly prominent canines, they are nearly identical to regular humans. Nosferatu are much more likely than other Infected to develop schizoid, paranoid personalities after transformation (if they did not already possess them), and have been the instigators of the worst vampiric cabals uncovered to date. To a one, they all seem to be fanatically convinced of their superiority. Nosferatu are omnivores, and can eat or drink whatever they please without ill effect, but must consume a certain amount of metahuman blood.

Vampires
(*Homo sapiens sapiens vrykolakas*)

Humans infected with a species of HMHVV I are one of the most common forms of vampiric Infected. Aside from a pale complexion and slightly prominent canines, they are nearly identical to regular humans. The large body of myth and popular culture surrounding vampires, combined with their impressive paranormal powers, make them relatively popular—to would-be Infected and hunters alike. Vampires are hemovores and cannot hold down other food.

Wendigo
(Homo sapiens robustus vrykolakas)

Wendigo are orks infected with a species of HMHVV I. At first glance, a wendigo resembles a slightly shorter, squatter sasquatch with white fur. Wendigo engage in the most extensive ritual cannibalism of all the Infected documented to date, and their transformation very often results in the triggering of latent magical talents. Wendigo are omnivorous, but cannibalistic and prefer raw meat.

NON-METAHUMAN SAPIENTS

Metahumanity is not the only intelligent species on planet Earth. Since the Awakening, they share that distinction with a handful of other sapient and sentient races. Metahumanity as a whole has been slow to recognize these beings as equals, and, for their own part, sapient paranormals tend to live in isolated communities in their native habitats—"tend" being the operative word. Due to metahuman encroachment forcing them out of their habitats or their own curiosity and drive, some sapient critters have become a part of metahuman society.

Non-metahuman sapients in their "natural state" are not members of technologically-based societies, and are sometimes erroneously categorized as hunter-gatherers or nomadic herders. In truth, all of the species below can and do avail themselves of metahuman technology when it is prudent and they are able to do so. Due to their physical differences, there is a great degree of customization and modification necessary to adapt some equipment for non-metahuman use, and items like clothing and shoes are often more economical for tribes, family groups, and individuals to craft rather than purchase.

In 2070, the United Nations proposed a Declaration of Non-Metahuman Sapient Rights recognizing the sapience and sentience of an additional six non-metahuman species/genus (sasquatches have already been recognized). This report is intended to be part of the evaluation process. If this Declaration is introduced as predicted later this year, cosignatory members of the United Nations are obligated by international law to accord members of twelve species/genus the same rights and privileges of SINless metahumans, with the qualifications and requirements for citizenship and SINs being reserved by those states. (A similar edict will be put before the Corporate Court, sponsored by Evo and Wuxing). This is heralded as the biggest achievement in Non-Metahuman Rights since the great dragon Dunkelzahn was accepted as a UCAS citizen by an act of Congress.

CENTAURS

A centaur is a mammal of the equine family, and one of the few that breaks the usual rule on number of limbs. Its lower body resembles that of a horse, with four legs ending in a four-toed foot (three of the toes are vestigial, only present in the leg, while the fourth toe forms a hoof like a modern horse), while its upper body—where the head and neck would be on a horse—resembles that of a primate, with long arms ending in three digits and an opposable thumb, and a vaguely equine head with an extended cranium perched on an long neck. They typically stand 2.5–3 meters tall at the shoulder and mass 300–600 kilograms.

Centaurs have slightly longer gestation terms than humans (9–12 months), and rarely birth more than one foal.

Long thought to be primitive and incapable of using advanced technologies, this perception has been fostered by the centaurs own desire for a simple communal lifestyle in their natural habitats. However, it has become clear through the few representatives of the species that have opted to explore metahuman society (such as Milo Czerda, Nobel Literature laureate), that centaurs are indeed capable of understanding and using human language, sophisticated technology, and tools. In fact, anecdotal evidence suggests centaurs possess sharp and curious minds able to quickly pick up complex concepts and ideas. Magical talent has been identified in centaur populations, and centaur magicians are accorded special importance in their societies. Centaur traditions and beliefs are predominantly shamanistic. Xenosociologists studying the species draw parallels in several respects with Native American Indian cultures during the early colonial period.

Centaurs are omnivorous, and in the wild use an innate magical tracking sense to locate prey animals. This ability has made them highly valued as scouts and "dowsers." While their builds are ill-suited for most urban environments, centaurs sometimes find metahuman employment in rural areas or as part of mercenary units (particularly in Europe and Asia). Increasing numbers of young centaurs worldwide seek metahuman civilization and educations and a few do wander into metahuman cities looking for work, alcohol, and drugs.

Estimated Population (Worldwide): 50,000

Population Centers: While most prominent on the Asian steppes, centaur tribes are also present in North America (in a refuge created by the Great Dragon Dunkelzahn) and parts of Europe, particularly Greece and the Czech Republic.

Common Languages: Czech, English, Greek, and Hopi.

Simon Wentworth (order #1132857)

PROMINENT CENTAURS

Kawai-i

A special member of the Organized Crime and Substance Control Task Force in the Pueblo Corporate Council, Officer Kawai-i specializes in tracking down kidnap victims, shipments of Awakened drugs, and organized crime figures that have gone to ground. She was raised by metahumans on a farm and is well-known for attempting to conceal or alter her natural palomino coloring, often through dyes or clothing, and to "fit in" with metahuman society.

Milo Czerda

Undoubtedly the most famous centaur in the world today, Milo Czerda is a Czech national and a member of the Draco Foundation's board of trustees. An internationally-renowned poet and author, Czerda only speaks and writes in Czech and requires an interpreter to communicate in other languages. Czerda was one of the prime forces behind the Declaration of Non-Metahuman Sapient Rights and in establishing citizenship for centaurs and other non-metahuman sapients in his native Czech Republic. Milo is doubly rare for a centaur in being both socially adept in metahuman society and being magically active.

Nikopol

"The Iron Horse" is one of the most infamous—and feared—mercenaries in the world. Long an independent contractor for Saeder-Krupp, Nikopol was critically injured by a mine during an operation in the Middle East and outfitted with a custom armoured cybertorso commissioned specifically by Saied Bey. The implant (and, it is rumored, subsequent upgrades) have made him much more dangerous and feared than ever before.

PROMINENT NAGA

Nagaraja

The Nagaraja is the monarchial leader of the Naga Kingdom in Cambodia, and the titular head of state. An unprecedented seventeen meters long, with a face scarred by a garuda assault, the Nagaraja is a powerful magician and an accomplished diplomat, albeit well-known for his derogatory treatment of metahumans who do not recognize his divine mandate to rule. Among his secular and religious duties is acting as emissary between his people and the Great Dragons, the trade in naga emeralds, and leading a number of geomantic rituals that the naga claim have religious significance. It remains to be seen what his larger plans, if any, are.

Phanishwar

Hatched in captivity in London, the nine-meter long naga "Phanishwar" has seemingly always been out of place. One of the few naga adepts, he is fully adapted to the relatively cold climate of the United Kingdom and serves as chief of security for NeoNET's Caerleon facility. His home, which features a number of devices to enable him to easily manage without hands, is considered a marvel of modern engineering and a gift from his employer, the great dragon Celedyr.

Phanishwar's habit for swallowing his meals (often large rabbits or devil rats) whole has given rise to exaggerated rumors of what happens to intruders caught in his territory.

Silverscale

The most eccentric naga in the Ninho das Escamas Perdidas (literally, "Nest of Shed Skins"), the naga community of Metrópole, "Prateado" as Silverscale is known in Amazonian Portuguese is also one of the handful of naga in the world to sport a datajack, and is considered a skilled freelance security hacker. He is a crusader for a greater naga presence in the Matrix, and regularly publishes freeware programs designed to aid and assist naga using Augmented Reality and commlinks.

Unsubstantiated rumor has it that Silverscale worked covert ops for the Departamento de Inteligência e Segurança Amazónico (the Amazonian CIA) at one point.

Current International Status: The Native American Nations, Greece, the Czech Republic, Amazonia, Yakut, and Mongolia all recognize centaurs as sapient beings and allow them full citizenship.

NAGA

Native to Southeast Asia and the Indian subcontinent, naga are thick-bodied serpents, up to ten meters long, with large, blunt heads, expressive faces, and thick multicolored armored scales that help them to retain heat. They have highly developed vocal cords and altered tongues that allow them to effectively speak metahuman languages, though they have difficulty pronouncing percussive consonants.

Naga normally live in small family groups near rivers and lakes, with one exception: the Naga Kingdom of Angkor Wat in Cambodia, a nascent Awakened nation ruled by a group of magically proficient naga and other sapient critters. Naga prefer tropical or subtropical climates but, with sufficient indoor heating, can survive in most environments.

Naga have short gestation periods of 6 months and hatch clutches of 5–9 naga.

Many security companies captured naga in the wild and imported them to other countries as security paracritters, a practice they excelled at and which enabled them to learn languages and about metahuman society and magic. Some of these naga were liberated or "retired" and elected to stay in the cities, utilizing their skills for their own gain. Other naga come from Angkor Wat, trading emeralds for schooling in the universities of Neo-Tokyo, Hong Kong, and the Canton Confederation.

Estimated Population (Worldwide): 160,000

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Population Centers: Amazonia, Cambodia (Naga Kingdom), Indian Union; other tropical and subtropical locations, particularly in Southeast Asia and the Indian Subcontinent.

Common Languages: Amazonian Portuguese, Cambodian, Chinese, Hindi, Khmer Nāga, and Malay.

International Status: Naga hold positions of political (monarchial) dominance in the Naga Kingdom, and are revered by many peoples in Southwest Asia. They are eligible for SINs in Amazonia, the Bangla Commonwealth, Burma, the Indian Union, Laos, Malaysia, Manchuria, the Salish-Shidhe Council, Sichuan, Singapore, Sri Lanka, and Vietnam. All of the Big Ten employ significant populations of naga, typically in magical security, as do many Asia-based AA corporations.

PIXIES

Pixies are small humanoids that resemble miniature elves of various ethnicities, approximately 45 centimeters high on average and with large, iridescent dragonfly wings emerging from their backs (wingspans approx. 1 meter). An inherently magical creature, a pixie's ability to fly is based entirely on an innate manipulation of mana.

Extraordinarily rare—usually only present in the wilds of the British Isles and western Europe—pixies are primitive toolmakers and tool-users in their native environment, organized into clans and family groups with line marriages or similar polyamorous arrangements.

The most prominent and vocal pixies belong to a coalition of paranormals, spirits, and so-called "Fey entities" calling themselves the Korrigan, who occupy parts of Brocéliande Forest in France, helping the local druids to control the dangerous magical mists that permeate that region. In recognition of the Korrigan's efforts and purported historical claims over the land, the French government set aside the forest as a self-governing territory in 2066.

A rare few do attempt to integrate into metahuman society, seemingly fascinated with mankind's applications of advanced technology and tools. Unfortunately, their delicate physiology and small size make them generally ill-suited to life in modern urban environments, and finding steady employment or integration proves difficult to many who end up returning to their clannish communities.

Estimated Population (Worldwide): unknown

Population Centers: Brocéliande Forest in the Brittany region of France as an independent country. Other major pixie populations live in the United Kingdom, Tír na nÓg, and Portland, Tír Tairngire. Smaller populations have been reported in the Ukraine and parts of the Allied German States; particularly the Duchy of Pomoyra and the Black Forest Troll Kingdom.

Common Languages: English, French, German, Sperethiel, and Upvehu; many pixies are familiar with various Gaelic languages, including Breton, Cornish, Irish, Scottish, and Welsh.

International Status: France is the only nation that issues permanent SINs to pixies; the government of Portland has begun issuing criminal SINs to pixies accused and convicted of a crime. NeoNET is the only AAA megacorporation with any pixie corporate citizens.

PROMINENT PIXIES

Dagobert

Native to the Languedoc region in the south of France, the pixie known as Dagobert is reputedly a powerful druid initiate, a peer of the Grand Druids of Wales and Scotland. He came to media attention when he served as a special consultant to the BBC trideo team touring the isle of Lyonesse; a subsequent documentary unearthed deep connections with the highest levels of the British government, including purported meetings with the Prime Minister and a representative of the Seelie Court. Dagobert is known for dressing in custom-tailored silk suits, favoring dark pinstripes.

Grace

This female pixie, of unknown origin, has been on life support in Portland Hospital for the last six years. The only known pixie with a datajack, Grace was apparently jacked into the Matrix during the Crash 2.0 and the trauma of a viral attack caused her to enter a comatose state. The local pixie tribe in Portland continues to pay for her care and medical expenses and visits her often. On slow news days, the local stations like to remind viewers of "Little Grace."

The Red Cap Killer

The most wanted criminal in the United Netherlands, the Red Cap Killer is representative of the worst that pixies have to offer. Most authorities agree that the Red Cap Killer, a potent mystic adept given to ritual mutilation, torture, and reputedly cannibalization of his victims (and known for dipping an article of clothing, typically a cloth cap, in the blood of his victims) is certainly sociopathic. He is still at large after nearly eight years since his first confirmed kill; Europol has created a special task force and appealed to the Korrigan for assistance in capturing the Red Cap Killer.

SASQUATCHES

Genetic studies show these three-meter tall hominids are distant relations to metahumanity. They are omnivorous, though most prefer a strictly vegetarian diet. Hair color is typically brown or black, but some members are known to have a pale, tawny yellow or ruddy coat, and older members develop silver tips. Native to the mountainous evergreen forests of North America and Asia, the sasquatch is the most popular and well-integrated sapient critter in the Sixth World. Sasquatches find employment in many areas of the entertainment industry and as ambassadors to other sapient critters.

Estimated Population (Worldwide): 35,000

Population Centers: The Native American Nations, Nepal, Tibet, the United Canadian-American States, and parts of the Yakut.

Simon Wentworth (order #1132857)

Urgent Message...

PROMINENT SASQUATCHES

Frumious

Shield Wall's legendary musician and backing vocalist vanished from the scene shortly after the band's first major hit. The remaining band members are tight-lipped about their friend's disappearance, but all their releases since include the line "To Absent Friends" in the credits.

Frumious was a fixture of the Seattle music scene for several years before hooking up with Shield Wall. He stuck with the band for three years before their career went stratospheric following the famous Underworld'93 livecast in 2051. Strangely, the recording of the concert is the only known photographic record of Frumious. Occasional rumors surface about his whereabouts, and the fate of the shaggy musician has become the stuff of music industry legend.

Meh-Teh Lama

The assertions of pioneering cryptozoologists like Coleman were proven correct when a small tribe of silver-furred sasquatch descended from the mountains into Pangboche on 27 December 2011. Their leader, using magic, identified itself as the Meh-Teh Lama, the reincarnation of an ancient animistic power converted to Buddhism by a passing monk in the eleventh century, and further provided certain scrolls to back its claims. Pangboche Monastery has allowed the Meh-Teh Lama and its tribe access to the monastery and permission to build a settlement nearby, but refuses to allow anyone access to the scrolls.

Common Languages: American Sign Language, Aztlaner Sign Language, French Sign Language, and Perkins-Athabaskan Sign Language.

Sasquatches possess an unusual paranatural mimicry ability which serves as an extremely expressive form of communication among themselves and a tool when hunting or herding in the wild. Unfortunately, they appear to lack the ability to comprehend metahuman speech as a form of communication, preventing them from learning spoken metahuman language; interspecies communication is usually accomplished with sign languages.

International Status: Sasquatches were recognized as an intelligent species by the United Nations in 2042 and are eligible for SINs in most nations and megacorporations of the world; some have even attained positions of political authority in their nations.

SHAPESHIFTERS

Shapeshifters are sapient Awakened paranimals of metahuman intelligence with the magical ability to assume a human form. Besides being vastly more intelligent than the other non-Awakened critters of their species, they are typically larger and more physically impressive specimens of their native species. Aside from size and intelligence, a shapeshifter is practically indistinguishable from a non-Awakened member of its species—genetic studies of shapeshifters are practically identical to normal animals of the same type. Shapeshifters also appear to be much longer-lived than their equivalent parent species; initial studies suggest a lifespan comparable to orks, though this takes into account the generally violent lives led by shapeshifters and their lack of access to regular medical care.

Shapeshifters are uncommon but not rare, and many chose to mingle with metahuman society particularly in Awakened nations. A few shapeshifters are even employed by megacorps in various functions.

Estimated Population (Worldwide): 200,000 (divided among various species.

Population Centers: Amazonia, Aztlan, and Awakened Yakut.

Common Languages: Chinese, English, and Japanese. Shapeshifters express worldwide and may learn whatever local language or languages are used locally.

International Status: The NAN states, Amazonia, Azania, and Aztlan recognize shapeshifter sapience and issue them SINs when they come in from the wild. Many countries that are not members of the United Nations consider shapeshifters dangerous animals and offer bounties for their destruction. The Awakened Yakut, a former Russian republic now in the control of militant Awakened forces, is the only nation where shapeshifters are the dominant political force over metahumans.

Shapeshifter Species

The following briefs describe some of the major shapeshifter types active in the Sixth World. This is not, by any means, a complete list—theoretically every animal species across the world could give rise to shapeshifters—but it does represent some of the most commonly encountered representatives.

Bear: This species can be found throughout the northern hemisphere. They have excessive body hair and tend to be massive in human form with layers of fat on top of solid muscle.

Eagle: These shapeshifters can be found throughout Europe and North America. They typically have dark eyes and sharp features in human form and tend to be claustrophobic.

Fox: This breed is primarily native to Japan and China, though a few rare instances have appeared in Europe. Fox shapeshifters retain their fox tails in human form (growing from the base of the spine directly above the buttocks), which are often covered by long coats and robes or crudely removed.

Jaguar: Jaguar or ocelot shapeshifters are natives of Latin America, particularly Amazonia and Aztlan, where they are idolized by many citizens for their place in native mythology. Amazonia in particular is said to have recruited some jaguar shapeshifters into its intelligence services, while others whisper that Aztlan's Jaguar Guards capture and hunt jaguar shapeshifters for their ceremonies. Jaguar shapeshifters in human form retain the slit-like iris and reflective layer in their eyes.

Leopard: Along with black panther shapeshifters, leopards are most common in Malaysia, as well as sub-Saharan and West Africa (called *wareks*), where they form the most common type of shapeshifter. In human form, they possess spotted markings on their skin similar to freckles (for leopards) or extremely dark complexions (for black panthers).

Simon Wentworth (order #1132857)

Urgent Message...

BUT THEY LOOK METAHUMAN!

By Plan 9

I'm fully supportive of interspecies relationships between consensual sapient beings of any and all physical form, but there are still some considerable social and physical hurdles to be overcome. For one, the rules of attraction are different—no matter how metahuman a shapeshifter might look, for example, they don't respond in the same way to metahumans, their sexual triggers and behaviors are different, their erogenous zones <**unnecessary details deleted by sysop**> not to mention the obvious physical difficulties, some of which can be overcome by proper positions <**more unnecessary details deleted by sysop**>.

- Focus.
- FastJack

Interspecies reproduction is currently a physical impossibility. It just comes down to genetics: no matter how much they might resemble a metahuman, the number of chromosomes is completely off. That's not saying there might not be some luck with genetic chimeras in the future, but all sapient critters are highly Awakened and their genetics are more than a bit screwy. So, for the present and immediately foreseeable future, you'll never see a half-centaur, shapeshifter-kin, sasquatch-troll supersoldiers, or anything like that.

- Shapeshifters are a little weird in this regard: genetically, they're practically identical with their parent species, so they can interbreed with them. Whatever trait it is doesn't always pass along, however. Even clones of shapeshifters rarely express as such.
- Sticks

Lion: Shapeshifters of this breed are particularly rare, owing to the dwindling lion population, and nearly all of them are from the southern African nation of Azania, where they enjoy protective status under the aegis of the great dragon Mujaji. In human form, a lion shapeshifter typically has tawny-colored hair—quite striking against their usually dark skin.

Seal: These shapeshifters are mostly found near the poles, and fine their way to warmer waters by stealing away on or working their passage on ships. In human form, seal shapeshifters have luxuriant, glossy hair and webbed toes or fingers.

Tiger: Tiger shapeshifters range all over Asia, from Yakut to India. In human form, they typically retain their cat-like eyes; natural streaks in the hair (in a striped pattern) are much rarer but not unknown. The various Chinese states maintain good prices for tiger shapeshifters and their parts for use in traditional Chinese medicine.

Wolf: Wolf shapeshifters are found throughout the northern hemisphere and are noted for prominent eyebrows that meet in the middle and hairy palms or knuckles.

Urgent Message...

PROMINENT SHAPESHIFTERS

Alejandro Tepeyollotl

According to all reports, Tepeyollotl is a jaguar shapeshifter and spy formerly in the employ of Aztechnology. Captured in the wild and reared by humans, Tepeyollotl was inducted into Aztlan's elite Otontin warrior order. Serving as an Aztlaner spy and assassin in Amazonia and neighboring countries for many years, Tepeyollotl unexpected severed his ties with Aztlan and joined the Deep Green faction known as *Primeira Vaga* (infamous for its ties to direct action radicals like TerraFirst! and GreenWar) serving as their recruiting officer among Amazonia's shapeshifter population. The reason for his sudden change of heart and his new affiliation are unknown

Ulric Bezyzvestnykh

Sometimes called "The General" or "Major Ursa" (though the latter never to his face), Ulric is the field commander of the Siberian Awakened militia. "The General" is a bear shapeshifter and a champion of Yakut's independence having joined the Awakened uprising as a youth and fought in several border conflicts with Russia. Ulric rose through the ranks as an able field commander and a vicious protector of his homeland. Ulric has become the figurehead for the militia forces that have held Yakut's borders against outside interests for over three decades now. It is rumored that Russian intelligence has placed a bounty on his head.

Xie Xie Nguyen and Ambamra

The "Laughing Tigers" are a mated pair of young adult Siberian Tiger shapeshifters who operate throughout Asia as shadowrunners and assassins, using the funds gained thereby to support a privately-owned tiger refuge in Manchuria. They are commonly seen in Hong Kong and Dhaka. Xie Xie generally resembles a powerfully built 19-year old Asiatic woman with vividly striped red hair in human form; her companion Ambamra is a slightly leaner and taller 20-ish male with vivid hair in alternating black and orange stripes, Indian features, and epicanthic folds over his eyes in human form. Both are wanted in several countries in the region on multiple counts of murder and assault.

Simon Wentworth (order #1132857)

SYNTHETIC INTELLIGENCES

Synthetic intelligences, or "artificial intelligences" as they are more popularly known, have begun literally springing to life within the Matrix in the years following the second global Matrix Crash. Despite their popular name, there is nothing artificial about them. Rather these "synthetic intelligences" are naturally adapted to their virtual habitat and fully capable entities (albeit beings of a different order of intelligence).

The synthetic intelligences metahumanity has encountered in the past few years seem to have developed spontaneously from existing programs. Little is known about this process, but it is believed that it entails a layered self-modifying code using genetic algorithms. If any power is to be blamed for the rise of the synthetic intelligence, it is metahumanity, and it is we who must come to terms with our "offspring" if we are to peacefully coexist.

It is generally accepted that there are three classifications for synthetic intelligences: the protosapient, the metasapient, and the xenosapient. The protosapient is much like an animal, and behaves as such within the Matrix. The xenosapient's thought processes are alien, little understood by metahumans, and usually still obsessed with its original programming. The metasapient, on the other hand, is a lucid human-like intelligence. It is aware of its surroundings and is capable of forming rational arguments. It has a real personality, real needs, and real desires. A metasapient is quite different from the metahuman, but it is nonetheless a sentient and sapient being by the criteria being presented in the Declaration of Non-Metahuman Sapient Rights.

While this does not resolve the issue of proprietary claims over an AI's source code by individuals and corporations, it does open the door to recognition of basic inalienable rights and establishes a platform for further dialog. The recent decision of the Corporate Court in Xiao-Renraku vs. Horizon regarding the AI Teskit's autonomy to choose employment also sets a landmark precedent.

METASAPIENTS

Metasapients represent only about one fifth of the known synthetic intelligence population. They are the only kind that have been recognized as eligible for citizenship by any authority, government, or corporation (three other Corporate Court rulings have followed the initial decision). These entities are, for all intents and purposes, people, and it is incumbent on the world's governments to come to terms with the ramifications.

Digital Lifepath

As a non-biological life-form, the metasapient has different needs than the metahuman. Obviously, it does not need to eat or drink. It does need shelter, although not in the same manner as biological life would. They need no actual bodies, although many use drones to interact with the physical world.

Metasapients are in the process of integrating into modern society. Though the process is not without its obstacles, some have already applied for citizenship in various nations and transnationals. Discreetly, metasapients are finding roles for themselves in the world, assuming the functions of security hackers, librarians, service personnel, drivers, nannies, and programmers, either acting autonomously or under the employ of some other party.

NOTABLE METASAPIENTS

Wombat

Emerging from the targeting and fire-control suite for a mobile battery unit, Wombat was born into the CAS military from which he promptly escaped. After developing to "adulthood" and reviewing his options, Wombat decided to stick with what he knew best. Finding a new home with Saeder-Krupp, Wombat is now one of the rising stars of Desert Wars aboard his new home, a Sigurd III panzer.

Annabelle "Belle" Endo

Belle is considered one of the best cab drivers in New York City. Though she will not confirm it ("You should know better than to ask a lady her age") it is suspected that Belle emerged shortly after her autocab came into service in 2067. If this is the case, she kept her nature hidden for several years.

For reasons known only to herself, she has chosen the form of a virtual ork, and has found wide acceptance within the city's ork community. If it will make her passengers more comfortable, Belle projects her icon, a comely female ork with a chequered cap, onto their AR display to make it seem she is a physical driver.

Pulsar

Probably the best known metasapient on the planet, Pulsar was the first AI to publically "come out" in 2070 during the height of the technomancer scare and played a crucial role in defusing the Sojourner crisis. Allied with Horizon and Evo, Pulsar is the nominal head of the Undernet Alliance, a group affiliated with the Draco Foundation and an important force in the AI rights movement. For all his media-friendly posturing, Pulsar has so far deftly dodged any questions about his own origin and history before his "emancipation."

According to current criteria, a metasapient is "born" when it first becomes self-aware, demonstrates subjective thinking, and shows metacognition. What triggers this transformation from complex program to self-awareness is the source of immense speculation in the scientific community. According to those few AI informants who have been willing to speak to our researchers, initially, a new metasapient often has a very limited worldview, depending on the program from which it was developed. A metasapient can seem highly competent in one area and child-like in another.

The maturation process of the metasapient appears to be much shorter than that of the metahuman, lasting only some 18 to 20 months. The mental development of the metasapient is somewhat reversed from that of a metahuman, starting with an "meta-adolescent" period of mood swings, inductive reasoning, and egocentric behaviour, and proceeding into a "post-meta-

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adolescent" period of curiosity, identity formation, and, often, a sense of wonder about both its own world and ours. During this development, the metasapient spends between half and one third of its time in re-alignment, a process much akin to biological sleeping that tends to cause the node in which it resides to freeze.

Posthuman Artificial Life

There have been too many reports of electronic ghosts, or e-ghosts, to discount the phenomenon. There are metasapients in the world who not merely believe themselves to be metahuman, but specific metahumans. In every case, the metahuman in question is recently dead, rarely more than a few months to a year before the emergence of the e-ghost. Regardless of the rumors to the contrary, this office has found no credible evidence that e-ghosts are the actual souls of the people they claim to be.

In legal terms, e-ghosts are treated as metasapients, but not as the people they claim to be. Most institutions report that the most effective way to handle a new e-ghost is to humor its belief and help it transition into its "new life."

Estimated Population (Worldwide): 50,000 (metasapients)

Population Centers: Unknown.

Common Languages: All languages

International Status: Corporate Court precedent allows for corporate citizenship but only on a case-by-case basis and only after careful review of the circumstances. Of the major corporations, Horizon, Evo, Saeder-Krupp, and NeoNET have all extended citizenship to interested AIs. In the Japanese Imperial State, laws have been passed forbidding citizenship to digital entities, who are considered property of the company or individual who developed and copyrighted their software core. Pueblo is leading the charge in terms of nation states recognizing digital rights, though similar legislation is under discussion in several industrialized nations.

FREE SPIRITS

If synthetic intelligences are newcomers to our world, free spirits have visited our world for decades. While thaumaturgic theory has advanced significantly in the years since the Awakening, the fact is that researching this report we were forced to conclude that very little is actually known about them, their otherworldly origins, and why some seem to wish to immerse themselves in metahuman society. This final point is particularly important in defining relationships between metahumans and free spirits. Too often in the recent past have metaplanar entities been revealed not to have mankind's best interests at heart.

Free spirits that exhibit human-like character traits and behavior are usually called anima. These exhibit a strong desire to remain on the physical plane and interact with humanity. Some theories suggest that a free spirit seeks energies that the magically active may share with it or simply to revel in the vibrant emotional output of metahumanity. Competing theories postulate that the desire to remain is merely an echo of its bond to its original conjuror, or a parallel to humanity's own curiosity about the metaplanes and their inhabitants.

Whatever the reason, free spirits have been joining the rest of modern civilization for many years and have even taken on important political roles in some countries (e.g. Amazonia and Manchuria). However, there are reasons to suspect that a far greater population has discreetly adopted less visible roles at all levels of society (though overall populations are still minute by metahuman demographics).

› Now that's fearmongering if I ever saw it. Anybody implying that there are free spirits by the boat load, like some sort of illegal immigrant, stealing people's jobs and finagling themselves into positions of power is just out to scare people. There are maybe a few hundred of them out there, to the 6 billion of us.

› Lyran

Free Spirits and the Legal System

Several studies by the Astral Preservation Society, DIMR, and MIT&T assert that most free spirits who stay on Earth try to integrate with civilian life. They choose their own identities and usually assign themselves a gender. Those whose forms allow sometimes register for a SIN with a government or corporate entity, maintaining their secret nature. Others simply settle for living on the fringes of mainstream society in a variety of roles.

Key issues surrounding spirit citizenship and rights include such difficult questions as: whether spirits should be allowed to marry or own property (a serious issue given the prospect of accumulated property and wealth and spirit's apparent immunity to age), what constitutes cruel and unusual punishment for a spirit, and what kind of sanction might apply for law-breaking spirits.

INCOMING FEED.....

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Estimated Population (Worldwide): >5,000 (anima)
Population Centers: Manchuria, Amazonia, Yakut.
Common Languages: All languages
International Status: Currently only a handful of nations including Amazonia, Yakut, Manchuria, Czech Republic, Pueblo, and Bolivia allow citizenship to free spirits. Several megacorporations have also set the precedent for corporate citizenship (namely Evo and Wuxing corporations). Of course, different jurisdictions have different policies toward free spirits with no consensus among world governments.

Urgent Message...

PROMINENT FREE SPIRITS

Sarah

Sarah is the principal of the Pueblo Supreme Court case. She has adopted the form of an attractive Amerind woman always attired in traditional tribal dress. The court will consider her petition to marry a metahuman and take legal custody over Rebecca, whom she calls her "daughter," and who is also a free spirit. Though Pueblo recognizes sapient rights and citizenship to free spirits, the complex ramifications of a legal union between a metahuman and a non-metahuman is generating a lot of media coverage.

Baker 620

Baker 620 is Knight Errant's designation for a "homeless" and apparently crazed spirit that is something of a local celebrity and is even an attraction of a VR drone tour of Boston. It is said that he is actually a spontaneous great-form spirit, the former ally of a magician killed in the Winternight strike on the city in '64, or a shadowrunner.

Baker 620 is well liked and has numerous friends among Boston's squatter community. He has been known to step in to protect his friends on occasion.

GAME INFORMATION

The following section introduces rules opening a variety of new options to for *Shadowrun* characters types. Before implementing any of these options in their games, groups should consider the impact and ramifications they might have on the style of play, tone of a campaign, and power level of the game. Some of the implications are obvious, others less so. Carefully consider and discuss the following material before introducing it into play.

Gamemasters are cautioned not to allow certain options into play if they are not comfortable with how they will change the game. Collectively or in part, some of the character types may very well unbalance the game if the gamemaster is unprepared to deal with the unique abilities and peculiarities of the new character options introduced in these rules.

All the rules that follow should be viewed as optional, and as such are subject to individual gamemaster approval before being introduced into a game.

CREATING A METAVARIANT CHARACTER

Despite six decades of study, mankind is still far from mastering the secrets of the metahuman genome. Metahumanity's understanding of the mechanisms behind the genetic expression of metatraits, the astral shadows of metagenes, and the differences between metatypes is incomplete to say the least. An overview and summary of all these topics can be found in *Genetics 101,* pp. 74–79, *Augmentation*.

A metavariant is ultimately a genetic subspecies of one of the basic metatypes (i.e. human, dwarf, ork, troll, and elf) not unlike human ethnic races (i.e. Caucasian, Asian, African, etc). Whereas the latter derive from the mundane genome, the former are expressed by traits encoded in the metagenome.

Metavariants conform to accepted theories of evolution and have adapted to the environment of their geographical habitat. They do share an underlying similarity with the baseline metatype from which they stem.

In game terms, this means that all metavariants belong to a certain common metatype (human, troll, ork, dwarf, elf). Additionally, all share their base metatype's minimum and maximum attribute ratings (see *Metatype Attribute Table*, p. 73, *SR4*).

METATYPE ATTRIBUTE TABLE

BP	Metatype	BOD	AGI	REA	STR	CHA	INT	LOG	WIL	INI
0	Human	1/6 (9)	1/6 (9)	1/6 (9)	1/6 (9)	1/6 (9)	1/6 (9)	1/6 (9)	1/6 (9)	2/12 (18)
	Human Metatype Abilities: +1 Edge									
20	Ork	4/9 (13)	1/6 (9)	1/6 (9)	3/8 (12)	1/5 (7)	1/6 (9)	1/5 (7)	1/6 (9)	2/12 (18)
	Ork Metatype Abilities: Low-Light Vision									
25	Dwarf	2/7 (10)	1/6 (9)	1/5 (7)	3/8 (12)	1/6 (9)	1/6 (9)	1/6 (9)	2/7 (10)	2/11 (16)
	Dwarf Metatype Abilities: Thermographic Vision, +2 dice for Body Tests to resist pathogens and toxins									
30	Elf	1/6 (9)	2/7 (10)	1/6 (9)	1/6 (9)	3/8 (12)	1/6 (9)	1/6 (9)	1/6 (9)	2/12 (18)
	Elf Metatype Abilities: Low-Light Vision									
40	Troll	5/10 (15)	1/5 (7)	1/6 (9)	5/10 (15)	1/4 (6)	1/5 (7)	1/5 (7)	1/6 (9)	2/11 (16)
	Troll Metatype Abilities: Thermographic Vision, +1 Reach, +1 natural armor (cumulative with worn armor)									

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However, each metavariant does possesses its own unique innate abilities and BP cost. A player wishing to play such a character buys the metavariant rather than the base metatype.

The following section describes each metavariant succinctly and lists its innate abilities—for definitions of those abilities not previously addressed in *Shadowrun, Fourth Edition* refer to the appropriate quality in the *Metagenetic Qualities* section (p. 110).

HUMAN METAVARIANTS

The single known human metavariant, the Nartaki, emerged about a decade ago following the mana level spike due to the passing of Halley's Comet that activated the dormant metagenes in a small group of humans, sparking a partial Goblinization event.

Nartaki

Metavariant Cost: 25 BP

Otherwise human-looking, Nartaki possess blue, red, or golden skin colors and two Shiva-style pairs of arms (for a total of four arms). These extra limbs are symmetrical, fully articulated, and hinged below the usual human shoulder joint.

Troubled by the sudden and unexpected transformation that placed them in the public eye, and the restrictive Brahmin lifestyle foisted on them by India's caste system, a rare few Nartaki have escaped their dharma into the shadows of India's megacities and even beyond.

Abilities: Shiva Arms, Striking Skin Pigmentation

DWARF METAVARIANTS

While all dwarf metavariants share the same short statures and robust constitutions, they are quite distinct from another in terms of their abilities and appearance.

Gnomes

Metavariant Cost: 25 BP

Gnomes are the smallest of all dwarf metavariants and the rarest. They are most common in Central and Eastern Europe with smaller populations in Asia Minor. Social exclusion, due to their small size and immature features, means gnomes often find themselves outcasts of mainstream society. Their resistance to magic and their inconspicuous stature (often mistaken as children) often lead them to work as negotiators, informants, or spies for European powerbrokers or among the shadows.

Abilities: Arcane Arrester, Neoteny, Thermographic Vision

Harumen

Metavariant Cost: 50 BP

Native to the Indian subcontinent, harumen are a monkey-like dwarf variant with a prehensile tail and short, downy fur. Although harumen favor rural and wilderness areas over the concrete jungles of India's overcrowded sprawls, a fair number were born or driven to the cities by poverty and misguided hope. Their unique traits make them imminently employable as infiltrators, thieves, and cat burglars in the shadows.

Abilities: Low-Light Vision, Metagenetic Improvement (Agility), Monkey Paws, Prehensile Tail, Unusual Hair (Body Hair)

Koborokuru

Metavariant Cost: 35 BP

This Japanese dwarf metavariant is about the same height as the basic metatype and shares most of its metatraits, but possesses profuse body hair and a dexterity uncommon in its sister species.

Koborokuru are highly uncommon outside Japan, Korea, and parts of Indonesia. Though discrimination is still rampant, most koborokuru consider themselves Japanese first and foremost and face considerable culture shock outside the archipelago.

Abilities: Celerity, Resistance to Pathogens/Toxins (2), Thermographic Vision, Unusual Hair

Menehune

Metavariant Cost: 25 BP

This subspecies is the dominant dwarf variant in the South Pacific and the Kingdom of Hawai'i. Short in stature but more wiry than the common dwarf, menehune have luxurious body hair, a blunt nose, and strong, ropy muscles. They are also particularly suited to their ocean-locked habitat and are generally excellent swimmers. Micro-populations can be found in many sprawls around the Pacific Rim.

Abilities: Resistance to Pathogens/Toxins (2), Thermographic Vision, Underwater Vision

ELF METAVARIANT

Although elves are the third most common metatype after humans and orks, metavariants of the *nobilis* species are relatively rare and often unfamiliar to the common man.

Dryads

Metavariant Cost: 45 BP

The dryad is the most uncommon variant of the elf and isn't native to any particular region or environment. Originally thought to be somehow related to Faeries given their symbiotic relationship with their environment and preternatural charisma, it appears that these abilities are metagenetic in nature. Dryads occur in all baseline elf populations, but only as offspring of two elf parents.

Abilities: Glamour, Low-Light Vision, Symbiosis

Night Ones

Metavariant Cost: 35 BP

An oddity even in the sprawls of its native Europe, this elven metavariant is characterized by acute senses, a vibrant dark colored vellum, sensitivity to light, and nocturnal biocycle. Finding it difficult to keep "office hours," night ones are often marginalized becoming entrepreneurs, freelance talents for hire, or carving out their niche among the local nightlife and criminal underworld.

Abilities: Allergy (Sunlight, mild), Low-Light Vision, Keen-eared, Nocturnal, Unusual Hair (Colored Fur)

Wakyambi

Metavariant Cost: 35 BP

Wakyambi are black-skinned elves native to Southern Africa, known for their long slender limbs and great height (comparable with a troll). Though rarely found outside their close knit tribal culture, they have been seen farther afield, in African sprawls and tribal lands, in recent years. Of course, some wakyambi do travel

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overseas and immigrate to other sprawls for reasons of their own (education, employment, wealth).
Abilities: Celerity, Elongated Limbs, Low-Light Vision

Xapiri Thëpë
Metavariant Cost: 40 BP

Xapiri thëpë are a recently identified elven variant indigenous to the Amazonian jungles. While these elves usually avoid civilizations due to their high sensitivity to pollutants, some have migrated to Latin American cities (and beyond) and abandoned their native natural ways.
Abilities: Allergy (*choose pollutant*, Mild), Allergy (*choose a second pollutant*, Mild), Low-Light, Photometabolism

ORK METAVARIANTS

Ork metavariants are quite exotic and deviate from the common ork significantly. Because of this difference, ork metavariants rarely identify themselves with the Or'zet cultural movement that has infused the ork metatype with a common cultural heritage.

Hobgoblin
Metavariant Cost: 20 BP

Hobgoblins are stereotyped as an ill-humored and surly ork variant, native to the Middle East. Wiry and less bulky than the common ork, hobgoblins possess a volatile temperament and an aggressive streak that comes to the fore when they are slighted.
Abilities: Fangs, Low-Light Vision, Poor Self Control: Vindictive

Ogre
Metavariant Cost: 20 BP

Ogres are a burly European variant that is best known (though inaccurately) known for their voracious appetite. Shorter, stockier, and with less body hair than the common ork, ogres are less brutish in appearance, though they share all of the remaining physical and biological traits of the baseline species.
Abilities: Low-Light Vision, Ogre Stomach

Oni
Metavariant Cost: 25 BP

This Japanese ork variant earned its name from the striking resemblance to the demons of Japanese folklore. Oni boast vibrant skin colors, twisted horns, and protuberant eyes that make them daunting even when they aren't trying to intimidate you. Under the new Japanese emperor, oni have slowly begun to shed the negative image that has plagued them in Japan and are finding employment as ronin and bodyguards among the shadows and non-racist underworld.
Abilities: Low-Light Vision, Striking Skin Pigmentation

Satyr
Metavariant Cost: 25 BP

Another ork variant with remarkable parallels to a mythological critter, the satyr is native to Greece and the Mediterranean region. Their odd goat-legged and horned appearance conceals many similarities with the brawny and hardy common ork. While typically outgoing and gregarious, satyrs owe this more to Mediterranean culture than genetics.
Abilities: Low-Light Vision, Satyr Legs

TROLL METAVARIANTS

Troll metavariants are often as striking and outlandish as the basic metatype. While the known metavariants do not posses the dermal deposits of the baseline species, each has its own distinctive features that make them easily identified as troll metavariants—aside from their sheer size and impressive body mass.

Cyclops
Metavariant Cost: 45 BP

Cyclops, named after the mythic giants they resemble, sport a single great eye in the middle of their foreheads. This rare subgroup is native to Greece and the Aegean Isles. Cyclops are typically broad shouldered and heavily built with Mediterranean skin tones and little body hair. Some possess a single small horn above their eye. Though the single eye can prove a handicap, cyclops are fierce and vigorous opponents in close combat. Several have made names for themselves around the Mediterranean as outstanding bodyguards and pit fighters.
Abilities: Cyclopean Eye, Metagenetic Improvement (Strength), +1 Reach

Fomori
Metavariant Cost: 45 BP

Native to the British Isles, fomori can be physically mistaken for young common trolls due to their smaller size. Since they lack dermal deposits, they are often perceived as less daunting than their cousins, but, in fact, they are comparatively more robust and vigorous than they appear. Fomori are also reputed to possess some innate resistance to magic.
Abilities: Arcane Arrester, Metagenetic Improvement (Body), Thermographic Vision, +1 Reach

Giant
Metavariant Cost: 40 BP

More so than any other metavariant, giants have great difficulty assimilating into society thanks to their size (they are, on average, 3 meters tall). While their build is relatively slender, more humanlike, and less stout than that of normal trolls, they are easily recognized by their leathery skin that possesses a bark-like texture.
Abilities: Dermal Alteration (Bark), Thermographic Vision, +1 Reach

Minotaur
Metavariant Cost: 45 BP

Similar in many respects to the legendary beast, troll minotaurs have several bull-like features such as broad noses, a short furry pelt, and a pair of symmetrical horns that can be used to gore a foe. Their fearsome appearance is often at odds with an otherwise peaceful nature, but those minotaurs that do cash in on their brawn and intimidating looks find ample work as mercenaries, bouncers, bodyguards, or underworld enforcers.
Abilities: Goring Horns, Metagenetic Improvement (Body), Thermographic Vision, +1 Reach

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INCOMING FEED.....

CREATING A CHANGELING CHARACTER

The first step when creating a changeling character is to choose a normal metatype (human, elf, dwarf, ork, or troll), metavariant (p. 46), or, contingent on gamemaster approval, a Non-Metahuman sapient. As with a regular character, this choice defines his natural attribute minimums and maximums, as well as setting augmented maximums (see *Building a Shadowrunner*, p. 72, *SR4*).

CHANGELING QUALITIES

After a metatype is chosen, transforming the character into a changeling is as simple as choosing one of the 3 levels of the Changeling Positive quality (next column). This quality counts towards the character's limit of Positive qualities (p. 77, *SR4*), but unlocks a number of additional Build Points to be used exclusively to select Positive and Negative Metagenic qualities (see *Metagenetic Qualities*, p. 110).

Depending on the level taken, the character must choose a number of Positive and Negative Metagenetic qualities (p. 110), though gamemasters may chose to take on Negative Metagenetic qualitiy selection to ensure balance. Metagenetic qualities chosen in this fashion do not count toward the 35 BP cap on qualities, as long as they remain within the totals defined by the Changeling quality. If the player chooses Metagenetic qualities with a total BP value greater than the given thresholds, the excess cost or bonus BP count toward the character's normal limits for qualities.

Changeling

Cost: 5 to 15 BP

The effects of SURGE are diverse and little understood. Some changelings suffer only minor phenotypic alterations, while others suffer full body transformations on par with goblinization. Since the genes expressed when SURGE strikes are errant, negative effects and traits such as mental disorders, physical deformities and impairments, and intolerances are common. Characters may chose only one of the SURGE classes below when this quality is taken and must add the relevant value to their total BPs spent on qualities.

Class I SURGE (5 BP): Class I often represents minor and cosmetic changes like altered hair, skin or eye colorations, dermal and hair texture, or metahuman traits. The character must take 10 BP worth of Positive Metagenetic qualities and 5 BP worth of Negative Metagenetic qualities.

Class II SURGE (10 BP): Class II changeling traits are often more pronounced. This can manifest either as multiple alterations or as greater physical changes that have certain impact on the character's appearance or how people respond to him. The character must choose 20 BP worth of Positive Metagenetic qualities and 10 BP worth of Negative Metagenetic qualities.

Class III SURGE (15 BP): Class III includes the most severe modifications. Characters with this SURGE level have usually undergone serious and often painful transformations. The gamemaster and character should think of a certain theme

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(like one of the beastmen, plant-human hybrids, or Ganesha-type changelings described in the fiction) and choose appropriate Metagenetic qualities from the list or make up their own as they deem fit. The character must take at least 30 BP worth of Positive Metagenetic qualities and 15 BP worth of Negative Metagenetic qualities.

Dormant Metagenetics

Cost: 5 BP (baseline human), 10 BP (all other metatypes and metavariants, Infected, and sapient critters)

Characters with this quality possess some inherited metagenetic predisposition that has not expressed and remains dormant. When exposed to some kind of magical trigger during play (see *SURGE in Play*, below), these genes might become functional, leading to a metamorphosis of the character in a goblinization-like process that will transform the character into a changeling. The point when this occurs is completely in the gamemaster's hands and should be based entirely on creating a good story—if the player is surprised, even better.

The class of SURGE may be chosen by the gamemaster, or he may opt to let fate decide, by allowing the player to roll an Edge Success Test when his or her character encounters a potential trigger that might set off the dormant metagenes. If the player scores no hits, the character does not SURGE at all. If he scores one or more hits, the number of hits (up to three) determines the SURGE type (e.g. 2 hits would be Class II SURGE) the character acquires when turning into a changeling.

The character will express a number of Positive and Negative Metagenetic qualities depending on the SURGE type (see the Changeling quality, above). While the player may pick the Positive qualities for the character, the gamemaster chooses the Negative qualities.

SURGE IN PLAY

Characters with the Dormant Metagenics quality may SURGE into a changeling in play when exposed to an appropriately potent arcane phenomenon. The following section provides guidelines on how to handle such situations.

Trigger Event

SURGE triggers can take a variety of forms, though the most common are encounters with exceptionally high background counts or mana anomalies such as powerfully aspected domains, mana warps, mana surges, or manastorms (pp. 117–122, *Street Magic*) or astral phenomena such as alchera, astral shadows, and astral rifts (pp. 115–117, *Street Magic*). Even a powerful spell striking a character might involve enough magic to spontaneously stimulate the astral shadows and activate the genes.

Sometimes it does not even require magic. Genetic treatments (as described in *Genetech,* pp. 86–94, *Augmentation*) of any kind or experimental infusions might cascade changes in the genome triggering dormant metagenes. The same is true for viral biohazards (such as ADS, MADS viruses, HMHVV, or even mundane viruses) that might infect a character.

Metamorphosis

SURGE always leads to a sudden and brutal genetic expression that radically alters the character's metabolism and physiology. Some mysterious mechanism ensures the system doesn't collapse as new organs form and are hooked up to the cardiovascular and neural pathways; while other organs wither, are replaced, or migrate within the body.

Since many metamorphoses include skeletal and tissue transformations, the process is often extremely painful and includes hemorrhaging, ruptures, fevers, hormonal imbalance, and an array of side-effects (not unlike gene therapy).

There is a very real risk of death during the transformation process (the metagenes responsible are damaged and mutated DNA after all) and characters may require hospitalization for a number of weeks following SURGE (the exact time is up to the gamemaster). As soon as the organism stabilizes, the body begins to accommodate to the changes (see *Advanced Medical Rules*, p. 118, *Augmentation*) and during which the character may start to learn how to control and live with his new metatraits.

Inside Out

The opportunities presented by roleplaying the SURGE process and aftermath should not be neglected. It is a traumatic experience that can leave psychological scars as deep and profound as the mutations suffered. Individuals' worldviews and personalities are shaken and overturned. Nor should the social ramifications of SURGE be neglected. The character's social and private life may change or suffer further aftershocks. The changes may lead longtime friends, companions, and contacts to respond differently to the character—either positively or negatively. All these should be viewed as opportunities that can be integrated into the game.

CREATING A DRAKE CHARACTER

As with the changelings, players can create drake characters using the standard character generation rules presented in *Shadowrun, Fourth Edition*.

After metatype is selected, the player simply picks the appropriate Drake or Latent Dracomorphosis quality (see p. 76), pays the appropriate BP cost, then continues on with buying up her attributes, skills, equipment, and other qualities. Remember that a character can only have one of these qualities—Drake or Latent Dracomorphosis.

The Drake quality does not count against a character's limit of 35 BP worth of Positive qualities at character generation.

Sufficiently Metahuman

Drakes are still very much metahumans, and can acquire other qualities and gear available to other characters of her metatype—this includes augmentations and implants, as well as other types of equipment (and subject to the usual restrictions of *Shadowrun* character generation).

The character can also be touched by most of the things that affect and afflict other metahumans: magic, diseases, toxins, and severe lead poisoning. However, they are also sufficiently different that they *can* be categorized separately using magical theory if desired. Thus, a drake can be targeted and affected by a spell that targets its metatype (ie. Slay Human, Slaughter Ork, etc) as well as a spell that targets drakes (ie. Slay Drake, etc.).

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Drake characters are also immune to HMHVV—they cannot become Infected, and they cannot carry the disease. Born Infected (p. 77) may never become drakes, and cannot take the Drake or Latent Dracomorphosis qualities.

Magic

Every drake begins the game with a Magic attribute of 1, which may be increased with BP or Karma as other attributes to a maximum of 6 (+ initiate grade), as normal, and is used for any Tests involving the drake's innate powers. If a drake's Magic attribute is permanently reduced to 0, it reverts to human form and loses the ability to assume drake form again. Should Magic be reduced to 0 due to a temporary reduction caused by background count/domains, the drake loses the use of all its powers except Natural Weapon and Enhanced Senses, if any, and is stuck in its current form until it leaves the area.

Drakes are Awakened beings, but not magicians. The drake's innate abilities and powers only function in drake form. But, as dual natured beings in their dracoform, drakes may learn Assensing and Astral Combat. They cannot, however, learn or use any other Magic Skills, astrally project, initiate, or bond foci *unless* they also take an appropriate quality such as Adept, Astral Sight, Latent Awakening, Magician, or Mystic Adept at character creation.

A drake's aura always reveals its other form—if currently in drake form, their aura appears metahuman; if currently in metahuman, their aura appears to be a small dracoform. Drake magicians may use Masking to conceal their true auras. Adept powers function no matter what form the character is in.

Augmentations

Drakes can accept any augmentation, but only in their human form. These implants do not carry over to their dracoform, but aren't expelled by the body—they simply disappear and their bonuses are not available while the character is in dracoform. There is no known augmentation currently available for dracoforms.

DRAKE POWER

Shift (Drake)

A drake character has the natural ability to assume a single, specific dracoform, chosen at character creation. This form is the same gender as the metahuman, and generally shares other traits as well—eyes of the same color, scales tinted with the character's skin color, distinctive scars and injuries, tattoos, piercings, etc.—though many drakes have more exotic scale colors as well.

Samples of tissue taken from the dracoform will show metahuman DNA, not dragon, and can serve as material links (see *Material Links*, p. 28, *Street Magic*) to the character no matter what form they are in.

While in dracoform, a drake character cannot speak (though other vocalizations are possible, from a growl to a hiss) and lacks the manual dexterity to operate most metahuman equipment. A character in dracoform also cannot use 'trode nets designed for metahumans (including nanopaste trodes).

The character's dracofrom uses the character's normal attributes modified as described in the next section. Note that these modifiers also affect the character's natural minimums and maximums while in dracoform.

THE DRACOFORM

A drake's defining ability is to take on the form of a small dragon, called their dracoform or drake form. While in this form (and only in this form), the drake gains the following powers: Dual Natured, Elemental Attack, Enhanced Senses (Hearing, Low-Light Vision, Smell, Thermographic Sense), Hardened Armor 4, Mystic Armor 4, and Natural Weapon.

As dual natured beings in dracoform, characters can use their Physical attributes and Unarmed Combat skills in conjunction with their Natural Weapon attacks on *both* the astral and physical planes.

The dracoform of most drakes is that of a small Western dragon, but players can choose for their drakes to be of any of the known types of dracoforms (*Dracoforms*, p.295, *SR4*). Each form has slightly different traits and modifiers, some of which can be advantageous and others less so. The different forms that may be chosen and their abilities are discussed below:

Common Drakes resemble small western dragons. They have large wings enabling them to fly at twice their normal movement rate. They are larger than other drakes and in dracoform possess the following modifiers: +1 Reach, +4 Body, and +5 Strength.

Feathered Drakes resemble small feathered serpents. They have bright feathered wings that enable them to fly at twice their

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normal movement rate. They have no forelimbs, but their tails end in a poisonous stinger that produces venom (as the Venom power, but with Power equal to the character's Magic). They are slimmer and more agile than other drakes and benefit from the following modifiers in dracoform: +2 Agility, +2 Body, and +2 Reaction.

Oriental Drakes resemble small Eastern dragons or sirrushes. They have no wings, but can still fly at twice their normal movement rate as though swimming through the air (through a form of innate magical levitation). Oriental drakes are the only drakes with opposable thumbs and manual dexterity in drake form, allowing them to pick up and manipulate objects with their forelimbs. In drake form, they apply the following Attribute modifiers: +2 Agility, +2 Body, and +2 Strength.

Sea Drakes resemble small leviathans, and can breathe water or air indefinitely. They do not possess wings, and cannot fly, but they can walk (but not run) on land and swim at twice their normal movement rate. The drake form's modified attributes are:+2 Reaction, +2 Body, and +2 Strength.

CHARACTER IMPROVEMENT

Drakes possess the same skills and base attributes in both forms. Skills can consequently be raised normally. When improving attributes, though, the metahuman form's attributes are what count. A drake's attributes in dracoform are modified from the metahuman form's attributes, so if Karma is spent on improving an attribute, the increase translates directly to the shifted dracoform.

All other standard rules for Character Improvement (pp. 263–265, *SR4*) apply as normal.

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OPTIONAL RULE: ALTERNATE ELEMENTAL ATTACKS

The default elemental effect for a drake's Elemental Attack power is Fire. However, drake characters may switch their Elemental Attack to a different elemental effect, including those listed on pp. 164–165 of *Street Magic* by paying 15 Karma. This new elemental effect is permanent until the character decides to pay another 15 Karma and change it again.

NEW DRAKE QUALITIES

Drake

Cost: 65

A metahuman with this quality is a drake, a unique creature able to transform into a small dracoform at will. They gain the Shift (Drake) power and a Magic attribute of 1. The dracoform has the powers of Elemental Attack (Fire), Enhanced Senses (Hearing, Low-Light Vision, Smell, Thermographic Sense), Hardened Armor 4, Mystic Armor 4, and Natural Weapons (Bite/Claws: (Str/2+2)P, AP 0). Drake characters receive additional abilities and attribute modifiers dependent upon their dracoform, as described in their individual descriptions.

Characters with any of the Infected qualities, any quality that grants Resonance, and non-metahuman characters may not take this quality. The Drake quality is also incompatible with the Latent Dracomorphosis quality.

Dragons or other drakes that possess the Dragonspeech power (p. 296, *SR4*) may teach drake initiates the ability as a metamagic technique.

Latent Dracomorphosis

Cost: 5 BP

A metahuman may take the Latent Dracomorphosis quality and start the game as a regular character but may later undergo dracomorphosis and become a drake. At the start of the game, the character does not possess a Magic attribute (unless she takes another quality which grants a Magic attribute). The character may not take any of the Infected qualities, any quality that grants Resonance (such as Technomancer), or the Drake quality.

At some point during gameplay, the gamemaster may decide for the character to undergo dracomorphosis. This decision is entirely in the gamemaster's hands and should be based entirely on creating a good story—if the player is surprised, all the better. Common triggers for dracomorphosis are proximity to or engagement in powerful magical events, encounters with magical artifacts, and entering areas of very high background count. Dracomorphosis can also trigger Latent Awakenings (p. 25, *Street Magic*), but need not.

When the gamemaster decides the character has undergone dracomorphosis, the character immediately gains a Magic attribute of 1 (or keeps their own Magic attribute, if they have one). If the character's Essence is less than 1, she has lost any chance to become a drake. The player gains the Drake quality and the gamemaster chooses a dracoform for the character from those provided (p. 75). The quality does not come free, of course. The character must pay for the quality with Karma, at a cost of 120 Karma. If the character does not have Karma available at the time, the gamemaster collects it as they deem fit from any Karma awards the character earns until the debt is paid off.

CREATING AN INFECTED CHARACTER

This section provides gamemasters and players the rules necessary to build and play Infected characters. Take the time to read the rules carefully; Infected characters are very powerful and can be disruptive and unbalancing in some games. More than that, some players may be uncomfortable with the realities of being Infected, particularly the vampiric and cannibalistic aspects of these characters. Gamemasters should be careful to neither ignore the facts of being Infected nor to overemphasize the gory bits just to ram home how inhuman the characters are. Players should be careful to consider all the consequences of Infection when looking for a shortcut to power and immortality.

BUILDING AN INFECTED CHARACTER

Players can create Infected characters using the standard character generation method presented in *Shadowrun, Fourth Edition*. After a metatype or metavariant is chosen, the player picks the appropriate Infected quality (see p. 79), pays the appropriate BP cost, and adjusts her Attribute maximums and minimums according

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DUAL NATURED CHARACTERS

Characters and critters with the Dual Natured power, such as ghouls, do not suffer the usual –2 dice pool modifier for interacting with the physical world while astrally perceiving.

BORN INFECTED

While most of the Infected are transformed later in life, the *ghilani* retroviruses can and do pass into the germ line, which means that the children of the Infected can be born with the Infected quality. Such "native" Infected characters are no different mechanically from any other Infected characters. They simply grow up afflicted by their condition.

Only bandersnatchii, fomóraig, ghouls, and loup-garou can reproduce in this manner—banshees, dzoo-noo-qua, goblins, nosferatu, vampires, and wendigo pass the virus along in the germ line, and the fetus fails to develop properly. Characters that are born Infected are not carriers and cannot pass the virus on to others, though their children may still be born Infected. This can be represented by the Infertile Infected quality.

to the *Infected Attribute Modifiers Table* (p. 79) to reflect her new post-human limits. She may then continue on with buying her attributes, skills, equipment, and other qualities. Remember that a character can only have one Infected quality.

The Infected qualities do not count against a character's limit of 35 BP worth of positive qualities at character generation.

Sufficiently Inhuman

The Infected are still metahumans (except for bandersnatchii), and still subject to most of the things that target metahumans, but are sufficiently different that they can be categorized separately using magical theory. Thus, an Infected can be targeted and affected by a spell that targets its metatype (Slay Human, Slaughter Ork, etc.) as well as a spell that targets its specific subspecies (Slay Vampire, Slaughter Busaw, etc.). The character can also still take qualities and equipment restricted or built especially to accommodate her metatype. Bandersnatchii can be targeted and affected by a spells that target sasquatches (Slay Sasquatch, etc.) as well as spells that target its specific subspecies (One Less Bandersnatch, etc.).

All Infected differ somewhat from the norm for their original species; some of them greatly so. At the gamemaster's discretion, a dice pool modifier of –1 or –2 can be applied to Social Skill Tests where the Infected's outré appearance is a factor—up to –3 or –4 if the character is recognized as one of the Infected.

In the case of Intimidation Tests, or dealing with an individual or group that accepts or idolizes the Infected, an equal +1 or +2 modifier might apply; +3 or +4 if the character threatens/offers to transform the victim.

Magic and Essence

Starting Infected characters start with Essence 5 and Magic 1 during character generation. The Infected may increase their Magic attribute with BP or Karma as any other attribute to a maximum of 5 (+ initiate grade). Magic is used for any tests involving the Infected's innate powers. If an Infected character's Magic attribute is reduced to 0 (temporarily or permanently), it loses the use of all its powers except Natural Weapon and Enhanced Senses, if any.

The Infected are Awakened, but not necessarily magicians. Dual Natured Infected may learn Assensing and Astral Combat, but otherwise they cannot learn or use Magic Skills, astrally project, initiate, or bond foci unless they take an appropriate quality granting magical abilities. Dzoo-noo-qua, by virtue of their Magical Guard power, may learn Counterspelling.

During the course of a game or campaign, the Essence attribute of Infected characters with the Essence Drain power and Essence Loss weakness will fluctuate; because such characters are so far removed from the natural order, special rules apply.

For Infected characters with Essence Loss, Magic loss does *not* occur every time they lose or spend a point of Essence, and their maximum Magic attribute is equal to their current Essence + Initiate grade. If their maximum Magic attribute is lower than their current Magic attribute, their current Magic rating is adjusted down to the reduced maximum. These points are lost and must be repurchased with Karma. Infected characters can temporarily exceed their current Magic maximum by spending Essence points (see *Essence Drain*, p. 288, *SR4*). Infected characters with Essence Drain can only maintain siphoned Essence equal to twice its natural maximum (from 6 to 12). Any Essence Drained above that point is simply lost.

If any condition other than Essence Loss or another character or spirit using the Essence Drain power were to cause the Infected character to lose Essence—such as receiving a cyberware implant, or a burnout addiction—the cost is subtracted from their maximum Essence instead.

No Infected character can take Magic Resistance, and if a character with Magic Resistance becomes one of the Infected, they lose that quality.

An Infected's aura always reveals its Infected nature, though this may be masked by Metamagic as normal.

The Infected and Augmentation

Most enhancement technologies available to metahumans are also available to the Infected at similar Essence and nuyen costs. The Infected characters, however, face several disadvantages when considering augmentation: their infectious nature makes them a walking biohazard in the eyes of many facilities, not to mention that it interferes with gene treatment.

Some Infected possess the Regeneration power, which makes implantation very difficult. Modern science can circumvent certain of these restrictions using specially-formulated materials, drugs, and allergenic surgery—for a price. In practice, most Infected can accept any implant (cyberware, bioware, nanoware) without difficulty, provided they can find a street doc or facility willing to perform the surgery—double the Interval for the Availability Test when looking for a Medical Provider that will work on the Infected. Infected with the Regeneration power may only accept

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deltaware implants. Genetech augmentations of any sort are not available to the Infected at all, as the retrovirus in their systems resists and rewrites any other attempt to alter the character's genetic code. The Infected's condition also renders them immune to all known antiretroviral drugs and treatments.

Biosculpting (*Cosmetic Surgery/Biosculpting*, p. 126, *Augmentation*) to appear as normal specimens of their metatype is popular among some Infected (notably ghouls), and is treated as a Severe Modification. Note that Infected with the Regeneration power will regain their typical appearance as the damage from the surgery heals, making this of limited value to them.

Bandersnatchii follow the same augmentation rules as sasquatches (p. 84), but cannot accept metahuman geneware augmentations.

Dietary Requirement

All Infected have a dietary requirement (p. 290, *SR4*); failure to meet this dietary requirement (5% of their body weight per week) results in slow starvation. Treat this as a permanent box of Fatigue damage for each whole week the character goes without, which cannot be healed or regenerated until the character meets their minimum dietary requirement. After four weeks, the character must make a Body + Willpower (2) Test every day—if they succeed, they permanently lose one point from a Physical or Mental attribute of the gamemaster's choice; if they fail, they die of starvation. This process is accompanied by physical and mental deterioration, which may include weight loss, atrophy of muscles and flesh, damaged hair, lack of energy, hunger pains, depression, paranoia, apathy, and decreased sex drive.

A (deltaware) digestive expansion implant (p. 338, *SR4*) allows the Infected to process a more varied diet, allowing them to ingest things that would normally nauseate them without penalty, but it does not alleviate their dietary requirement.

Qualities for the Infected

Many of the Infected don't know much about their condition or fully understand its pathologies. Too often, they fall back to the

OPTIONAL RULE: INFECTED LIFESTYLE

Players and gamemasters can save some bookkeeping by making a character's dietary requirement part of his Lifestyle. The Infected character's Lifestyle costs are increased by 30 percent, and the character is assumed to receive sufficient metahuman blood or flesh to satisfy his dietary requirement—note that this does not cover Essence Loss. If using the Advanced Lifestyle Rules in this book (pp. 149–165), the Necessities category must be at least at Middle.

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tropes of Hollywood, Bollywood, and Asian horror films. As such, the Infected are justified in taking Allergies to holy symbols, garlic, silver, and other typical "vampire hunter" materials. The allergy itself is completely psychosomatic, but the effects are real to the Infected because of the stigmata effect—if they think the cross or holy water will burn them if it touches them, then their flesh will bubble and peel.

A character can represent children Infected with the Neotony metatrait, which they may take as a quality (see p. 117). This option is only available to Infected with the Immunity (Age) power.

Another quality to seriously consider is Addiction, which can either represent a character's addiction to using the Essence Drain power (Addiction: Essence) or to being subject to the Essence Drain power (Addiction: Essence Drain).

POSITIVE INFECTED QUALITIES

Each Infected character has been transformed by a species of the HMHVV retroviruses, and gains certain paranormal powers (*Powers*, p.236, *SR4*), weaknesses (*Weaknesses*, p.290, *SR4*), appearances, and appetites. The following qualities are permanent and cannot be bought off later with Karma, nor corrected through gene therapy or restoration.

A character with any Infected quality cannot take any quality that grants Resonance (and loses them if he previously possessed them). A character with the Magic Resistance quality loses it upon becoming Infected, and Infected characters cannot take the Magic Resistance quality. A character can have only one Infected quality.

Consult the *Infected Attribute Modifer Table* and adjust the character's attribute minimums and maximums; if any of the character's attributes fall outside these new minimums and maximums, increase or decrease them to conform (rating points reduced are simply lost).

OPTIONAL RULE: ALTERNATE INFECTED

The *ghilani* viruses are highly prone to mutation, and different species around the world have slightly different powers and weaknesses. The following variants are available with the gamemaster's permission; the BP costs and attribute maximums and minimums are the same as the more common species.

Abat: A Filipino vampire with Allergy (Salt, Moderate) and Dietary Requirement (Metahuman Organs) instead of Allergy (Sunlight, Moderate) and Dietary Requirement (Metahuman Blood).

Amalanhig: A Filipino/Malaysian vampire with Vulnerability (Wood) instead of Allergy (Wood, Severe).

Busaw: A West African ghoul with +1 Natural Armor and Allergy (Salt, Mild).

Gaki: An Asian ghoul with fluorescent eyes and Allergy (Sunlight, Severe) instead of Allergy (Sunlight, Mild). All gaki can astrally project as magicians (*Astral Projection*, p.183, *SR4*), even adepts and mystic adepts.

Penanggalan: An Asian vampire with Noxious Breath instead of Mist Form and Dietary Requirement (Vinegar) instead of Allergy (Wood, Severe).

Sasobonsam: An African ghoul with extremely elongated arms and legs (+1 Reach) instead of Natural Weapons. They can walk and run comfortably on all fours.

Sukuyan: A Caribbean vampire with Dietary Requirement (Salt) and Vulnerability (Wood) instead of Induced Dormancy (Lack of Air) and the –4 dice pool modifier to all Swimming-related tests. They can drink alcohol and fruit juice without becoming nauseous, but their Immunity (Toxins) does not protect them against Awakened drugs or the toxins of Awakened critters.

INFECTED ATTRIBUTE MODIFIER TABLE

BP	Metatype	BOD	AGI	REA	STR	CHA	INT	LOG	WIL	INI
30	Bandersnatch	N	N	N	N	N – 2	N	N – 1	N + 2	N
35	Loup-Garou	N + 1	N	N	N + 4	N – 2	N	N – 1	N + 1	N
35	Ghoul	N + 4	N	N + 2	N + 3	N – 2	N	N – 1	N + 2	N + 2
35	Goblin	N + 1	N	N + 1	N + 1	N – 2	N	N – 2	N + 2	N + 1*
45	Fomóraig	N + 3	N	N + 1	N + 3	N – 2	N	N	N + 1	N + 1
Fomóraig Metatype Abilities: +2 Natural Armor										
65	Banshee	N	N	N	N	N	N + 1	N	N + 1	N + 1*
100	Wendigo	N	N – 1	N	N	N + 1	N	N	N	N*
80	Dzoo-Noo-Qua	N + 2	N	N + 2	N + 1	N – 1	N	N	N + 1	N + 2*
Dzoo-Noo-Qua Metatype Abilities: +3 Natural Armor										
100	Vampire	N	N + 2	N + 2	N	N + 2	N + 1	N	N + 1	N + 3*
150	Nosferatu	N + 1	N + 1	N + 1	N + 1	N + 2	N + 2	N + 2	N + 2	N + 3*

N = natural minimum, maximum, and augmented maximum attribute; the adjusted minimum is never less than 1

* = +1 IP; this is not cumulative with any other form of IP augmentation, only the highest number of IPs apply

** These abilities are in addition to those normal for the character's race or metatype

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Bandersnatch

Cost: 30 BP

This quality may only be taken by sasquatch characters (see p. 84). The characters pelt becomes mangy and irregular as it falls out and a new adaptive thicker and shabbier coat grows back in. The bandersnatch's canines become more pronounced and its limbs become more elongated, making it seem even more animalistic.

Powers: Adaptive Coloration, Dual Natured

Weaknesses: Dietary Requirement (Sasquatch Flesh).

Banshee

Cost: 65 BP

This quality may only be taken by elf characters. The elven transformation into banshee is relatively discreet, and to outward appearances the Infected is barely noticeable. With the passage of time, a banshee's natural skin and hair color tend to fade and pale; their epidermis becoming slightly translucent with veins more visible on the surface of the skin.

Powers: Enhanced Senses (Hearing, Smell), Essence Drain, Fear, Immunity (Age, Pathogens, Toxins), Infection, Mist Form, Natural Weapon (Bite: Str/2+1P, AP 0, –1 Reach), and Regeneration.

Weaknesses: Allergy (Sunlight, Moderate), Dietary Requirement (Metahuman Blood), Essence Loss, Vulnerability (Silver), and Vulnerability (Wood). Banshees are hemovores: like vampires they cannot hold down normal food, and alcohol induces nausea (see *Vampires*, p. 294, *SR4*).

Dzoo-Noo-Qua

Cost: 80 BP

This quality may only be taken by troll characters. Following Infection, the troll's dermal deposits grow to cover more of the body becoming even more irregular, spiky, and nodular—making him a grotesque and frightening figure. The troll's natural musculature becomes more toned as skin color fades or becomes duller. The trauma of infection often diminishes intellectual capacities.

Powers: Essence Drain, Infection, Magical Guard (self only, see p. 101, *Street Magic*), Natural Weapon (Bite/Claw: DV Str/2+2P, AP 0, Reach +1) and Regeneration

Weaknesses: Allergy (Sunlight, Mild), Dietary Requirement (Metahuman Flesh) and Essence Loss.

Fomóraig

Cost: 45 BP

This quality may only be taken by troll characters. The effects of infection are extensive, including enlarged limbs, calcification of upper skin levels, massive keratinization of hands and feet, and the formation of subcutaneous deposits of bony "chestnuts." Glands develop that produce a corrosive, acidic fluid. Keratinized plates develop to cover rudimentary gill structures on each side of the long and muscular neck.

Powers: Corrosive Secretions, Magical Guard (self only, see p. 101, *SM*), and Natural Weapons (Claws/Bite: Str/2+1P, AP 0).

Weaknesses: Allergy (Air Pollution, Moderate), Allergy (Sunlight, Mild), and Dietary Requirement (Metahuman Flesh). Cooked meat makes them sick and causes nausea (see p. 245, *SR4*).

Ghoul

Cost: 35 BP

This quality may only be taken by characters of any metatype. The new ghoul's skin becomes rough and scabrous. Body and facial hair fall out during the first few days. Fingers elongate and nails harden into claws. Teeth become more pronounced, and while the eyes blind under white cataracts, his senses of hearing and smell become hyperactive.

Powers: Dual Natured, Enhanced Senses (Hearing, Smell), and Natural Weapon (Claws: DV Str/2+1P, AP 0)

Weaknesses: Allergy (Sunlight, Mild), Dietary Requirement (Metahuman Flesh), and Reduced Senses (Blind; –6 dice modifier to all tests involving purely physical sight). Ghoul characters can overcome their Reduced Senses by taking cybereyes. Ghouls can only easily digest raw meat; cooked meat makes them sick and causes nausea (see p. 245, *SR4*).

Goblin

Cost: 35 BP

This quality may only be taken by dwarf characters. New goblins rapidly purge almost all body fat and hair. They become skeletal, skin taught over bone and wiry muscle. Goblins often possess a sickening sweet body odor, which develops with time.

Powers: Enhanced Senses (Smell, Taste), Essence Drain, Immunity (Fire damage), Infection, Natural Weapons (Claws: DV Str/2+1P, AP 0), and Regeneration.

Weaknesses: Allergy (Sunlight, Mild), Dietary Requirement (Metahuman Flesh), Essence Loss, and Vulnerability (Iron). The character loses the Human Looking quality, if they have it. Goblins cannot digest heavily processed foodstuffs, and suffer from nausea (see p. 245, *SR4*) when they eat them.

Loup-Garou

Cost: 35 BP

This quality may only be taken by human characters. After the virus has run its course, the host is changed considerably: short gray-black fur covers his body, the canines become pronounced, the lips draw back baring sharper teeth, and fingernails harden into claws. The brutal transformation costs most loup-garou their intelligence, leaving them feral and animal-like.

Powers: Dual Natured, Enhanced Senses (Thermographic Vision), and Natural Weapon (Claw/Bite: DV Str/2+1P, AP 0),

Weaknesses: Allergy (Aconite, Moderate), Allergy (Horseradish, Moderate), Allergy (Sunlight, Moderate), and Dietary Requirement (Metahuman Flesh). During the 4–6 day peak of its 28-day cycle, a loup-garou will become savage and go berserk as a Bear shaman (see p. 192, *SR4*) and is treated as if it had a rating 2 adrenaline pump (p. 338, *SR4*).

Nosferatu

Cost: 150 BP

This quality may only be taken by human characters. After purging their organs, Infected characters slowly transform into nosferatu over a period of a couple of days. They lose all body and facial hair, their skin becomes pale and taught over the skin, they lose weight often becoming emaciated, and their incisors grow more pronounced and sharper.

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Powers: Compulsion, Enhanced Senses (Hearing, Low-light Vision, Thermographic Vision), Essence Drain, Fear, Immunity (Age, Pathogens, Toxins), Infection, Influence, Natural Weapon (Bite: Str/2+1P, AP 0, –1 Reach), and Regeneration. In addition, the maximum Essence a nosferatu character can drain is equal to three times its natural maximum Essence.
Weaknesses: Allergy (Sunlight, Severe), Dietary Requirement (Metahuman Blood), and Essence Loss (every 6 months).

Vampire

Cost: 100 BP

This quality may only be taken by human characters. After a phase of internal transformation and purging, the character's canines become more pronounced, his skin becomes paler, and their breathing and heartbeat shallower and slower (except when feeding).
Powers: Enhanced Senses (Hearing, Smell, Thermographic Vision), Essence Drain, Immunity (Age, Pathogens, Toxins), Infection, Mist Form, Natural Weapon (Bite: DV Str/2+1P, AP 0, –1 Reach), and Regeneration.
Weaknesses: Allergy (Sunlight, Moderate), Allergy (Wood, Severe), Dietary Requirement (Metahuman Blood), Essence Loss, and Induced Dormancy (Lack of Air). In addition, vampires are less buoyant than humans and take a –4 dice pool modifier to all Swimming-related tests. Vampires are exclusively hemovores and cannot hold down other food: alcohol in particular is very disruptive to their systems (see *Vampires*, p. 294, *SR4*).

Wendigo

Cost: 100 BP

This quality may only by taken by ork characters. The character is transformed into a powerfully-built white furred humanoid standing almost 2.5 meters tall. His nails harden into claws, and his upper and lower canine teeth develop into dagger-like fangs.
Powers: Enhanced Senses (Hearing, Smell, Vision Magnification (1)), Essence Drain, Fear, Immunity (Age, Pathogens, Toxins), Infection, Influence, Natural Weapons (Bite/Claw: DV Str/2+2P, AP 0), and Regeneration. Additionally, all wendigo are magicians; the character loses any other quality that gave them a Magic attribute, if any, and gains the Magician quality (or Mystic Adept quality, if they were previously adepts) at no cost. The character's Magic attribute does not change.
Weaknesses: Allergy (Ferrous Metals, Moderate), Allergy (Sunlight, Moderate), Dietary Requirement (Metahuman Flesh), and Essence Loss. The character also loses the Human Looking quality, if they have it.

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NEGATIVE INFECTED QUALITIES

Carrier

Bonus: 5 BP

The character is HMHVV-positive, but not one of the Infected, or one of the Infected but carrying multiple strains. Her bodily fluids carry a virus that she cannot express—such as a human carrying the retrovirus that creates Fomóraig—which the character can pass on to others. Only one of the Infected with the Infection power can become a carrier for a retrovirus that is only spread via the Infection power. Any Infected the character creates become carriers for all species of HMHVV the character is a carrier of. The character receives a –2 negative dice pool modifier to all Social Tests against other metahumans and sasquatches that know she is HMHVV-positive.

This quality may be taken more than once, with the character choosing a different strain each time. The dice pool modifier is cumulative. A character cannot carry the strains for both vampires and nosferatu.

Infertile Infected

Bonus: 5 BP (10 BP if character has the Infection power)

Only Infected characters can take this quality. The virus in this character's bodily fluids has mutated and is no longer transmissible, or the character was born Infected and the virus was never present in her system. Other characters cannot become Infected by coming in contact with her bodily fluids, and the character loses the Infection power if she has it.

INFECTION IN PLAY

The most characteristic trait shared by all of the Infected is that they are contagious. No metahuman is immune to every strain of HMHVV, though most of them are only susceptible to specific strains, and any Infected can pass their disease on to others. As such, becoming one of the Infected normally follows the same rules as catching a disease (see *Diseases, Pathogens, and Other Conditions*, p.129, *Augmentation*), with the exception of HMHVV I, which has certain special conditions (see the *Infection* power, p.289, *SR4*).

No inoculations or antiviral agent has been developed which provides any bonus or protection against any species of HMHVV, though the innate resistance to disease of dwarfs does apply, as does the Cure Disease spell, if applied in time. Hazmat suits and other protective devices can also aid against specific vectors of contagion. Note that a character can only be infected by an HMHVV strain that targets their particular metatype—attempts to infect characters of a different metavariant automatically fail, though the victim may become an unwitting carrier (at left).

Much like there are no such things as metatype "half-breeds," there are no "partial Infected"; it's all-or-nothing. By the same token, once a character has become one of the Infected, she is immune to all other species of HMHVV—a loup-garou cannot become a vampire, a troll ghoul cannot become a dzoo-noo-qua, etc.—though she may become a carrier of a different strain of HMHVV with the Carrier quality (at left).

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HMHVV I (*Ghilani Vrykolakiviridae*)
Vector: Infection power (p. 289, *SR4*)
Speed: 1 minute (1)
Penetration: –6
Power: 13
Nature: Retroviral
Effect: Coma, transformation

HMHVV I is responsible for the creation of banshees, dzoo-noo-qua, goblins, nosferatu, vampires, and wendigo and can only be spread by the Infection power. Once infected, the character has very little chance to escape the disease; if they do somehow manage to reduce its Power to 0 then the character simply dies. A character may burn a point of Edge to either guarantee they pass the test—and die in peace—or to deliberately fail the test and gain a shot at life again as one of the Infected.

If the test fails, the character falls into a coma for (30 – Body) hours as his body transforms. When the character awakens, he has lost all Resonance and technomancer abilities, acquired the appropriate Infected (Banshee, Dzoo-noo-qua, Goblin, Nosferatu, Vampire, or Wendigo) Quality, and has an Essence of 1 and Magic of 1.

HMHVV II (*Ghilani Moneriviridae*)
Vector: Contact
Speed: 1 hour (3)
Penetration: –6
Power: 13
Nature: Retroviral
Effect: Coma, Essence loss, transformation

HMHVV II is responsible for the creation of bandersnatchii, fomóraig, and loup-garou, and is typically spread by unprotected contact with those creatures or their bodily fluids. If a character succumbs to the virus, she loses 1 point of Essence—if this brings her Essence to 0 or below, the character dies. Otherwise, the character falls into a coma for (30 – Body) hours as her body transforms. When the character awakens, she has lost all Resonance and technomancer abilities, acquired the appropriate Infected (Bandersnatch, Fomóraig, or Loup-Garou) Quality, and a Magic attribute of 1 (or retains her own Magic attribute, if higher). Revitalization gene therapy cannot recover Essence lost to HMHVV II infection.

HMHVV III (*Ghilani Wichtiviridae*)
Vector: Contact
Speed: 1 day (10)
Penetration: –6
Power: 8
Nature: Retroviral
Effect: Pain, nausea, Essence loss, transformation

HMHVV III is responsible for the creation of ghouls, and is typically spread by unprotected contact with those creatures or their bodily fluids. Unlike the cases of other retroviruses in this genus, the subject is usually awake and aware during the metamorphosis. Every time the character fails the Disease Resistance Test, he loses 0.1 points of Essence. If his Essence falls to 0 or below, he dies.

The character should keep track of how many points of Essence he loses every time he is infected with HMHVV III. After losing 1.0 points of Essence in this fashion, the disease halts (if still ongoing). The character loses all Resonance and technomancer abilities and gains the Infected (Ghoul) Quality and a Magic attribute of 1 (or retains his own Magic attribute, if higher). Revitalization gene therapy cannot recover Essence lost to HMHVV III infection.

Triggered Awakenings

Becoming one of the Infected often triggers magical talent. If the character possesses the Latent Awakening quality (p. 25, *Street Magic*), then the gamemaster should pick an appropriate quality for the character and apply it immediately, as given in the description of that quality. If the Infected is a wendigo, this quality *must* be the Magician quality (or Mystic Adept quality if the character was previously an Adept).

NEW CRITTER POWERS

Adaptive Coloration

Type: P • **Action:** None • **Range:** Self • **Duration:** Always

The Adaptive Coloration power allows a creature to refract light around itself and thus become nearly invisible. When the creature remains immobile, there is a –6 dice pool modifier for Perception tests to detect it by sight; when the creature is moving, the dice pool modifier drops to –4. Because this power effects the depth perception of onlookers, add an additional –2 dice pool modifier of any ranged attack against the creature.

This power works against natural and augmented thermographic vision, but has no effect against nonvisual senses such as sonar, radar, scent tracking, or astral perception. However, some creatures may have a version of this power that effects a wider range of senses.

Corrosive Secretions

Type: P • **Action:** None • **Range:** Self • **Duration:** Always

Creatures with the Corrosive Secretions power ooze a corrosive substance from their skin, equivalent to an acid (see *Acids and Alkalis*, p. 80, *Arsenal*) with a rating equal to the critter's Essence; this damage affects anything or anyone that touches or is touched by the creature. The creature is immune to its own corrosive secretions.

NEW CRITTER WEAKNESSES

Induced Dormancy

If the creature is cut off from some material—usually air or water, but sometimes something more exotic—for more than (Essence) minutes, it falls unconscious indefinitely. However, if the creature is exposed to that substance again, it regains consciousness within a minute.

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CREATING A SAPIENT CRITTER CHARACTER

This section provides rule for players to create sapient critter characters.

Sapient critters follow the same character generation procedures as metahuman characters, except for the limitations and special considerations given below. Instead of choosing a metatype, the player selects what type of sapient critter they will play and pays the appropriate BP cost given in the Sapient Critter Attribute Table. This table also gives the sapient critter's attribute maximums and minimums.

Centaur

A centaur's three-fingered hand makes using many items slightly awkward; often forcing them to remove trigger guards and shorten grips, but their real difficulty is trying to navigate their bulk in tight hallways or walking backwards. Centaurs also find metahuman social cues difficult to judge and are easily agitated by displays of teeth and direct stares; this is represented by the Uncouth disadvantage, which may be bought off during or after character generation in the same manner as Uneducated.

Powers: Enhanced Senses (Low-Light Vision, Thermographic Vision), Magic Sense, Natural Weapon (Kick: DV (Str/2)P, AP 0), Sapience, Search

Weaknesses: Uneducated, Uncouth

Naga

These critters possess no hands, which makes wielding and manipulating most gear difficult—most naga magicians learn the Magic Fingers spell to compensate. Naga who interact with metahuman society develop sufficient skill with computers to electronically open automated doors and devices using their commlinks. Nagas may be "milked" for one dose of their venom (see *Naga Venom*, p.84, *Arsenal*) every hour.

Powers: Armor (2/3), Dual Natured, Guard, Natural Weapon (Bite: DV (Str/2)P, AP 0), Sapience, Venom

Weaknesses: Uneducated

Sasquatch

Linguasofts are very valuable for sasquatches, as sign-to-speech, sign-to-text, text-to-sign, and speech-to-sign patches can be easily downloaded for free from the Matrix. This means a sasquatch can use AR gloves with an appropriate linguasoft to translate their sign language into relevant text or computer-generated speech for the language on the linguasoft. If the sasquatch has an image link and the appropriate linguasoft, any text they see or speech they hear in the language can be translated into animated sign language in their image link. This enables erudite, tech-savvy sasquatches to "speak" to other metahumans without much trouble.

Powers: Dual Natured, Mimicry, Sapience

Weaknesses: Uneducated

Pixie

A pixie character can turn her astral perception on or off at will, just like a metahuman magician or adept with the Astral Perception power, but she cannot bond foci without taking an appropriate quality.

Powers: Concealment (Self Only), Enhanced Senses (Astral Perception), Sapience

Weaknesses: Vanishing, Uneducated

Not Metahuman

Sapient critters are not metahumans, and thus cannot be targeted by spells that specifically target metahumans (Slay Elf, etc.). Likewise, they cannot be infected with HMHVV (except for sasquatches) or become drakes.

Each sapient species has a different lifespan, though this generally does not have any impact on the game. What will have an impact is the very different shapes and sizes of sapient critters—the naga lack of hands, for example, generally puts them at a great disadvantage in metahuman society. Centaurs are large equine quadrupeds ill-suited for many built up areas. Players should be very aware of the limitations inherent in their body types and play them accordingly.

Further, metahuman dwellings, settlements, equipment, foods, and healthcare are not designed with other sapient species in mind—the lifestyle costs for sapient critters are increased by 50%. At the gamemaster's discretion, items of normal equipment may need to be custom-modified or specially built for the character.

All sapient critters begin the game with an Essence of 6, and their maximum Edge is 5, except for pixies who have a maximum Edge of 7.

Magic

Every sapient critter begins the game with a Magic attribute of 1, which may be increased with BP or Karma as any other attribute to a maximum of 6 (+ initiate grade), as normal, and is used for any tests involving its innate powers. If a sapient critter's Magic attribute goes to 0, it loses the use of all its powers except Sapience, Natural Weapons, and Armor, if any.

SAPIENT CRITTER ATTRIBUTE TABLE

BP	Critter	BOD	AGI	REA	STR	CHA	INT	LOG	WIL	INI
30	Centaur	2/7(10)	1/6 (9)	1/6 (9)	2/7 (10)	1/6 (9)	1/5 (7)	1/5 (7)	1/6 (9)	2/11 (16)
	Centaur Critter Abilities: Enhanced Senses (Low-Light Vision, Thermographic Vision), +1 Reach									
30	Naga	3/8 (10)	1/4 (6)	2/7 (10)	4/9 (12)	2/7 (10)	1/6 (9)	1/6 (9)	2/7 (10)	4/14 (19)
35	Pixie	1/3 (5)	3/8 (12)	3/8 (12)	1/3 (5)	3/8 (12)	2/7 (10)	2/7 (10)	3/8 (12)	5/15 (22)
	Pixie Critter Abilities: Enhanced Sense (Astral Perception)									
40	Sasquatch	6/11 (16)	1/6 (9)	1/6 (9)	5/10 (15)	1/6 (9)	1/6 (9)	1/6 (9)	1/6 (9)	2/12 (18)
	Sasquatch Critter Abilities: +1 Reach									

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Sapient critters are Awakened, but they are not magicians. Those sapient critters with the Dual Natured or Enhanced Senses (Astral Perception) powers may learn Assensing and Astral Combat, but otherwise they cannot learn or use Magic Skills, astrally perceive or project, initiate, or bond foci unless they take an appropriate quality such as Adept, Astral Sight, Magician, or Mystic Adept.

Most sapient critters follow magical traditions similar to metahumans in their native area or according to their upbringing. Some especially well-developed cultures, like the Naga Kingdom or the Korrigan, might follow their own unique traditions. Spirits of Man summoned by sapient critters tend to resemble members of their own species.

Augmentations

Most enhancement technologies available to metahumans are not available to sapient critters at similar Essence and nuyen costs. Metahumans simply never designed cyberlimbs and implants for other sapients, many of whom possess vastly different anatomies than their closest non-paranormal relations, and surgeons experienced in operating on them are few and far between. On top of these difficulties, few sapient critters go in for augmentation—loss of Essence will cause them to lose Magic, which might eliminate their powers altogether.

Sapient critters can only accept deltaware bioware and cyberware implants, and even all replacement limbs and organs must be cultured (see *Transplants and Organ Replacements*, p.126, *SR4*) from the character's own cells. Sapient critters can accept geneware and nanoware without difficulty.

Urgent Message...

OPTIONAL RULE: CHROME CRITTERS

At their discretion, the gamemaster may allow sapient critter characters to accept a non-deltaware implant appropriate for its body type, but for purposes of Essence cost, such implants are treated effectively as second-hand cyberware or bioware (see p. 32 and 61, *Augmentation*) instead of their normal grade.

Movement

Sapient critters use the values given in the *Sapient Critter Movement Table*. Note that for nagas, "walking" is actually slithering, while a pixie's most common form of movement is flying.

Uneducated

Every sapient critter character begins the game with the Uneducated Weakness to reflect the rarity of sapient critters and their unfamiliarity with metahuman society and technology. This Weakness may be bought off during character creation for 20 BP, or during gameplay by paying 40 Karma—this need not be a "lump sum," the player can pay the quality off gradually to reflect their character's growing adaptation to the Sixth World. However, the full effects of this weakness remain in play until the Weakness is completely bought off.

SAPIENT CRITTER MOVEMENT TABLE

Critter	Walking Rate (m/turn)	Running Rate (m/turn)
Pixie *	1	4
Naga **	5	20
Sasquatch	15	35
Centaur	20	100

* Pixies can fly at a "walking" rate of 20 m/turn and a "running" rate of 50 m/turn

** Nagas can swim at a "walking" rate of 8 m/turn and a "running" rate of 20 m/turn

Urgent Message...

NEW CRITTER WEAKNESS

Vanish

When a critter would die from any cause, be it old age or the detonation of a nuclear weapon, it vanishes from this world, leaving no trace. This disappearance can be captured on film, video, or trideo cameras with ease, but there is no way known to stop or prevent it—even the critter itself seems powerless to remain. Researchers debate exactly where the critters go; many suggest they transition to some metaplane where they cannot die. Naturally, no resuscitation, autopsy, or cybermantic procedure is viable on the critter without a body to work with.

NEW CRITTER POWER: SHIFT

Type: M • **Action:** Complex • **Range:** Self • **Duration:** Special

This power allows the critter to take on the shape of a specific animal or metahuman, and back again to its original form. The critter's attribute ratings carry over to the new form, as do any purely internal deltaware implants, geneware, and nanoware; non-deltaware implants are automatically rejected during the change, causing (total Essence cost of implants x 10, round down)P damage—the character does not recover the Essence from implants lost in this fashion. Purely cosmetic alterations such as piercings and tattoos are lost as well, though this does not injure the critter.

When in their new shape, the creature gains access to all non-paranormal abilities innate to that race, including Armor, Natural Weapons, and Enhanced Senses, if any. The creature retains all of its paranormal powers in its new form.

Once the critter uses the shift power, it remains in its current form until it decides to shift back. The critter does not suffer a –2 penalty for sustaining this power. This power only affects the creature's own physical form, not its clothing or equipment; the process of the change destroys most fabrics.

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CREATING A SHAPESHIFTER CHARACTER

As a variety of sapient species capable of taking metahuman form, shapeshifters warrant a section of their own providing gamemasters and players the rules necessary to build and play such characters in their games. Take the time to read the rules carefully; shapeshifter characters may prove potentially disruptive and unbalancing in some games. Incorporating a shapeshifter into a campaign can be an excellent roleplaying challenge given their dualistic nature.

Shapeshifters are built just like other characters, using the process detailed in *SR4*. Instead of a metatype, however, shifters choose a shifter type from the options given below and consult the Shapehifter Type Attribute Table (below) for their racial attribute minimums and maximums. These attribute values apply for both the shapeshifter's human and metahuman forms. In addition, shifter characters must abide by the special conditions outlined below.

Not Human

Shapeshifters are animals, not metahumans, and cannot be targeted by spells that specifically target humans (Slay Human, etc.); they can be targeted by spells that target either their parent species (Slay Wolf, Slaughter Bear, etc.) or their specific species (One Less Lion Shapeshifter, Slay Fox Shapeshifter, etc.) Shapeshifters cannot be infected with HMHVV or become drakes.

Shapeshifter characters mature at the same rate as their parent species, but have longer lifespans, comparable to orks. Many shapeshifters are loners, having been raised in the wilds or on the fringes of metahuman society, and have

SHAPESHIFTER MOVEMENT TABLE

Shapeshifter Type	Walking Rate (m/turn)	Running Rate (m/turn)
Eagle*, Seal**	3	6
Fox	12	30
Bear, Lion, Tiger, Wolf	15	50
Jaguar, Leopard	15	80

* Eagles can fly at a "walking" rate of 18 m/turn and a "running" rate of 80 m/turn

** Seals can swim at a "walking" rate of 8 m/turn and a "running" rate of 20 m/turn

INCOMING FEED.....

SHAPESHIFTER TYPE ATTRIBUTE TABLE

BP	Shapehifter Type	BOD	AGI	REA	STR	CHA	INT	LOG	WIL	INI
50	Fox	1/5(7)	2/7(10)	2/7(10)	1/4(6)	1/6(9)	2/7(10)	1/6(9)	1/6 (9)	4/14(20)
	Shapehifter Abilities: –1 Reach*, Enhanced Senses (Hearing, low light vision, smell, taste)									
55	Wolf	1/6(9)	1/6(9)	1/6(9)	1/6(9)	1/6(9)	1/6(9)	1/6(9)	1/6(9)	2/12(18)
	Shapehifter Abilities: Enhanced Senses (Hearing, low light vision, smell, taste)									
60	Eagle	1/6(9)	1/6(9)	1/6(9)	1/6(9)	2/7(10)	1/6(9)	1/6(9)	3/9(13)	2/12(18)
	Shapehifter Abilities: Enhanced Senses (Vision Enhancement(2), Vision Magnification)									
65	Leopard/Jaguar	3/8(12)	5/8(12)	2/7(10)	2/7(10)	1/5(7)	1/5(7)	1/5(7)	1/5(7)	3/12(18)
	Shapehifter Abilities: Enhanced Senses (Hearing, low light vision, smell)									
70	Seal	4/9(13)	4/9(13)	1/6(9)	2/7(10)	1/6(9)	1/6(9)	1/6(9)	1/5(7)	2/12(18)
	Shapehifter Abilities: Enhanced Senses (Low light vision)									
75	Tiger/Lion	4/9(13)	5/8(12)	2/7(10)	3/8(12)	1/6(9)	1/5(7)	1/5(7)	1/5(7)	3/12(18)
	Shapehifter Abilities: +1 Reach*, Enhanced Senses (Hearing, low light vision, smell)									
80	Bear	7/13(19)	1/4(6)	1/5(7)	7/13(19)	1/6(9)	1/5(7)	1/5(7)	1/5(7)	2/10(16)
	Shapehifter Abilities: +1 Reach, +1 natural armor*, Enhanced Sense (Smell)									

* Only in critter form

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OPTIONAL RULE: ALTERNATE SHAPESHIFTERS

Not every shapeshifter in the Sixth World is identical. Every family of critters offers variation, different species which are intimately related to each other, but each with their own unique traits. Shapeshifters, like the mundane critters from which they expressed, are no different. Some of these differences are superficial as far as statistics and attributes go; a derivation of their mundane origins—a bear shapeshifter that expressed from a polar bear and one that expressed from a grizzly bear are functionally identical, aside from coloration and the developmental impact of growing up in different climates and cultures.

Other shapeshifters show variation in their paranormal abilities, which can be reflected in their weaknesses and powers. These differences often have correspondences with local traditions and legends, though rarely do the myths and legends reflect the whole of the story. Naturally, these local variations typically only express in native species—whether the belief shaped the paracritter or pre-Awakening encounters with members of the paraspecies provided the inspiration for the local stories is a matter of heated academic debate. Shapeshifters are naturally more mobile than normal members of their critter species, of course, and metahuman transport of foreign species across the globe ensures that these alternate shapeshifters could potentially occur almost anywhere—though they are much more common in their natural habitats.

These options *must* be selected at character creation, and cannot be changed or bought off later on.

Untouched By Silver

Shapeshifters are not the were-creatures of legend, though they resemble them to a degree. While many European myths hold to silver as anathema to werewolves and the like, other regions and cultures with their own shapeshifter tales account for different weaknesses. The *warek* (leopard) shapeshifters of Africa's Gold and Ivory Coast, for example, are known to be vulnerable and allergic to gold, while some wolf shapeshifters in Europe are vulnerable and allergic to toxic aconite.

Players may, with the gamemaster's permission, exchange their shapeshifter's Vulnerability and Allergy for another natural, uncommon substance appropriate to the paracritter's local environment.

Not Always Quite Human

Shapeshifters look mostly human—normally. Through some quirk of magic or paragenetics, some shapeshifters can transform into a form that more closely resembles another metatype, or even metavariants. This is represented by changing their Shift (Human) power to another, as appropriate—Shift (Elf), Shift(Oni), etc.—and spending an additional number of BP equal to the typical cost for that race –10 BP. A shapeshifter with a different metatype gains their standard metatype abilities (see *Metatype Attribute Table*, p. 72, *SR4*) when in that form.

difficulty adapting to life in cities and metroplexes. They are also much more prone to violence than typical metahumans, especially if scared or provoked.

Shifter Powers

All shapeshifters start out with the Shift (Human), Regeneration, and Sapience powers, as well as the weaknesses Allergy (Silver, Severe) and Vulnerability (Silver). Their Natural Weapons (Claws/Bite: DV Str/2 + 2, AP 0) are usually only available in their critter form. Shapeshifter characters also have Enhanced Senses that they retain in both their animal and human forms, as noted in the *Shapeshifter Attribute Table* (p. 86).

Magic

Every shapeshifter begins the game with a Magic attribute of 1, which may be increased with BP or Karma as any other attribute to a maximum of 6 (+ initiate grade), as normal, and is used for any tests involving its innate powers. If a shapeshifter's Magic attribute goes to 0, it reverts to its animal form and loses the use of all its powers except Sapience, Natural Weapons, and Enhanced Senses, if any.

Shapeshifters are Awakened but they are not magicians. Shapeshifters are dual-natured beings in both forms, and, as such, they may learn Assensing and Astral Combat, but otherwise they cannot learn or use Magic Skills, astrally project, initiate, or bond foci unless they take an appropriate quality such as Adept, Astral Sight, Magician, or Mystic Adept.

Most shapeshifters follow magical traditions similar to metahumans in their native area or according to their upbringing. It is very rare for shapeshifters to possess a mentor spirit different than their animal type. Spirits of Man summoned by shapeshifters tend to resemble members of their own species.

A shapeshifter's aura always reveals its true form—that of an animal, not a metahuman. Shapeshifter magicians may use Masking to conceal their true auras. Adept powers function no matter what form the character is in.

Augmentations

Most enhancement technologies available to metahumans are also available to animals at similar Essence and nuyen costs. Shapeshifter characters, however, face several disadvantages when considering augmentation: their Regeneration power heals incisions rapidly, Shift rejects any foreign matter, and any loss of Essence will cause them to lose Magic—which could potentially cause them to be stuck in critter form permanently. Modern science can circumvent certain of these restrictions using specially-formulated materials and surgical techniques—for a price.

In practice, this means that shapeshifters can only accept deltaware implants, and only in their natural animal forms. These implants do not carry over to their human form, but they don't disappear either—they're simply not available while the character is in human form.

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Urgent Message...

FLIGHT (STRENGTH)

The Flying skill is used to increase the distance a character can fly, as well as determine how well she can pace herself and conserve energy while flying. Flying characters may use this skill to dive downward as if sprinting using the running rules (see *Using Running*, p. 117, *SR4*); the Diving specialization applies.

Default: Yes
Skill Group: Athletics
Specializations: Diving, Long Distance, Rough Weather

Movement

When in human form, a shapeshifter uses the appropriate values in the *Movement Rate Table* on p. 138, *Shadowrun, Fourth Edition*. In their natural critter form, a shapeshifter uses the values given in the *Shapeshifter Movement Table*.

NEW SHAPESHIFTER POWERS

Shift (Human)

A shapeshifter can only assume a single, specific human form, chosen at character creation. This form is the same gender as the animal, and generally shares other traits as well—eyes of the same color, hair similar to the animal's fur or plumage, distinctive scars and injuries, tattoos, etc. The human form's apparent ethnicity is often (but not always), similar to that of humans residing in its native area and possesses unique fingerprints and retinas which are consistent from transformation to transformation. Samples of tissue taken from the human form will show animal, not human, DNA and can serve as material links (see *Material Links*, p. 28, *Street Magic*) to the character regardless of current form.

Shapeshifters retain all of their powers and weaknesses in shifted human form except for their Natural Weapon.

Qualities

Shapeshifters can take every quality they qualify for except those that grant Resonance. Given their common lack of education and familiarity with metahuman society in general, the Uncouth and Uneducated negative qualities are both highly appropriate. The Hunted negative quality may be appropriate if a bounty exists on shapeshifters in the area or if poachers hunt animals of the shapeshifter's type for fur or use in traditional medicines.

CREATING AN AI CHARACTER

Many new forms of life have sprung up since the Awakening. All things considered, none are newer than the "synthetic intelligence," better known as the AI. Risen out of the complex code of modern Matrix programs, the new crop of AIs made their appearance shortly after the public emergence of technomancers. Regarded as dangerous by many, these new beings have worked their way into modern society. Young AIs have become security hackers, librarians, service personnel, taxi drivers, and even shadowrunners.

Metasapient AIs (p. 167, *Unwired*) can be played as player characters. Each PC AI follows the rules presented here. Such AIs are special in that they are tracked in a "higher resolution" than NPC artificial intelligences. AI player characters are protagonists in the story and so merit greater detail. References to AIs or metasapients in this section are to PC artificial intelligences.

THE EMERGENT SELF

Artificial intelligences emerge or evolve from existing programs, whether they be standard or hacking programs, node operating systems, or even firewalls. Hackers tend to believe that this is a natural consequence of using code that is self-adjusting and adaptive, but most mathematics and computer science academics remain skeptical.

Starting AI characters are newly-emergent. The PC metasapient was "born" within a few months to a year of the start of play. As such, many have a rather fresh or even naive outlook on the world.

AIs exist purely in the Matrix. They are programs, rather than physical beings, and are quite different than metahumans. The "racial" cost for an artificial intelligence is 110 BP. Additional differences in character creation are as follows.

Welcome to My Mind

Each metasapient has an origin, the type of program from which it was born. This origin includes what the AI used to be (usually an agent of some sort), and its original duties. For example, an AI might have been born of a marketing analysis tool for a Matrix shopping site, an autonomous firing platform control program, or an interactive doll. Even though the AI has developed its own sapience, it never quite loses the programming of its origin. The origin of an AI player character informs its personality, outlook, and inherent programming.

Artificial intelligences are autonomous programs, existing as loaded programs in a node. An AI counts as a single program toward the process limit of the node in which it is residing. It may also make connections and create icons in other nodes as a normal Matrix user, but it exists in a single node at any given time. An AI may, as a Complex Action, move to another node to which it has an open subscription and on which it has admin access privileges. While a metasapient may reside in a drone, and even use a drone as its home node, it may not "jump into" a drone or other rigged device, as it has no motor cortex with which to interface.

Since the Matrix is the metasapient's native environment, all AIs receive a +3 dice pool modifier to Matrix Perception Tests.

Artificial intelligences all have their own access ID (p. 216, *SR4*). This access ID is more entrenched in the core of the metasapient's being than it is in a more mundane device or program. As a result, it takes longer for an AI to alter its access ID with a Spoof program, as it must alter and rework a part of itself. To spoof its own access ID, it must succeed in an Extended Software + Spoof (AI's Rating, 1 day) Test.

The Body Electric

As a being made purely of data, AIs have certain advantages and disadvantages that metahumans do not. They are immune to aging, at least as far as has been determined. They are immune to biological diseases and toxins. They do not need to sleep, although the process of realigning is analogous. They can be trapped in a node that gets isolated from the rest of the Matrix.

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AIs have no Physical attributes, but do have Mental attributes and Edge. An AI's Initiative is equal to its Intuition rating plus its Response rating; they get three Initiative Passes per Combat Turn. AIs have no Essence.

An AI's Mental attributes and Edge start at 1. It may buy up these attributes at the standard BP costs for attributes (p. 73, *SR4*). The natural maximum for the Mental attributes is 6, and the natural maximum for the Edge attribute is equal to the AI's Rating, which is described as follows.

The Rating attribute expresses the general strength of the AI. It is equal to the average of the AI's four Mental attributes, rounded up. A metasapient's Rating acts as the natural maximum for its Edge.

An artificial intelligence has two Matrix attributes, Response and Signal, that are always the same as the Response and Signal of the node in which they are at the time. The AI also has two Matrix attributes that are independent of the node in which the AI is residing: System and Firewall. Like Rating, these are derived attributes. The System attribute is the average of the Intuition and Logic attributes, rounded up. Similarly, the Firewall attribute is the average of the Charisma and Willpower attributes.

> *The AI, Corvus, has Charisma 2, Intuition 5, Logic 4, and Willpower 3. Its Rating attribute is the average of all four Mental attributes, which is 3.5, rounded up to 4. Its System is the average of Intuition and Logic, which is 4.5, rounded up to 5. Its Firewall is the average of its Willpower and Charisma, which is 2.5, rounded up to 3.*

The only Condition Monitor that applies to a metasapient is the Matrix Condition Monitor, which starts at 8 plus half the AI's System rating (rounded up).

Codebase

AIs have programs that are part of its code. These inherent programs are the remnants of its origin. Inherent programs are part of the AI. They are always loaded, but do not take up any process space beyond the AI's own. A metasapient may never have more inherent programs than its Rating. If its Rating should decrease, it may lose one or more inherent programs (permanently).

INHERENT PROGRAM INITIAL RATING TABLE

Attribute	Program
Charisma	Attack, Black Hammer, Blackout, Command, Disarm, Nuke, Spoof
Intuition	Analyze, Decrypt, Edit, Scan, Sniffer, Stealth
Logic	Browse, Corrupt, Data Bomb, Defuse, Encrypt, Exploit
Willpower	Armor, ECCM, Medic, Purge, Reality Filter, Track

An AI player character starts with a number of free inherent programs equal to its Rating. These inherent programs must be appropriate to the AI's origin, and are subject to approval by the gamemaster. Inherent programs start at a rating equal to the rating of one of the AI's Mental attributes; each program is based on a specific attribute. Inherent program ratings may not be increased at character generation, but may be advanced later during play.

Inherent programs automatically have the Ergonomic and Optimize (pp. 114–115, *Unwired*), but may not have any other options. Inherent programs may not be copied, cracked, infected, traded, or run by any other icon; they are an integral part of the AI. Also note that only the initial ratings of inherent programs are based on the AI's attributes, but the AI does not use its Mental attributes for Matrix Tests.

Metasapients may also purchase programs with nuyen. These programs follow the normal rules for programs. The AI may load them into itself, carrying them as would an agent. Loaded programs must be run before they can be used, and take up processor space as normal. AIs may only load and directly use Common Use, Hacking, Knowsoft, and Agent Autosoft programs.

Sk33lz

Obviously, AIs have no bodies. This limits the usefulness of many Active skills. An AI may still learn these skills, at the normal cost, for use when remotely controlling devices. Metasapients may never have a Magic or Resonance attribute, and so may not learn skills that require these attributes.

AI QUALITIES

The following qualities are appropriate for metasapients, and may be bought at character generation. An asterisk (*) denotes a quality found in this book.

Positive Quality	Cost (BP)	Ref
Aptitude	10 BP	p. 77, *SR4*
Authority	10 BP	p. 168, *Unwired*
Code Flux	5 BP	p. 168, *Unwired*
Codeslinger	10 BP	p. 78, *SR4*
Exceptional Attribute	20 BP	p. 78, *SR4*
First Impression	5 BP	p. 78, *SR4*
Guts	5 BP	p. 78, *SR4*
High Pain Tolerance	5 to 15 BP	p. 78, *SR4*
Home Ground	10 BP	p. 78, *SR4*
Intuitive Hacking	5 BP	p. 37, *Unwired*
Lucky	20 BP	p. 79, *SR4*
Obscure	5 BP	p. 37, *Unwired*
Photographic Memory	10 BP	p. 80, *SR4*
Piloting Origin	5 or 10 BP	p. 91
Redundancy	5 BP	p. 169, *Unwired*
Rootkit	10 BP	p. 169, *Unwired*
Sapper	5 BP	p. 169, *Unwired*

Negative Quality	Bonus (BP)	Ref
Addiction	+5 to +30 BP	p. 80, *SR4*
Bad Luck	+20 BP	p. 81, *SR4*
Codeblock	+5 BP	p. 81, *SR4*
Combat Paralysis	+20 BP	p. 81, *SR4*
Data Shadow	+5 BP/level	p. 37, *Unwired*
Ghost in the Machine	5 or 10 BP	p. 91
Gremlins	+5 to +20 BP	p. 81, *SR4*
Incompetent	+5 BP	p. 82, *SR4*
Low Pain Tolerance	+10 BP	p. 82, *SR4*
Media Junkie	+5 to 30 BP	p. 37, *Unwired*
SINner	+5 or +10 BP	p. 83, *SR4*
Uncouth	+20 BP	p. 83, *SR4*
Uneducated	+20 BP	p. 83, *SR4*

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Quality Assurance

Due to their unique nature, AIs may not take certain qualities. The qualities available for metasapient PCs are listed in the AI Qualities sidebar. AIs have the same limits on purchasing qualities that metahuman characters have. A full list of qualities can be found starting on p. 182.

Node Sweet Node

Every metasapient has its own home node. This home could be a nexus, or a commlink, or a vending machine, or even a drone (which would allow it to interact more effectively with the physical world). An AI needs a home to maintain its connection to the Matrix. An AI's Rating is reduced by 1 for every week it is without a home of any kind.

An AI's home node is definitely its castle. The metasapient's presence improves the node while it resides there, optimizing the device. The home node's Matrix attributes are increased by the amount listed on the Home Node Adjustmen table.

Being the home of an AI puts a strain on the node's resources, both hardware and software. A node must be kept in top condition, with the latest upgrades and technology, in order for it to continue to serve without breaking down. This cost is analogous to metahuman lifestyle costs, and an AI must arrange payment of this upkeep or risk losing its home.

A home node's base Device rating and its lifestyle cost are linked. The Home Node Lifestyle table gives the lifestyle cost appropriate to the base Device rating of the AI's home node. If the home node does not have a generic Device rating, use the highest Matrix attribute rating (not including Signal) as the Device rating when reading the table. Note that the rating increase due to the node being the AI's home does not count in this calculation.

Use the standard rules for keeping up the payments (p. 262, *SR4*). If the AI's lifestyle is downgraded, so is its home node.

Should an AI find that it needs a new home, or wishes to move out of its current digs, it may do so by performing the following steps. First, if its old home node has not been destroyed, it must spend a Complex Action in that node to remove itself from the premises. When this happens, the node immediately loses the bonuses it gained from the AI's presence. Next, it must enter the new home node and gain an admin account there. It then makes an Extended Intuition + Reality Filter (10, 1 day) Test, after which it has its new home and grants its bonuses to the new node.

An AI may only have one home node at a time. Any given node may only be home to a single AI at a time.

HOME NODE ADJUSTMENT TABLE

Node Matrix Attribute	Rating Increase (round up)
Response	AI's INT/2
Signal	AI's CHA/2
System	AI's LOG/2
Firewall	AI's WIL/2

HOME NODE LIFESTYLE TABLE

Base Device Rating	Lifestyle
1	Squatter
2–3	Low
4–5	Middle
6	High
7+	Luxury

Realignment and Restoration

Metasapients have maintenance subroutines that work with code created within its home node to repair damage. While in its home node, an AI may make an Extended Rating + System test with an interval of one day, healing one box of Matrix damage for each hit. The Medic program is also an effective means of healing the AI, but, due to the complexity of the AI's code, the program may only be used once on any given set of damage (similar to First Aid on metahumans).

If an AI's Matrix Condition Monitor is filled, it begins a process called realigning; this process is described on page 166, *Unwired*. Additionally, if the damage taken by the AI ever overflows its Condition Monitor by more than its Willpower rating, it must succeed in a Willpower + Edge (2) Test or have its highest-rated Mental attribute reduced by 1 immediately before realigning begins (if there is more than one highest-rated Mental attribute, choose randomly). If this results in the AI's Rating being reduced, the AI also loses an inherent program, chosen at random, that may never be recovered.

If a node in which an AI is running shuts down, the AI is stored in memory and trapped. When the node restarts, the AI begins the process of realigning immediately.

An AI can only be destroyed under three circumstances. First, if its home node is shut down while the AI is present and in the process of realigning, it is slain. Second, the AI is killed if the node in which an AI is running or trapped is physically destroyed. Third, the AI is destroyed if attribute loss from Matrix damage overflow reduces one of its Mental attributes to zero. Metasapients may escape destruction by burning a point of Edge (p. 68, *SR4*). Artificial intelligences are intricate, dynamic programs and cannot be copied or have backups made.

Metasapient Advancement

Metasapients do not gain Karma, at least not the karmic energy that metahuman characters gather in their adventures. They do learn and grow, however, and the disorder in their hyperdimensional cognitive matrices is highly analogous to Karma.

AI characters earn Karma as do normal characters. However, this is not normal Karma, and cannot be drained by Energy Drain, given to spirits, or otherwise transferred. For all other intents and purposes, it is real Karma.

Metasapients may improve attributes, improve or buy new skills, and buy or buy off qualities as would a metahuman. When an AI's Mental attributes are increased, its Rating and Matrix attributes are recalculated accordingly. Additionally, AIs may improve an inherent program rating by 1 for a Karma cost equal to the new rating; the upper limit of the rating of an inherent program is equal to twice the AI's System rating.

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AI QUALITIES

These are new qualities that apply to AI characters only.

Piloting Origin

Cost: 5 or 10 BP

The AI's origin is (or is related to) that of a drone or vehicle pilot program. With the 5 BP version of this quality, the character with this quality can interpret rigger signals and may "jump into" rigged vehicles as would a rigger. The 10 BP version of this quality is the same, except that the AI may load and directly use all autosoft programs, using the program rating in place of its own skill.

Ghost in the Machine

Bonus: 15 BP

The AI's origin is that of an e-ghost, a metasapient that is, for all intents and purposes, an imperfect copy of a formerly living person (p. 170, *Unwired*). Most e-ghosts are only vaguely aware of their previous life, remembering most clearly the events leading to the death of the person in question and perhaps any unfinished business or injustices left over from that person's previous life. Some e-ghosts are aware of their "new" life, while some believe themselves still alive and trapped in the Matrix.

E-ghosts follow all the same rules as AIs, except that they do not receive any free inherent programs at character generation.

CREATING A FREE SPIRIT CHARACTER

These rules cover the play of free spirits as player characters. A PC free spirit is somewhat different than an NPC. The PC has a greater level of detail, because, as one of the story's protagonists, it is more important than NPC free spirits. As such, they follow somewhat different rules. Unless otherwise specified, all references to free spirits in this section denote PC free spirits (NPC free spirits use the rules on p. 106, *Street Magic,* unless the gamemaster chooses otherwise).

BORN FREE

When a free spirit is born, it is released from its previous fetters and into the world. Sometimes it recalls its prior life, but, even then, it rarely remembers more than cloudy images and emotions. It starts its new life in the physical world as a sentient but somewhat naive entity. It often takes a few years for a free spirit to get up to speed with modern society. Once it has a chance to learn the ways of its new home, it can start to find its niche in life.

It goes without saying that free spirits are different from the native denizens of the physical realm. Free spirit characters are also built slightly differently than metahuman characters. The "metatype" cost of a free spirit character is 250 BP. Other principal differences are as follows.

Free Spirit Nature

A free spirit, in its materialized form, is made of energy in the form of a set of coherent forces. These forces effect the space around it, giving it the illusion of shape, mass, and appearance. The interaction of these forces with the physical world cause light to reflect at various wavelengths, making it possible for cameras, ultrasound, radar, and other physical detection methods to perceive the spirit. A free spirit has the "look and feel" of a physical being, based on the form it took before it became free, but it is not made of the materials that appear to make it up; "skin" will not tan or sunburn, "iron" will not be attracted to magnets. The spirit has no mass, but the forces in its form have all of the effects of a body with mass, according to its Physical attributes. A result of being comprised of energy is that the spirit needs no clothes, food, or shelter to survive, although, in many cases, the spirit can wear clothing, eat food (which it can later expel discreetly), and live in a home, as the social situation warrants. Free spirits may not have technological augmentations.

Each free spirit has a home metaplane. While no longer a permanent address, the spirit still has ties to this home and may travel from astral space to its native metaplane with a Complex Action. It may return to astral space at any point on Earth that it has previously visited with a Complex Action, unless it has been disrupted (see *Free Spirit Health*, below) or banished. Note that starting this trip when materialized takes an extra Complex Action to return to astral space (leaving any physical objects behind), and another to materialize again after returning to Earth.

A PC free spirit may be banished by the same method as for NPC free spirits (p. 109, *Street Magic*). They may also be barred from ever returning to Earth by the same method described on that page. The permanent barring of a free spirit is analogous to the death of a metahuman: the player must either spend a permanent point of Edge or make a new character.

Every free spirit has a true name, a complex and intricate expression of the magical forces that make up the Essence of the spirit. This true name is imprinted on some object, person, or place that was present when the spirit first became free, chosen by the player with the approval of the gamemaster. The magical skill Arcana can be used to translate this imprint into a spirit formula for the free spirit (p. 107, *Street Magic*), which can be a great hassle.

If a spirit formula is created for a free spirit, the spirit knows instantly where the formula is. Player character free spirits are susceptible to the irritation of spirit formulae, as described on p. 108, *Street Magic.*

Spirits in astral form have the standard movement rate for astral bodies. Materialized spirits have a movement rate of 10 meters per Combat Turn walking, and 25 meters per Combat Turn running, regardless of what type of spirit it was before becoming free. Any materialized spirit can use its movement rate in any direction, unfettered by gravity. Because of this, spirits use the Flight skill (which free spirits may learn) when sprinting, rather than the Running skill. Spirits of possession traditions have the physical movement rate and movement skill of the vessel they possess, and may only use the Flight skill if the vessel can fly.

Spirits do not need food or shelter. They do not suffer from having a Street lifestyle, although most free spirits like to have a place to put their stuff. Unless they wish to keep their home stocked with food and beverages for guests, spirits pay 10% less for basic lifestyle costs, or if the alternate lifestyle rules are used (p. 149), they do not need to buy Necessities.

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Free Spirit Attributes

Free spirits have a Force special attribute that starts with a rating of 2. This attribute determines a free spirit's natural minimums and maximums for all attributes. It also acts as the spirit's Magic attribute. Force increases can be purchased at character generation for the same price as any attribute. The natural maximum for the Force attribute is 6, although this can be later increased through initiation. A free spirit's Force rating is the natural maximum for all Physical and Mental attributes, as well as its Edge attribute—so the player must raise Force if he wishes to raise the remaining attributes. In addition, free spirits have the same Physical, Mental, and Edge attributes as metahuman characters, which all start at 2 (their starting Force) at the start of character generation. For materialized spirits, the Physical attributes apply to its materialized form. For spirits of possession traditions, the spirit's Physical attributes are added to the attributes of the vessel possessed by the spirit. A spirit's Initiative is its Intuition x 2 in astral space, and its Reaction + Intuition when materialized or possessing a vessel; it gets three Initiative Passes in astral space and two in physical space each Combat Turn. A spirit's Essence is equal to its Force. If it ever loses Essence, it also loses Force, in the same manner that a metahuman loses Magic with the loss of Essence, except that the spirit's Force maximum is unchanged.

All rules on in *Shadowrun, Fourth Edition* and *Street Magic* regarding the abilities and limitations of Materializing and Possession free spirits apply as normal.

Free Spirit Magic

Free spirits are creatures of mana, and this gives them a unique take on the magical world. All free spirits have the Magician quality at no cost. They may learn Sorcery skills, Assensing, Arcana, and Enchanting. Free spirits may never learn or use any skills from the Conjuring skill group (being spirits themselves, they can never hold such sway over other spirits). Spirits may not bond foci. When learning spells, the free spirit does not need (and cannot use) a spell formula, but does need to assense the spell as it is cast at least once.

All free spirit characters must have a tradition. This tradition is almost always the tradition of the magician that summoned the spirit into the physical world, before it became free. A spirit's tradition is important, because it informs its outlook on the world, determines its Drain attribute, and defines the spirit powers it may possess.

Free spirits may initiate at the same cost as metahumans. Each grade of initiation increases the natural maximum of the spirit's Force attribute by 1. Additionally, for each grade of initiation, the spirit may either learn a new metamagic technique (but not Invoking or Sensing) or gain one Power Point. A free spirit may join a magical group.

Free Spirit Powers

Free spirits automatically gain certain critter and spirit powers. The power of Sapience is automatic. Free spirits also have Astral Form, as they still exist primarily in astral space. Each free spirit gains Materialization or Possession, as appropriate to their traditions (PC free spirits may not be from Inhabitation traditions). Free spirits also have the Banishment Resistance power and the Spirit Pact power (see the Spirit Pact sidebar, p. 93, for more details). Spirits also have Immunity to Normal Weapons.

Free spirits gain a number of Power Points equal to their Edge attribute. These points are similar to the Power Points gained by adepts, but are spent on critter powers rather than adept powers. Spirits may only choose powers that are on the Free Spirit Powers table and available to spirit types relevant to the spirit's tradition (e.g. a hermetic free spirit can only buy powers available to spirits of air, earth, fire, man, and water), with some exceptions. The powers available and Power Point costs are listed on the Free Spirit Powers table.

Spirits may sustain powers with no penalty, but may only have a number of powers active at one time equal to their Force.

Free Spirit Perception

Free Spirits on the physical plane are dual-natured beings. As with other dual-natured entities, a spirit's ethereal senses are able to sense both worlds without incurring modifiers for acting on both planes at the same time. Note, however, that spirits are unable to see or interpret simsense, electronic projections on screens, or AR displays.

Spirits may use both Perception and Astral Perception skills as normal. A spirit may even, with a successful Assensing Test, perceive in a person's aura whether they have been cruel to spirits in the past.

FREE SPIRIT POWERS

Power	Cost	Reference
Accident	0.5	p. 286, *SR4*
Animal Control	1	p. 286, *SR4*
Aura Masking*	3	p. 98, *Street Magic*
Binding	2	p. 287, *SR4*
Concealment	2	p. 287, *SR4*
Confusion	1	p. 287, *SR4*
Divining	1	p. 99, *Street Magic*
Elemental Attack	3	p. 287, *SR4*
Energy Aura	3	p. 287, *SR4*
Engulf	2	p. 100, *Street Magic*
Enhanced Senses (Hearing, Low-Light, Smell, Thermographic)	0.25 each	p. 288, *SR4*
Fear	1.5	p. 288, *SR4*
Guard	0.5	p. 288, *SR4*
Influence	2	p. 289, *SR4*
Movement	1	p. 289, *SR4*
Mutable Form*	1	p. 109, *Street Magic*
Natural Weapon	1	p. 289, *SR4*
Noxious Breath	1.5	p. 289, *SR4*
Personal Domain*	3	p. 109, *Street Magic*
Psychokinesis	0.5	p. 290, *SR4*
Realistic Form*	0.5	p. 102, *Street Magic*
Regeneration*	5	p. 109, *Street Magic*
Shadow Cloak	1	p. 102, *Street Magic*
Silence	1	p. 102, *Street Magic*
Spirit Pact*	1	p. 110, *Street Magic*
Venom	1	p. 290, *SR4*
Weather Control	2	p. 290, *SR4*

*available to free spirits of all traditions

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Free Spirit Health

Spirits are creatures of mana and have no real bodies to speak of. They can still become hurt and suffer the same dice pool modifiers for Stun or Physical damage that their metahuman counterparts do. Spirits also heal at the same rate as metahumans (p. 242, *SR4*). A spirit with a full Physical or Stun Condition Monitor is disrupted.

Spirits that are disrupted, whether it be by damage, being forced through an astral barrier, or some other cause, are compelled to return to their native metaplane. If the spirit is disrupted by a cause other than damage, its Physical Condition Monitor is filled. The spirit may not return to Earth until it has completely healed, again using the same rules as metahumans. Additionally, unless the spirit has an active Friendship Pact, the spirit may not return for a number of days equal to 28 minus its Force.

If a spirit takes enough damage to overflow its Physical Condition Monitor by more than its Willpower attribute, its Force is reduced by 1 when it returns to its home metaplane. Its natural maximum attributes are also reduced, which may cause the reduction of one or more attribute ratings. If a spirit's Edge is reduced, it also loses at least one Power Point worth of critter powers.

First aid and medicine and medicine do not work on spirits, although they may work on a possessed vessel. Any healing or repair given to a vessel applies only to that vessel's Condition Monitor, and not to the spirit's. Free spirits may not use cyberware, bioware, nanoware, transgenics, drugs, or anything else that requires an organic body.

Free Spirit Qualities

Free spirits may choose any quality available to characters, except for the following: any quality conferring a Magic or Resonance attribute, Aspected Magician, Codeblock, Codeslinger, Focus Addiction, Human-Looking, Magic Resistance, Mentor Spirit, Natural Hardening, Natural Immunity, Resistance to Pathogens/Toxins, Scorched, Sensitive Neural Structure, Sensitive System, Simsense Vertigo, Spirit Affinity, Spirit Pact, Weak Immune System, or any quality from *Arsenal, Augmentation,* or *Unwired.*

Free spirit characters may also take the qualities available to free spirits, which are listed in this section.

FREE SPIRIT QUALITIES

These are new qualities that apply to free spirits only.

Former Ally Spirit

Bonus: 15 BP

The free spirit was originally an ally spirit. As such, a copy of its spell formula exists and is in the hands of the magician for whom it had been an ally. The circumstances of this situation are up to the gamemaster but are never simple or pleasant.

Fixated

Bonus: 5 BP

The spirit with this quality is obsessed with its original form. The spirit may only purchase powers accessible by a single type of spirit available to its tradition, chosen at character generation. The spirit gains no other traits of the spirit type, including movement rate and weaknesses.

SPIRIT PACTS

Player character free spirits start with one spirit pact. This is the pact that the spirit "knows," and is available to the spirit to make with other characters. The PC free spirit has the choice of any of the pacts on page 108 of *Street Magic,* plus the Friendship Pact, which is detailed below.

A spirit may start the game with a spirit pact in place. The pact must be with another player character or an NPC that has close ties to the team. The person with whom the spirit has the pact must have the Spirit Pact quality (p. 26, *Street Magic*).

A spirit character may start knowing one additional spirit pact by taking the Spirit Pact power, gaining one new kind of pact each time it is taken.

Friendship Pact

A Friendship Pact is an agreement in which the spirit trades its protection and assistance in exchange for a closer connection to the physical and astral planes. It allows a spirit to create a magical bond with a group of sentient people native to the physical plane. The spirit must find a number of people for the pact equal to its Force. Should the spirit's Force ever increase, it must find another friend to add to the pact within a day of the increase.

This bond more strongly connects the spirit to the physical world. The spirit gains the ability to acquire its own Karma as a metahuman does. The spirit also gains the ability to communicate with its bonded friends mentally in images and thoughts up to the spirit's Force x 10 meters. This communication is only between the spirit and one or more bonded friends, and not between the friends in question. The bond also strengthens the spirit's ties to the Earth. it loses the 28-day limitation on returning from its home metaplane and may return as soon as it is fully healed.

This pact does exact a toll on the spirit. Every time a pact member dies, the spirit's Force rating is reduced by one. Its natural maximum attributes are also reduced, which may cause the reduction of one or more attribute ratings; if a spirit's Edge is reduced, it also loses at least one Power Point worth of critter powers. If all of the spirit's pact friends die, its Force is reduced to zero and the spirit dissipates into the astral. To help delay this fate, a spirit may burn one of its own Edge to save a pact friend from death (p. 68, *SR4*).

A free spirit may start the game with a Friendship Pact in place with any other eligible and willing player characters. The people participating in a Friendship Pact with the spirit do not need the Spirit Pact quality.

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. . . NEW QUALITIES . . .

The rain dripped down the back of my coat as I crouched in front of the dinky motor.

"This is all your fault," Sam growled behind me. "You worked with that Pachinko Mike, and everyone knows he's bad luck. Curses everyone around him—and everyone around those stupid enough to work with him."

The Sound was choppy, the boat too small, and I could taste the salt spray running down my face. While we rocked on the waves, our target was sliding further away, running lights getting dim in the persistent drizzle.

"I think the boat's leaking," Mouse piped up, from the bow, where he'd been puking his guts up since we motored out of the docks. I closed my eyes, prayed for inspiration. A miracle. Divine intervention. Hell, dumb luck would do.

"C'mon, Beaker, can't you do *something*?" Piper asked, holding the tiny flashlight over my shoulder.

"If you all would just *shut up*," I muttered, peering closer at the engine, unrolling another length of duct-tape. The boat had a small tool kit—a screwdriver, the duct-tape, and the flashlight that Piper was trying to keep steady. Not exactly the cozy garage I had behind my house. I shouldn't have taken the job, not with stupid Sam, who had sworn it'd be *just so easy. Everything's all set. Got a boat, got a shaman, we'll just sneak up and pinch the load before they even know what hit them. Just need someone who can steer the boat...*

But Sam's boat turned out to be a POS with an outboard motor and enough rust to qualify as a chemical experiment. And his shaman had turned out to be a sea-sick fourteen year old.

If I didn't have a family at home, with an out-of-work dad and three younger siblings, I'd have told Sam where he could stick it. Hell, I would have told Pachinko Mike to stick it, him and his curse—not that I believed there was a curse, but it'd trashed my rep—but there wasn't a hell of a lot of work out there for a plus-sized troll woman in this skinny-assed human world. I could handle a gun, sure, but I wasn't a gun-bunny. I was a techie. Not a lot of work for a techie who stuck out of the crowd like I did.

Muttering, I put down the tape, pulled the engine cord again. Nothing.

"Fucking great," Sam said. "You think some tape and a few hairpins will fix that? Some tech-wiz you are."

Hoping for patience, still holding out for that Divine intervention, I prayed.

Saint Jude, Hope of the Hopeless, Pray for me.

I pulled the cord again, then a third time. Still nothing. Frustrated, I hit the engine with a fist, imagining it was Sam's face.

It sputtered to life.

I looked up at Sam, who was finally shocked into silence.

"And that, you asshole, is what a tech-wizard does," I said. "Next time, *I* pick the boat."

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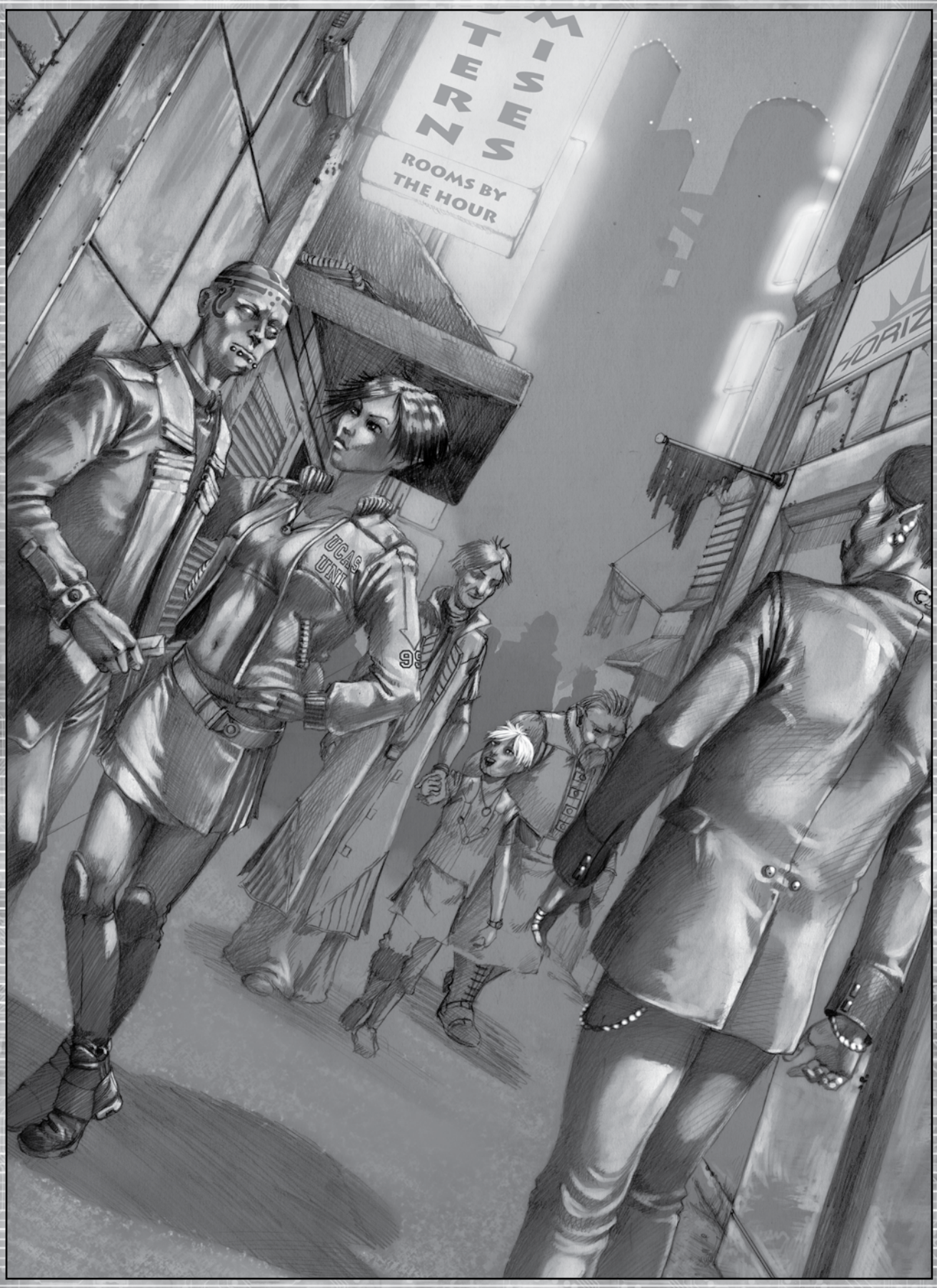

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A PLETHORA OF QUALITIES

In Shadowrun, qualities represent edges and flaws that help round out characters by granting them special talents and flaws beyond the scope of normal learned skills or innate attributes. *Shadowrun, Fourth Edition* (pp. 77–84) offers a basic selection of positive qualities. Additional qualities, focusing on a specific aspect of the rules, can also be found in the advanced rulebooks; *Street Magic* offers additional Awakened qualities (pp. 24–28), *Augmentation* features biotech-related qualities (pp. 20–22 and 163–164), and *Unwired* (pp. 36–38) qualities related to the Matrix. As always, final approval of any quality is in the hands of the gamemaster; some qualities may be inappropriate or incompatible with the style and tone of her game.

The Metagenetic qualities presented later in this chapter are only available to characters who have first taken the Changeling quality (see *Creating a Changeling Character*, p. 73) and as innate abilities to various metavariants.

POSITIVE QUALITIES

The Positive qualities below can be bought during character creation or exceptionally introduced in play (for guidelines on the latter, refer to p. 264, *SR4*). As with all material in the advanced rulebooks, these new options should be approved by the gamemaster before being introduced into the game, since some may effect the style and tone of a campaign.

Adrenaline Surge

Cost: 15 BP

The Adrenaline Surge quality allows a character to act first in the first Initiative Pass of a new combat (and only the first), regardless of their actual Initiative Score. The character need not expend Edge to do so, and may not combine the effects of Edge use on initiative with Adrenaline Surge. If other characters also have Adrenaline Surge or spend Edge to go first in the same pass, those characters act first in order of their Initiative Scores, then, all other characters involved in the combat get to go according to their Initiative Scores.

Analytical Mind

Cost: 5 BP

The Analytical Mind quality represents the uncanny deductive and logic ability some individuals possess to intuitively crack ciphers, solve puzzles, and sift through data. This quality gives the character a +2 dice pool modifier to any Logic Tests involving pattern recognition, evidence analysis, clue hunting, or solving puzzles. This quality also provides a + 2 dice pool modifier to any Data Search and Software Tests.

Bilingual

Cost: 5 BP

Whether due to a bilingual upbringing or a natural aptitude for languages, a character with this quality reads, writes, and speaks a second tongue fluently and may list a second language as a Native tongue (see *Language Skills*, p. 75, *SR4*).

Black Market Pipeline

Cost: 10 BP

At character creation, the player chooses one of his contacts and one type of merchandise (i.e. vehicles, weapons, electronics, armor, etc.). This contact can always buy or sell that contraband on the black market at a price that benefits the character. This guarantees a 10 percent discount when the character buys the appropriate merchandise from the Black Market Contact, and confers a +3 dice pool modifier when negotiating to sell/fence appropriate goods through the Pipeline.

Born Rich

Cost: 10 BP

A character with this quality comes from an affluent background (i.e. high-level corporate scion, old money family, successful entrepreneur) and, as a result, has more ready resources than a typical character. This quality extends the 50 BP maximum spent on gear at character generation to 60 BP. This quality does not imply the character is rich at the start of play.

Catlike

Cost: 10 BP

A character with the Catlike quality is gifted with uncanny elegance, a stealthy gait, and the almost preternatural ability to move without making a sound. This quality modifies the character's Infiltration and Shadowing skill ratings by +1 (limited by the modified skill rating; see p. 109, *SR4*); the character must still buy at least rating 2 in those skills to benefit from this quality.

College Education

Cost: 5 BP

A character with the College Education quality has not only attended an institution of higher education but has made the most out of her stay and knows a substantial amount about a diverse group of academic subjects. The College Education quality modifies the skill rating of any Academic Knowledge skills the character acquires by +1 (to a maximum of rating of 6).

Common Sense

Cost: 5 BP

A character with Common Sense is down-to-earth, practical, and sensible. Any time such a character is about to do something the gamemaster deems foolish, the gamemaster must act as the proverbial inner voice of reason and warn the player: "Something tells you that's a bad idea."

Urgent Message . . .

OTHER RUNNERS COMPANION QUALITIES

Some of the new character types—changelings, drakes and the various Infected variants—presented in the *Alternative Character Options* chapter (pp. 45–93) are also introduced as qualities. This allows these options to any normal metahuman or metavariant character (barring any specific restrictions listed in their descriptions).

Exceptionally, such qualities do not count towards the standard 35 BP limit on Positive qualities and may be matched with most of the qualities presented in this chapter.

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Deep Cover

Cost: 5 or 10 BP

The Deep Cover character is not who she says she is. She might not even be who she thinks she is. Through engram manipulation and training, her actual identity is buried under layers of false memories and impressions—even a Mind Probe spell can't crack her cover, because she sincerely believes she is the person she presents herself to be. For 5 BP, this quality simply preserves her "real" personality from coming forward, letting her act in deep cover until a trigger—an image, a series of numbers, a phrase—lets her snap back and spill her guts; a second trigger puts her real self back to sleep. For 10 BP, she knows what both triggers are, and can set things up to bring herself in and out of deep cover on her schedule, no one else's. The player should work with his or her gamemaster to define the character's true personality, why she is in Deep Cover, and for whom she works.

Digital Doppelganger

Cost: 10 BP

By some quirk of fate, during the Crash 2.0, the character's digital data trail was shuffled onto someone else's identity. Some (or all) of the character's spending habits, purchases, payment defaults, news items, license lapses, etc. get attributed to this other identity. In the immense corporate data havens, the character's direct marketing intel is placed on the other person. The character doesn't get direct ads sent to him by corps, and anyone doing research on him has a hard time finding any information (+2 threshold for data searches or tracking the character on this ID).

The character must be a SINner.

Erased

Cost: 5BP or10BP

Better than SINless—the character with this quality officially doesn't exist and never did; someone or something actively works to remove her traces from the system. Maybe it's an elite hacker who owes her a favor or an AI she befriended, but the end result is that her data trail and records vanish from all but the most secure systems shortly after being entered.

For 5 BP, criminal SINs and unwanted data disappear within a week. For 10 BP, any SIN, undesirable credit history, or personal information on the Matrix that she wishes is burnt (see p. 96, *Unwired*) after 24 hours. Obviously, the eraser will preserve any data the character wishes preserved and that is vital for her to function in society.

Note that vanishing data may prove an unwanted complication if the character is in custody or doing prison time (the Man may "forget" she is there).

Escaped Clone

Cost: 5 BP

At some point, someone made a clone from stored DNA: maybe your parents wanted their little girl back, maybe a rich corper thought this was his ticket to immortality, or maybe a megacorp grew a wimp for experimentation. Maybe she was accidentally released, saved by a kind soul, or misplaced at a clinic. Regardless, that clone eventually escaped into the world and realized its full potential becoming the character.

If scrutinized, the character's genetic information and biometrics will often be cross-referenced with the original donor of the genetic material—depending upon whether the character or the donor has a dead/deactivated or criminal SIN, this can be good or bad. It also means that it is much more difficult to identify the character beyond a reasonable doubt.

Should the character's nature be revealed, the social stigma still associated with cloning will lead to a –1 dice pool modifier to any of his social interactions with anyone aware of it. Additionally, the character may be wanted or actively hunted by whoever grew him (this may be best represented by taking a Wanted or Enemy negative quality).

Fame

Cost: 5 to 15 BP

A character with this quality is famous, not just among the denizens of the shadows but to the general public. However, famous does not necessarily equate to rich—the character may be retired from whatever activity brought her into the public eye, or she might be a down and out has-been. She might be a retired sport star or a former trid show host. Or, she might still be in the limelight; perhaps she is an acclaimed musician, a well-known blogger, or possesses a popular P2.0 livefeed. Whatever the reason, she has a recognizable public persona that can be as much a hindrance as a boon.

Fame can give the character social privileges: giving her words additional clout, opening doors to restricted social circles and access to the trendiest hot spots. In situations where she can benefit from her high profile and reputation, a Famous character gets a dice pool modifier to Social Skill Tests. This modifier depends on her fame as represented by levels taken in this quality.

When combined with the Day Job quality, Fame also provides a multiplier to the Day Job income.

Note that Fame is a double-edged blade for those who run the shadows. While it is helpful, it also makes the character easily identifiable. Mr. Johnson is unlikely to hire someone who is well known, and other runners may not want to work with someone so recognizable. Also, if the character is very famous, he needs a very good reason to be running the shadows at all. To avoid identification, a famous character can disguise her appearance and create a runner persona (though under this guise she gains no social advantages).

Local Fame (5 BP): The character's image and reputation are well known locally or around a single sprawl. This grants her a +2 dice pool modifier in appropriate social situations. If the character also possesses the relevant quality, multiply Day Job income by 3. The character is well-known locally and any compatriot will identify him with an Intuition + Logic (1) Test.

Examples: Local news anchor, rising star of small urban brawl franchise, local politician.

National Fame (10 BP): The character is nationally famous and gets a +4 dice pool modifier to appropriate Social Tests. If the character also possesses the relevant quality, multiply Day Job income by 5. People around the country recognize the character by face and name almost automatically.

Examples: Best-selling author, popular sports star, face of national media campaign.

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Global Fame (20 BP): The character is globally famous and benefits from a +6 dice pool modifier in situations where she can bring her status to bear. If the character also possesses the appropriate quality, multiply Day Job income by 10. The character is immediately recognizable by anyone with a commlink or trideo unit. The character will be filmed and harassed by fans.
Examples: Multiple-platinum download artist, star of the summer's blockbuster sim,

Gearhead
Cost: 5 or 10 BP

The Gearhead character is a natural born driver or pilot. From the first time the Gearhead sat behind the wheel/stick/controls of a certain vehicle, it was like putting on a comfortable old suit. She discovered an intuitive understanding of its limitations and its capabilities, and she quickly learned to coax exceptional performances out of the vehicle. During a single scene (duration at the gamemaster's discretion), a Gearhead can increase the Acceleration of her chosen vehicle by 20 percent, *or* increase the Handling modifier by +1. She also gets a distinct +2 dice pool modifier when attempting difficult maneuvers or stunts in the vehicle. This quality only benefits manual or VR control of the vehicle.

For 5 BP, the Gearhead is gifted at piloting a specific vehicle (i.e. a Suzuki Mirage racing bike or a MiG-67 panzer).

For 15 BP, the Gearhead is gifted at piloting any vehicle of a given type (i.e. bikes, cars, trucks, rotorcraft).

Hawk Eye
Cost: 5 BP

Hawk Eye grants a character exceptionally keen natural vision. She can spot a sniper on a rooftop without binoculars or a chip on the ground at twenty feet. Characters with the Hawk Eye quality gain a + 1 dice pool modifier to Perception Tests to spot something at a distance and see their unaugmented Weapon Range Modifiers reduced by 1 step (for instance, Long Range becomes Medium Range). This quality is not cumulative with other forms of vision magnification and is incompatible with cyber- or bioware augmentation or replacement.

Inspired
Cost: 5 BP

An Inspired character is touched by a muse and is rightfully lauded as an artistic genius by his peers. This quality does not translate to widespread fame, but it does grant the character a Street Cred of 2 (see. p. 275, *SR4*) among fellow artists familiar with his talent and reputation. Inspired also modifies any Artisan skill rating the character possesses by +2.

Juryrigger
Cost: 10 BP

This quality gives a character an intuitive grasp of the underlying principles and functioning of all kinds of mechanical and electronic devices. Contingent on success on an appropriate Mechanics Skill Test (threshold defined by the gamemaster using the *Build/Repair Table* on p. 125, *SR4*, as a guideline), this quality allows amazing, if temporary, technical feats with bare minimum gear. The gamemaster should decide whether any given feat the player proposes is possible with the Juryrigger quality. Such feats include, but are not limited to:

- Jury-rigging a destroyed device so that it will operate just one more time (duration at the gamemaster's discretion).
- Tweaking an electronic device to function at a rating one higher than normal for 1 Combat Turn.
- Temporarily coaxing extra performance from a vehicle's or drone's components, increasing its Sensors or Handling by +1 (duration at the gamemaster's discretion).
- Improvising a one-shot device or weapon from various pieces and parts (the gamemaster has final say on whether suitable parts are available).

Linguist
Cost: 5 BP

A character with this quality has a natural gift for learning and understanding languages, grasping vocabulary and grammar much more quickly than others would. This quality halves the basic learning time for a language and modifies the rating of any Language skill the character possesses by +2.

Lightning Reflexes
Cost: 15 BP

The Lightning Reflexes quality allows an *unaugmented* character to react with astonishing speed. This quality granting her a +2 Reaction attribute modifier, which is not cumulative with any other Reaction or Initiative enhancement, be it technological or magical.

Made Man
Cost: 10 BP

The character is a minor member of an organized crime syndicate and as such can call on its resources. In game terms, this means the character possesses a crime syndicate as a free Group Contact (see *Groups as Contacts*, p. 124) with a modified Connection Rating of 8 and a Loyalty Rating of 4. This also allows her to use the syndicate as a reliable fence for stolen goods (for a 20 percent cut) or as a source for stolen and restricted goods (though items are contingent on gamemaster approval). However, the character is expected to aid and participate in syndicate activities on a regular basis, taking at least 30 hours of her time every week.

Mistaken Identity
Cost: 10 BP

Something about a character with this quality reminds people of another (moderately well known) person—perhaps the morning weather girl, a minor politician, or the announcer at the local sports arena. Maybe it's the hairstyle, or maybe it's the way she walks. Though she gets the occasional request for an autograph or free cup of coffee from a fan, the real benefit is that when people try to describe her, they invariably end up describing the other person. This makes it particularly difficult for authorities to credibly trace nefarious activities back to her. The unwitting doppelganger must be of the same gender, metatype and race as the character.

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OPTIONAL RULE: CODE OF CONDUCT

As an optional rule, groups may want to consider introducing a Code of Conduct quality. This represents a personal code of conduct deeply tied to a character's behavior, how others view her, and how she views herself. Her commitment to the code manifests itself in every aspect of her life, as it is a guiding force for her. While some codes are built from the moral compass of religion, others stem from the simple need to find a way to live with doing terrible things.

A code of conduct is a 5 BP Positive quality that represents an idealized self-image or behavior. By seeking to embody that ideal, the character gains social favor from those who also strive to follow the code. A Code of Conduct affects Reputation and may lead to Street Cred (p. 257, *SR4*) or unwanted Notoriety (pp. 257–258, *SR4*). Characters should only be allowed one Code of Conduct quality at a time.

Code of Conduct Modifiers

A Code of Conduct places certain restrictions on a character's behavior. By sticking to the code, she may gain dice modifiers to a variety of Social Tests ranging from Street Cred checks to Intimidation Tests. Each code dictates specific advantages and disadvantages.

If a character voluntarily gives up the code, she immediately loses access to its advantages, while the disadvantages remain for as long as the character is perceived to be a follower of the code (until her Street Cred next rises). If a character strays from the code (as determined by the gamemaster), he is subject to the same penalties as if he had given it up. The first time the code is broken, a character also gains one point of Notoriety. A character can restore access to the code's advantages by role-playing the code successfully. The length of time the character must do this before benefits are reinstated is up to the gamemaster.

Sample Codes of Conduct

The following Code of Conduct qualities are only a sample of those possible. Gamemasters and players are encouraged to develop their own, as appropriate to their games.

Assassin's Creed

Anyone can kill, but the assassin strikes down people who are impossible to reach. An assassin is precise, avoiding collateral damage whenever possible. She kills only when it challenges her, and never for free. You wouldn't remember her if you met her. She has spent a lifetime learning how to be overlooked—just another face in the crowd.

Advantages: Being an assassin limits the effects of Notoriety. Treat the character's Notoriety score as being 2 points lower than it actually is when determining the effects of Notoriety (see *Notoriety Applications*, p.258, *SR4*).

Disadvantages: Being invisible can be a disadvantage as well. Assassins gain Street Cred much slower than anyone else. Divide total Karma by 15 and round normally in order to determine Street Cred (see *Street Cred*, p. 257, *SR4*).

Bushido

The classic bushido is a stoic warrior who fights for honor as much as for pay, who treasures knowledge as much as martial victory. A bushido is compelled to make the moral choice where possible. She is not rash: every decision she makes has been carefully weighed, and each mistake is a mark against her honor that must eventually be redeemed. A modern variant of bushido is common among street samurai.

Advantages: The character receives a +2 dice to her Street Cred dice pool modifier.

Disadvantages: The bushido is a warrior and a scholar. Each time she increases a Combat Skill in play, she must increase a Knowledge Skill by the same number of rating points before she can increase another Combat Skill.

Courier's Rulz

When it absolutely has to get there on time, a courier is the way to go. The courier lives to drive. He has built his life around vehicles, and trusts no one else behind the wheel. A courier lives by a set of performance standards: Don't be late, don't lose your cargo, and (almost) never ask questions. If he violates those standards, he's already failed.

Advantages: A courier knows the routes he travels. He receives a +1 dice pool modifier to all Navigation Tests relating to a particular city region that he frequents. The courier must have lived in the region for a year before receiving the bonus.

Disadvantages: Couriers spend most of their energy studying the routes they travel. This attention to detail gives them little time to focus on other activities. Treat this as a –1 dice modifier on all Knowledge Tests unrelated to vehicles, survival or navigation.

Mercenary Credo

A merc is a soldier for hire, an elite military professional, taught to obey the chain of command. The merc must remain neutral and act professionally at all times. A job is a job. Personal involvement compromises effectiveness and reputation—and a merc lives by his (and his unit's) reputation.

When on the job, a mercenary thinks of nothing else but that job. When off duty, he lives by his own rules, as long as those rules do not impugn the integrity of his organization.

Advantages: A veteran merc has seen it all, giving him an edge when trying to gauge someone's intentions. Treat this as a +1 dice pool modifier to Judge Intentions Tests (see p. 130, *SR4*). A veteran merc has seen it all, giving him an edge when confronted with the effects of death and violence. Treat this as a +1 dice pool modifier to Composure Tests (see p. 130, *SR4*).

Disadvantages: Mercenaries are known throughout the world, and their reputation isn't always a good one. Add 2 points to the character's Notoriety score. These additional points may not be bought off by Street Cred. Additionally, mercenaries are the bane of bushido. The character receives

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a –2 dice pool modifier when attempting any Social Test with a bushido who is aware of the character's status as a mercenary.

Semper Paratis

A bodyguard is the ultimate personal defense system. "Always ready" is a bodyguard's credo; she is prepared to do whatever it takes to protect her client, even if that means placing herself in harm's way. In fact, a bodyguard must put her ward's safety above her own.

Bodyguards are known as much for their high level of awareness as for their often intimidating physical presence. This is something they work at. Unfortunately, that grim sense of the world around them cannot be turned off when the workday ends.

Advantages: The character receives a +2 dice pool modifier to all Intimidation Tests.

Disadvantages: When you're a good bodyguard, everyone knows it. When you fail, it becomes legend. Every time a bodyguard's client is killed, the bodyguard receives a point of Notoriety.

Sworn Soldier

This code of conduct applies to soldiers of every criminal syndicate. A sworn soldier thinks of his criminal family first, and will sacrifice himself for the lives of those ranked above him. He is loyal to his family or clan above all, and obeys his seniors without question.

Advantages: The character is well respected by those within his syndicate. With respect to the character, other members of the syndicate are friendly (see the *Social Modifiers Table*, p. 122, *SR4*). Additionally, the character receives a bonus dice when purchasing black market items through his specific syndicate, such as a Mafia soldier dealing through a Mafia black market broker.

Disadvantages: Sworn soldiers are naturally antagonistic toward opposing syndicates and law enforcement professionals. When dealing with either, the character must make a Composure (3) Test (see p. 130, *SR4*) in order to avoid treating them with open contempt and hostility. If the soldier needs the services or cooperation of such a person, lower the threshold of the test to 2. If the soldier is in a situation where he is being ordered to be respectful, no test is needed. Every time a sworn soldier defies the orders of his superiors, he gains an additional point of notoriety.

Natural Athlete

Cost: 10 BP

A character with this quality has an innate combination of physical form, spatial awareness, and natural athletic or gymnastic talent. While the character may not be a world-class athlete and may require training to achieve peak performance, he is in prime physical shape for his size and weight class. Gifted Athlete modifies the character's rating in the Running and Gymnastics skills by +1 (subject to modified skill maximums, see p. 109, *SR4*).

Night Vision

Cost: 5 BP

Night Vision provides human characters with improved night vision. This means human characters with this quality gain the advantages of low-light vision (see *Visibility Table,* p. 140, *SR4*). This quality is not cumulative with other forms of vision enhancement and is incompatible with cyber- or bioware augmentation or replacement, nor is it possible to combine with electronic sensors and vision enhancements.

Outdoorsman

Cost: 10 BP

A character with this quality is particularly at ease in wilderness and rural environments. She is a natural tracker and hunter, able to quickly familiarize herself and learn the lay of the land. The Outdoorsman quality modifies the character's the character's existing ratings in all skills of the Outdoors skill group by +1 (subject to modified skill maximums).

Perceptive

Cost: 5 or 10 BP

Perceptive characters are likely to notice small details and clues that others may miss. Perceptive is available at two levels. For 5 BP, characters with this quality receive a +1 dice pool modifier on all Perception Tests, including Astral and Matrix Perception Tests. For 10 BP, the modifier rises to +2. This quality does not effect vision modifiers in combat.

Perfect Time

Cost: 5 BP

A character with Perfect Time has a split-second sense of timing that enables her to always know the current time, to the minute. Prolonged periods of isolation, unconsciousness, or the application of mind-benders, such as drugs or chips, can throw off the character's sense of time, but the character quickly recovers his or her Perfect Time when such conditions are removed.

Privileged Family Name

Cost: 5 BP

The character's family is exceptionally rich or well-connected, and her name is recognizable and carries significant weight in her home sprawl—so much so that the character's very name is a get out of jail free card for small misdemeanors and violations of the law (such as being caught carrying a weapon or driving a car without a license). Local NPCs will think twice before harassing or physically intimidating the character (suffering a –2 dice pool modifier in appropriate tests). Privileged Family Name can also be a bane if abused, since it makes the character easier to identify.

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Restricted Gear
Cost: 5 BP

The character knows just the right person to get ahold of that one elusive piece of restricted gear or miltech weaponry she really needed. Every time the character takes this quality at character creation (max 3 times), she may exceptionally buy a piece of gear with an Availability of up to 20. The character may also save the quality to buy one such item during play.

School of Hard Knocks
Cost: 5 BP

A character with the School of Hard Knocks quality grew up in the back streets and alleys, learned the hard way that knowledge is power, and that often it's not how tough you are that gets you through the day, but what you know. The character has picked up a little knowledge of just about any subject of interest to denizens of the streets. The School of Hard Knocks quality modifies the rating of any Street Knowledge skills the character possesses by +1 (to a maximum of Rating 6).

Sense of Direction
Cost: 5 BP

A character with the Sense of Direction quality never gets lost. The character always knows where true north lies. If the character also possesses the Survival skill, she can always retrace her path and will be able to estimate distances traveled within a few meters. Sense of Direction doesn't help a character orient herself if she has been transported somewhere while unconscious or if she is unable to perceive her surroundings.

Sensei
Cost: 5 BP

One of the character's contacts has the skill set and levels to act as her Instructor in a particular skill group (see *Using Instruction*, p. 123, *SR4*). The Sensei and the skill group are determined when the quality is chosen. The character need not chase down and hire an appropriate teacher to gain the benefits of instruction but may be subject to the contact's availability at the gamemaster's discretion.

Speed Reading
Cost: 5 BP

A character with Speed Reading can tear through a full page of written text (about 800 words) in about 5 seconds. The character does not memorize what she has read unless she also possesses the Photographic Memory quality (p. 80, *SR4*) but will grasp the gist of the contents and be able to remember the context of key words. If attempting to recall a specific piece of information or locate a specific phrase or subject while in the process of reading, the character need only succeed in a Logic + Intuition (1) Test, with an interval determined by the gamemaster based on the length of the text, its complexity, and the obscurity of the information being sought.

Technical School Education
Cost: 5 BP

A character with the Technical School Education quality has not only attended a tech school, but has gotten more out of it than a normal student and knows a substantial amount about a diverse group of technical subjects. The Technical School Education quality modifies the skill rating of any Professional Knowledge skills the character acquires by +1 (to a maximum of Rating 6).

Tough as Nails
Cost: 10 per level

A character with this power has formidable physical endurance and can take much more punishment than one would expect from someone of her size. Each level taken in this quality adds an additional box to the character's Physical Condition monitor. This quality may be taken up to 3 times.

Trust Fund
Cost: 10 or 20 BP

A character with this quality possesses a lifelong trust fund or inheritance that is managed by another party (a trustee), but that pays enough to cover her lifestyle expenses with a little left over.

For 10 BP, the Trust Fund income covers a perpetual Medium lifestyle with 500 nuyen left over each month. For 20 BP, the Trust Fund income provides for a High lifestyle with 1,000 nuyen of monthly spending money. Neither lifestyle can be converted to money; payment is made directly by the trustee.

To benefit from this quality, the character must also be a SINner and have the place of residence to which her Trust Fund lifestyle applies in the public record. Additionally, should the character be caught breaking the law, the Trustee may suspend the Trust Fund payments (at the gamemaster's discretion).

Trustworthy
Cost: 5 or 20 BP

Something about the character inspires confidence and trust in those around her (even if she doesn't deserve it). For 5 BP, this quality modifies the character's skill rating in one skill in the Influence skill group by +1 (subject to modified skill maximums, see p. 109, *SR4*). For 20 BP, the Trustworthy quality modifies the ratings of all skills in the Influence skill group by +1 (also subject to modified skill limits).

Water Sprite
Cost: 5 BP

A character with this quality takes to water like a fish; she benefits from a +2 dice pool modifier for all tests relating to Swimming, holding her breath underwater, treading water and diving. The time before the onset of Fatigue from swimming and diving is also doubled.

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NEGATIVE QUALITIES

As with Positive qualities, Negative qualities can be chosen at the start of play. With the gamemaster's approval, Negative qualities may be bought off with Karma per the rules on p. 265, *SR4*. If the character does not possess the requisite Karma, she may have to wait. Also note that this expenditure does not encompass the Costs of any associated augmentations, medical treatments, schooling, etc. that the gamemaster may require. Additionally, the gamemaster may decide that certain qualities can only be removed after roleplaying through their resolution (such as removal of a dependent or curing a mental illness).

Amnesia

Bonus: 10 or 25 BP

A character with Amnesia has lost some or all of her memory. (Such memory loss can be caused by neurological damage, magic, drugs or brainwashing). The severity of the character's Amnesia is determined by the selected BP bonus offered by the quality.

For 10 BP, the amnesiac cannot recall who she is or anything about her past, but retains the use of her skills and abilities.

For 25 BP, the amnesiac has no memory of her past at all, including the skills and abilities she had learned. Gamemasters should create character sheets for such characters, so that the player does not know her character's abilities, attributes, and so on until the character acts on them.

Amnesia may be incompatible or inappropriate in combination with other qualities (such as Trust Fund) at the gamemaster's discretion.

Asthma

Bonus: 15 BP

Due to genetic predisposition, viral illness, or constant exposure to pollutants, the character has developed chronic asthma—leading to troubles with his respiratory system due to narrowing airways. Typical symptoms include wheezing, shortness of breath, chest tightness, and coughing. The character may face strong episodes of asthma when exposed to an environmental stimulant, allergen, exertion, or even stress.

For rules purposes, treat Asthma as a Mild Common Allergy (p. 80, *SR4*) against multiple "allergens." In addition, due to troubles with the respiratory system, the Body Rating is halved to determine the number of turns before the character starts taking Fatigue damage (p.155, *SR4*).

Albinism

Bonus: 10 BP

Albinism is a genetic disorder, characterized by partial or complete lack of pigmentation in the eyes, skin, or hair, resulting in white hair or skin as well as pink and blue irises with bright red pupils. Due to the lack of melanin pigmentation and subsequent ultraviolet light protection, albino characters are photosensitive and prone to sunburn. All ethnicities, metatypes, and metavariants can manifest albinism.

Treat albinism as a Light Allergy against sunlight (p. 80, *SR4*). In addition, albinos that don't possess cybereyes are more vulnerable to flashing or glare effects—increase any appropriate dice pool modifier by one-half of the normal modifier. If using flare compensation, subtract the –2 modifier before calculating (i.e. an albino character would face a –6 modifier from a flash-pak and a –3 modifier when using flare compensation goggles).

Bad Rep

Bonus: 5 BP

A character with a Bad Rep has a dark and lasting stain on her reputation in the shadow community and even beyond. Something she did, or was falsely accused of doing, in the past has stuck and permanently tainted the way people perceive her. The character starts play with 3 points of Notoriety which cannot be removed or decreased except by confronting and resolving the source of the bad reputation. Only then may the Bad Rep quality be bought off with Karma.

Bi-Polar

Bonus: 10 BP

A character with this quirk vacillates between periods of manic activity and bouts of depression. During manic phases, add a +1 dice pool modifier to any tests involving Agility or Reaction, but the inability to focus for extended periods of time results in a –2 dice pool modifier for tests involving Logic or Intuition. During depressive periods, the character is lethargic, feels no motivation to get out of bed, and expresses an inability to concentrate on tasks at hand. Apply a –2 modifier to any tests involving Agility, Reaction, Logic and Intuition.

Gamemasters should role a die for the character once a day. On a result of 1 or 2, the character is in a manic phase, on a 3 or 4 the character is reasonably stable, and on a 5 or 6 the character is depressed.

Medication to stabilize Bi-Polar characters is available at a cost of 500 nuyen a month, but legally requires a prescription and a valid SIN. Failing to take meds for more than 6 hours results in a die roll by the gamemaster.

Big Regret

Bonus: 5 BP

The character has done something in his past that she is embarrassed about: maybe a past as a prostitute, a leaked pr0nvideo, or a job as an Aztechnology spokesperson. It could be that she was trapped in a well as a child or was a famous baby model. The character suffers a –3 dice pool modifier to Social Tests against anyone who knows about the character's past. The wrong person might hold it over the character's head as blackmail. If the secret becomes too public, the gamemaster can give the character 1 point of Notoriety.

Borrowed Time

Bonus: 20 BP

A character with this quality is living on Borrowed Time and may die at any moment. She may have a fatal disease, be infected with a slow-acting poison, or possess a ticking cortex bomb. In any case, her life span can be measured in months.

When a character takes the Borrowed Time quality, the gamemaster secretly rolls 3D6. The result indicates the number of game months the character has to live. When the character's time is up, she dies—(almost) nothing can save her.

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The character should have an appropriately dramatic death scene. This quality is impossible to buy off with Karma, but if the player changes his mind and wants his character to survive, the gamemaster may allow the player to remove Borrowed Time only by permanently burning *all* his current Edge. The gamemaster can decide to allow this or not only if and when the player makes the request.

Computer Illiterate

Bonus: 5 BP

Unlike the Incompetence quality, the Computer Illiterate quality means the character is technologically uneducated to the point she has no experience at working with AR, computers, commlinks, and other electronic devices. Such characters have trouble performing even simple tasks such as sending email or instant messages, programming a trideo recorder, using an unfamiliar commlink, or performing a data search.

Computer Illiterate provides a –2 dice pool modifier to all tests that involve a computer, electronic device or Matrix-connected system in any way, shape or form. Additionally, the gamemaster may require the character to make a Success Test to complete tasks her contemporaries would take for granted.

Cranial Bomb

Bonus: 10 BP

Someone has planted a cranial bomb in the character's head (for a description of the possible headware involved, see p. 331, *SR4*, and p. 32, *Augmentation*, for various trigger types). The gamemaster decides who planted it and what that person or group wants. The player need not pay for the bomb with the character's starting Resource points—the bomb's a freebie.

If the character manages to disarm the bomb, the gamemaster may elect to replace it with an Enemy quality, or a mental disorder (such as a Phobia, Mania or OCD) of equal BP value. This quality may not be bought off with Karma.

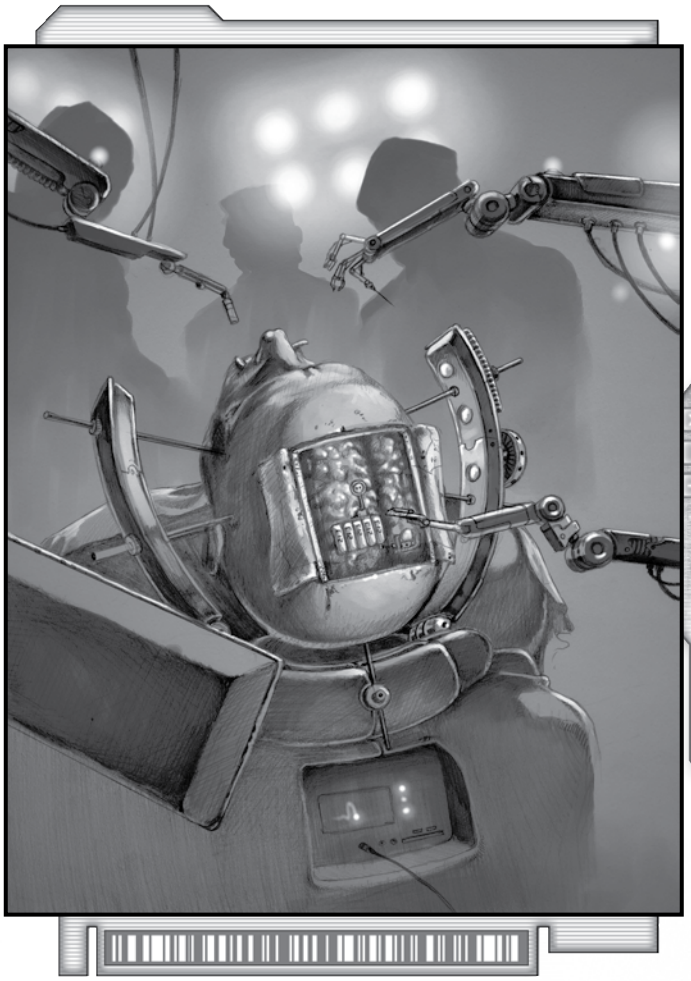
Day Job

Bonus: 5 to 15 BP

A Day Job burdens a character with responsibilities and time constraints. While there are some advantages, such as stable income, a Day Job is a hindrance with the shadowrunning profession. The table below offers guidelines for salary and hours. The gamemaster and player can work out actual restrictions and hours of the character's profession. The character must be a SINner or possess a fake SIN.

DAY JOB TABLE

Value	Salary/Month	Hours/Week
5 BP	1,000¥	10 Hrs
10 BP	2,500¥	20 Hrs
15 BP	5,000¥	40 Hrs



Distinctive Style

Bonus: 5 to 35 BP

A character that takes this negative quality possesses at least one distinctive physical feature or unique mannerism (note that what qualifies as a Distinctive Style may vary from group to group; see the *What is a Distinctive Style? S*idebar, p. 104). The quality may represent a unique look, a peculiar fashion sense, a trans- or non-metahuman modification, a unique speech pattern—anything that makes the character inconveniently attention-grabbing and memorable.

Whatever type of flair the character selects, it must enable other individuals to easily remember him. Any individual who attempts to identify, trace or physically locate the character (or gain information about him via Legwork) receives a +3 dice pool modifier on all tests made during such attempts (including Perception Tests). The modifier does not apply to astral or Matrix searches. This quality may be taken multiple times by characters that possess multiple distinctive features, with cumulative modifiers. However, the maximum cumulative modifier is +6 dice.

All the advanced character options in this book automatically suffer the effects of Distinctive Style and do not get a BP bonus.

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WHAT IS A DISTINCTIVE STYLE?

The Sixth World setting as depicted in *Shadowrun, Fourth Edition* game materials is a vibrant, multi-cultural society, one pervaded (and to a certain extent jaded) by a global media culture that constantly floods the market with new trends and styles. While megacorporate monoculture and approved dress codes dominate a wage slave's workplace and living enclave, personal dress style, body art and modification, and even cosmetic augmentation is increasingly popular in all circles of society as a form of self-expression. What is distinctive also varies with the local culture and sub-culture; something that stands out in a Seattle nightclub, might be unremarkable in feral Chicago.

In 2070, cybernetic modification and replacement is not uncommon. Bioware, genetech and nanotech are seen as the *modern* solutions, while cybernetics are often seen as slightly crass and the poor man's option. That said, most augmentations don't carry a social stigma, and are even viewed as a sign of ambition and self-improvement. Nonetheless, any augmentation that significantly deviates from the human norm, any blatantly transhuman modification, or excessive amounts of visible augmentation, are still frowned upon and will draw attention.

Exactly where to draw the line depends on the gamemaster and the game being played. Players should consult the gamemaster as to whether Distinctive Style is appropriate for the feature, metatrait, implant, or mannerism being chosen for their character. As a rule of thumb, for such a feature to qualify as distinctive, it must be obvious, attention-grabbing, glaring, or jarring. Excessive or glaringly obvious cyberware, inhuman biomods, gross transgenic phenotype modification and so on should all make the short list, as should a number of augmentations and cosmetic changes.

For instance, while colored hair will not normally constitute a Distinctive Style, sporting a fluorescent green mohawk might; while cybereyes are the most-sold cyberware on the planet, glowing red eyes with no irises are so in-your-face artificial that they would qualify; a cyber-fetishist with obvious multi-limb replacement would certainly qualify, as would anyone with visible changeling traits, supernatural features, or one of the relatively rare metavariants hailing from different corners of the globe.

What constitutes a Distinctive Style in any given campaign varies significantly; it is up to the gamemaster whether a player's choice qualifies. The Distinctive Style quality is intended to be flexible enough that gamemasters can easily decide whether or not it is applicable.

Dependent(s)

Bonus: 5 to 15 BP

A character with the Dependent quality has a loved one who depends on her for support and aid from time to time. Dependents may include children, parents, a spouse, a sibling, or an old friend. Meeting the needs of a dependent should take up a fair amount of the character's time, as well as some of the character's money. The dependent should also be a hindrance in other ways—getting underfoot, sharing living space, involving herself in the character's affairs, borrowing the car, calling at the most inappropriate moment, etc.

The gamemaster should set the Build Point value of the quality according to the needs of the dependent and the demands those needs place on the character. This quality cannot be bought off with Karma, unless the relation of dependency is first somehow resolved through roleplaying.

For 5 BP, the dependent is an occasional nuisance, dropping in on the character unexpectedly, demanding time, friendship, and occasionally money.

Examples: slacker sibling, long-term boyfriend.

For 10 BP, the dependent becomes more of an inconvenience demanding time and commitment on a regular basis, getting involved in the character's affairs; the dependent shares living space with the character.

Examples: live-in lover, wife, young child, or close sibling.

For 15 BP, the dependent is close family or a life partner and lives with the character. The dependent is a regular and demanding strain on the character's time, resources, and availability, and/or requires special care and vigilance detracting from the character's professional responsibilities.

Examples: large family, elderly parent, ailing grandparent.

Enemy

Bonus: Variable (max. 25)

The character possesses an Enemy (or more than one). Enemies are described on p. 132 and are a constant foil and threat to the character's activities and plans. The BP cost of an Enemy is equal to the sum of its (modified) Connection Rating and its Incidence Rating.

The nature and depth of the bad blood between the two characters should be defined together with the gamemaster when the Enemy quality is chosen. The Enemy may even be a group or organization, rather than a single antagonist or rival (for more details on this option, refer to *Enemies*, p. 132). Enemy can easily be paired with a number of Negative qualities like Wanted and Vendetta.

Evil Twin

Bonus: 10 BP

A character with this quality frequently gets mistaken for someone else whose reputation is even worse than his own. Perhaps this person is a crooked politician, a well-known Humanis Policlub member, or a criminal that got significant media coverage. Mothers with young children cross the street when they see the character coming, police drones frequently stop him, and there's always a hassle when they run his ID. He gets little to no service in restaurants. Electronic flyers are spread to all his neighbors when he moves, warning them about him. Whenever the character's doppelganger commits another crime, or gets caught in another political sting, the character gets media camping out on

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his doorstep and occasionally gets hauled in to the police station by surly officers (who never apologize later).

Flashbacks

Bonus: 5 or 10 BP

The Flashbacks quality causes a character to experience vivid memory-based sensory hallucinations. These flashbacks are always triggered by specific stimuli. For example, a character that was tortured by a corporate interrogator might experience flashbacks of the torture whenever she sees the corp's logo. Any time a character with Flashbacks encounters a potential flashback trigger, she must make a Willpower + Intuition (3) Test. If the test fails, a flashback occurs and incapacitates the character for 1D6 minutes. The character cannot take any useful action during that time.

Players whose characters have the Flashback quality should confer with the gamemaster to devise an appropriate flashback trigger before beginning play. The trigger condition can be a particular sight, smell, sound, taste, idea and so on. The condition should be something that the character will encounter a few times during a game. If the trigger is too common, the character may end up experiencing flashbacks all the time. If it is too rare, the character may never experience any.

For 5 BP, the trigger is relatively uncommon; something the character will encounter once every few weeks.

For 10 BP, the trigger is relatively common; something that would be encountered at least once per adventure.

Hung Out to Dry

Bonus: 10 BP

For a reason chosen by the gamemaster, the character's contacts suddenly dry up—no one will talk to her. The character can try to find out what happened, or simply get on with her life. The effects of this quality are intended to be resolved through role-playing. If desired, the resolution of this quality can even become the subject of an entire subplot. Such a story line can provide an opportunity for the character to redeem her reputation among her Contacts or further antagonize them until they become Enemies (see p. 132) and the character ends up with a permanent Notoriety.

Illiterate

Bonus: 10 BP

Despite the omnipresence of iconography, voice recognition and talking AROs in communications, the written word is still a useful tool for conveying nuanced and detailed information. While many people in the Sixth World are barely literate, an Illiterate character never learned to read at all (maybe she grew up on the streets, or in an isolated rural or wilderness setting). These characters must rely on other characters or technology to translate written information for them. Illiterate characters can use commlink software in conjunction with built-in scanners or cameras to translate written words to sound. They can also learn to use computer programs that rely on icons rather than written commands and instructions; however, such characters receive a –4 dice pool modifier to all computer-related tests and cannot have a Computer Skill higher than 1.

Finally, Illiterate characters may not take any Academic, Professional, or Interest Knowledge skills that require reading, either during character creation or in play (until the quality is bought off with Karma).

In Debt

Bonus: 5 to 30 BP

The character is indebted to a third party, usually an underworld syndicate, large gang or corporation, chosen by the player with gamemaster approval. For every 5 BP taken, the character receives an extra 5,000¥ at character creation; this money can be above and beyond the normal 50 BP cap for gear. The character then owes her creditor that much plus another 50 percent. The amount owed increases 10 percent every month, as compound interest. If the character is unable to pay at least the interest amount each month, the creditor may send someone looking for her.

Judas

Bonus: 10 BP

The opposite of Deep Cover, the character is an infiltrated sleeper agent for an antagonist of the character's group: she is not who she thinks she is, and she doesn't even suspect she is going to betray everyone around her ... until the trigger comes. She acts as she would normally, and cannot warn her comrades, because her true nature and mission are hidden behind a layer of conditioning and personality programming.

Liar

Bonus: 5 BP

This character is known to be a compulsive liar, and sounds insincere even when he's telling the truth. Every time a character with this quality addresses someone, the gamemaster rolls 1D6. On a result of 1, the person or contact being addressed assumes that the character is lying. On any other result, the addressee believes the character. The next time the character meets the person who "caught him lying" (that is, the person to whom he was talking when he rolled the 1), the person refuses to believe the character on a result of 1 or 2. The chance of being "caught lying" increases by 1 for every encounter with this person thereafter. Once the character gets "caught lying" three times by the same individual, the character gains a point of permanent Notoriety. If the person in question is a contact, his Loyalty rating decreases by 1. If Loyalty was already at 1, the character loses that contact permanently.

Lost Loved One

Bonus: 5 BP

The character is obsessed with the unexplained disappearance of someone near and dear. The person (defined when the quality is taken) vanished in mysterious circumstances and hasn't been seen or heard of since. The character with this quality feels compelled to find the missing person at any cost. She must succeed in a Willpower + Logic Test (2) to resist following any lead the gamemaster may wish to throw in her direction (be it a solid lead or a red herring). The effects of this quality are intended to be resolved through roleplaying. If desired, the resolution of this quality can even become the subject of an entire subplot.

Mental Handicap

Bonus: 10 per level (max 3 levels)

The individual suffers from one of several forms of mental handicap—natural or induced. This can be a result of brain injury, genetic mental retardation, or any of several genetic anomalies. The character suffers a –1 dice pool modifier to any Tests involving Logic and Willpower per level of this quality.

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MYSTERIOUS IMPLANTS

Below are sample augmentations that gamemasters may assign to characters with the Mysterious Implant Negative quality; These augmentation packages are merely suggestions, a springboard for ideas and plot twists. Gamemasters are free to invent their own Mysterious Implants appropriate to their campaign.

Each entry has a suggested BP Cost; gamemasters can combine multiple Mysterious Implants below or assign additional Negative qualities that apply to the implant (p. 21, *Augmentation*). While many Mysterious Implants are detrimental to characters, they need not be—they can be useful, if unknown and occasionally problematic, implants as well.

Mysterious Implants generally lack characteristics that can identify their point of origin or function; this doesn't mean they are undetectable, or untraceable, especially if it fits into the overall campaign. Mysterious Implants also lack tags for easy access by EMTs (p. 31, *Augmentation*) and are not part of the character's PAN. Many genetech Mysterious Implants can be administered *in vitro*, or even inherited from parents; bioware, cyberware and nanoware typically require a more surgical setting, which the character may or may not be aware of—a lost weekend or a torture session without anesthetic, the end result is the same.

A Mysterious Implant should not reduce a character's Essence to 0 or below at character generation—talk to the player and ask them to either choose a new Negative quality of the same point value, or remove existing implants and replace them with the mysterious augmentation.

Cyberware Backdoor
Suggested Bonus: 5 BP
Essence Cost: 0.0 (cyberware)

A wireless micro-transceiver has been integrated into one of the character's pieces of cyberware, nanocybernetics, or cybersuite implants. The transceiver can be activated on demand by someone broadcasting the right code on the right frequency and opens a backdoor into the character's cyberware. This grants the hacker not only control over the implant (per the rules in *Hacking Cyberware*, p. 102, *Unwired)*, it also provides an unguarded entry point into the character's PAN (for instance, a backdoor transceiver might be hidden in a cybereye that would be normally be wi-fi linked to the commlink to perceive for the image link to work).

Headsafe
Suggested Bonus: 5 BP
Essence Cost: 0.1 (cyberware)

The character has a Data Lock (p.331, *SR4*) full of someone else's data. What this data is and who it belongs to is up to the gamemaster.

Killswitch
Suggested Bonus: 10 BP
Essence Cost: 0.01 (cyberware) and/or 0.01 (bioware)

A killswitch is connected to one of the character's other implants—bioware or cyberware, including nanocybernetics—and is essentially a wireless on/off-switch. For cyberware or nanocybernetics, this is simply a trigger attached to the implant that turns it on or off. Bioware implants are activated or deactivated by an organic version of the trigger, a nodule that, when stimulated, releases an enzyme that temporarily disables the bioware augmentation. Most killswitches depend upon some kind of stimulus to activate or deactivate an implant—increased heartbeat or traffic through the implant, a blow directed at a specific pressure point on the skin, etc. An external radio signal can activate a cyberware trigger. A cyberware trigger can be combined with a bioware trigger so that the bioware trigger is activated by the cyberware trigger, or vice versa.

Permanent Infusion
Suggested Bonus: 10 BP
Essence Cost: Variable, see below.

Many genetic infusions carry the potential for permanent augmentation; they are also laced with material that produces an addictive substance or dangerous deficiency in the character's system. The character starts off with a permanent Genetic Infusion (p.94, *Augmentation*) and a permanent Moderate Addiction (p.80, *SR4*) to a street drug of the gamemaster's choice. The addiction cannot be reduced unless the Genetic Infusion is removed from the character's system.

Traceless
Suggested Bonus: 5 BP
Essence Cost: 0.1 (bioware)

The character has been subject to Print Removal (p.89, *Augmentation*). As such, the character's prints will never match those of her SIN or fake SIN. Law enforcement and authorities tend to suspect the worst of characters without prints, assuming they removed them deliberately to avoid leaving evidence when committing crimes, especially if they cannot provide a license for the augmentation.

Mysterious Implant
Bonus: 5 to 25 BP

The character has a mysterious implant in her body of which she is unaware. The gamemaster chooses the implant, and the character does not become aware of its existence until the gamemaster chooses to reveal it—perhaps by having it kick in at an inconvenient time or show up on a detector when the character tries to travel or pass unnoticed into a corporate environment.

To avoid detection, the Mysterious Implant may even be hidden within another implant such as a cyberlimb or nanohive. If and when the character discovers and eliminates or otherwise neutralizes the implant, the gamemaster may choose to replace the implant with an appropriate Negative quality like Amnesia, Enemy or Phobia/Mania (p. 164, *Augmentation*).

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Night Blindness

Bonus: 5 BP

When limited by this quality, a character's (natural) eyes do not adapt to well to darkness and he has difficulty operating in dimly lit environments. This quality adds an additional –2 dice pool modifier to any other visibility modifiers in any lighting conditions worse than normal daylight (or the equivalent). This quality is incompatible with the Blind quality and with cyber or bio-replacement of the eyes.

Oblivious

Bonus: 5 BP

An Oblivious character often fails to notice glaring details (this quality may result from a short attention span or some other perceptual problem). Such characters increase the threshold of any Perception tests by +1, including Astral Perception tests. The quality does not affect combat modifiers for vision or range.

Pacifist

Bonus: 5 or 10 BP

The Pacifist quality makes a character unusually principled and humane for the dark streets of 2070. If the quality is taken at 5 BP, the character actively avoids needless violence and will not kill unless in self-defense (and even then, she will do so as humanely as possible). Such characters cannot participate in premeditated murders or wetwork and are compelled to dissuade their fellow shadowrunners from embarking on such operations.

If the quality is taken at 10 BP, the character has severe moral qualms about any violence and will refuse to harm any living creature that possesses more intelligence than a gnat, regardless of the provocation. If she does, she is overcome by a deep depression, during the onset of which the character refuses to do anything other than eat, sleep and go about her daily routine. Such a state typically lasts several weeks, but may vary at the gamemaster's discretion.

Some individuals respect the restraint of Pacifist shadowrunners, while others consider them useless wimps.

Paranoia

Bonus: 10 BP

While Paranoia may be considered a survival trait in the shadows, a character with this quality thinks *everyone* is out to get her, either because she knows too much, or because they think she does. The character is subject to a –3 dice pool modifier in any interaction with unfamiliar individuals or with Contacts whose Loyalty rating is below 4. She must also change addresses every couple of months for fear of being located.

Paraplegic

Bonus: 10 or 15 BP

Typically, Paraplegic characters are paralyzed from the waist down. Such characters can perform physical tasks that do not require the use of their legs and can move around via wheelchair (or wheelchair drone). Paraplegic individuals are invariably victims of severe nerve damage, and replacement is not always an option. The Paraplegic quality cannot be treated with cyberware, though certain gene therapies and nanotechnologies may repair the damage (requiring the character to buy off the quality with Karma per standard rules during recovery).

The Paraplegic quality has no effect on a character's abilities in the Matrix or in astral space. Characters with the Paraplegic quality can and often do become highly effective hackers, riggers, and magicians. Characters cannot take both the Paraplegic and Quadriplegic qualities.

For 15 BP, the Paraplegic character has lost the use of his upper limbs with all the resulting handicaps thereof.

The BP bonus of this quality is reduced by 5 BP if the character enjoys a Full Immersion Lifestyle (p. 38, *Unwired*)

Poor Self Control

Bonus: 5 to 15 BP

This quality groups several different personality traits, all of which reflect poor self-restraint and different antisocial behavior. Each is presented as a quality with a BP cost. Poor Self-Control can be taken multiple times, but only once for each option. All these options are incompatible with the Common Sense quality and use the Composure Test (p. 130, *SR4*).

Braggart (5 BP): While bragging is one way to bolster a character's reputation, this quality means the character doesn't know when to quit. She will claim that things she did were better, tougher, and just that much cooler than anything anyone else has done. The character will also falsely claim to have done things if doing so means she can one-up a rival. The character must succeed in a Composure (2) Test to back down from a story or boast.

Thrill Seeker (5 BP): This quality means the character tends to jump into risky situations without considering possible consequences and dangers. When confronted with an obviously risky proposition or dangerous situation, the character must make a successful Composure (2) Test to avoid blindly jumping into the thick of things.

Compulsive (5 to 15 BP): Compulsive characters possess a specific compulsive behavior over which they have little or no control. The value of this quality depends on how troublesome and dangerous the behavior is for the character. For example, a character who is compulsively tidy won't be more than the casual nuisance to his teammates; his Compulsive quality might be worth 5 BP. By contrast, a decker who compulsively breaks into high-level corporate nodes would have a Compulsive quality of 15 BP. Resisting a compulsion requires a successful Composure (2) Test.

Vindictive (10 BP): Vindictive characters are especially vengeful and go out of their way to correct any slight against them, no matter how small. The retribution varies according to the slight. A simple insult might call for a coldly delivered threat or a punch in the face, while an injury almost always calls for the blood of the offending individual. Vindictive characters will carry grudges for a long time; cross them once and you are on their hit list forever. To resist the urge to pay back a slight, a successful Composure (2) Test is required.

Combat Monster (10 BP): A character with the Combat Monster quality becomes irrationally vicious in combat situations. The character is unlikely to willingly turn his back on an ongoing fight after the first blow has been delivered—even if outnumbered and losing. The character must make a Composure (2) Test to break away. Otherwise, the character can only break away if he kills or disables all his opponents. Combat Monster is incompatible with the Combat Paralysis quality.

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Prejudiced

Bonus: 5 to 25

The character is (unjustifiably) prejudiced against members of a specific group of people: metahumans, an ethnicity, artists, gays, or some other group. He not is not only intolerant, but may actually be outspoken about his beliefs and may actively work against the group. Depending upon the degree of prejudice, this quality may get the character into trouble for expressing his views or when forced to confront the targets of his prejudice.

The BP bonus granted by this quality varies depending upon the "commonness" of the hated group and the degree to which the character is openly antagonistic to that group. Refer to the Prejudice Negative Quality Table as a guideline when choosing the prevalence of the hated group and the degree of prejudice for purposes of calculating the BP value of the quality.

Prejudiced character must succeed in a Willpower + Intuition Test to back down from a confrontation (verbal, physical, or professional) with a representative of the hated group. The Threshold of this Test varies by the degree of prejudice; see Confrontation Threshold on the *Prejudice Quality Table*, at right.

PREJUDICE QUALITY TABLE

Prevalence of target group	BP Value
Common target group (ie. women, metahumans)	10 BP
Specific target group (ie. artists, gays, lawyers)	5 BP

Degree	BP Value	Confrontation Threshold
Biased (ie. closet meta-hater)	0 BP	0
Outspoken (ie. typical member of Humanis)	5 BP	1
Actively prejudiced (ie. Humanis chapter leader)	10 BP	2
Radical (ie. racial supremacist)	15 BP	3

Quadriplegic

Bonus: 20 BP (10 BP if character possesses Full Immersion Lifestyle)

Quadriplegic characters are paralyzed from the neck down and cannot perform physical tasks of any kind. The Quadriplegic quality does not affect a character's Attributes or use of Mental Skills. Use the character's Physical Attributes for calculating abilities such as Reaction per standard rules. If desired, a character with the Quadriplegic quality may take the Infirm quality as well.

Characters with the Quadriplegic quality require permanent hospital-grade care (High Lifestyle Costs) and the attention of hired medical attendants or programmed robot drones to perform physical tasks for them. The Quadriplegic quality cannot be treated or cured with cybertechnology or magic. Characters cannot take both Quadriplegic and Paraplegic. The Quadriplegic quality has no effect on a character's abilities within the Matrix or in astral space.

Characters who resort to the Full Immersion Lifestyle (p. 38, *Unwired*) only receive 10 BP from taking this quality.

Reduced (Sense)

Bonus: 5 to 15 BP

For each level taken in this quality, one of the character's natural senses (vision, hearing, touch, smell, taste, astral sight, and so on) is impaired to some extent. For 5 BP, the affected sense is only *partially* reduced, resulting in a –3 modifier to any Test involving that sense. For 10 BP, the chosen sense is completely reduced and the character suffers a –6 modifier to all Tests towards which the sense might contribute.

For an additional 5 BP (10 or 15 BP), the reduced sense is the result of a neurological dysfunction—for instance a problem with the occipital lobe of the brain—this renders the character incapable of hearing sound directly, via organ replacement, and through direct simsense stimuli. This type of sense reduction cannot be repaired with surgery or gene therapy (though such possibilities are open at the gamemaster's discretion).

Blind/Reduced Sight (10 BP): A character with Fully Reduced Sight is legally blind and receives a –6 dice pool modifier for all vision-based Tests. Note that since their astral perception is not a visual sense, Awakened characters with the Blind quality may still perceive astrally, though gamemasters are advised to strictly apply the Astral Visibility modifiers on p. 114 of *Street Magic*.

Deaf/Reduced Hearing (10 BP): A character with Fully Reduced Hearing is deaf and cannot hear. The character cannot make Perception Tests based solely on hearing, and receives a –6 dice pool modifier for any tests in which hearing is a factor (such as Surprise Tests).

A NOTE ON REDUCED SENSES

The Reduced (Sense) quality is intended to represent a detrimental and significant impairment to the character taking it. The gamemaster may wish to veto the quality or reduce its BP bonus, if he believes the sense chosen will have little impact on the character (such as taking a Fully Impaired Taste in a game where it is unlikely to ever come into play).

If cyber or biotech replacement of the sensing organ is attempted without buying off the quality with Karma, complications will arise which render the implant ineffectual until the character does buy off the quality (*or*, with the gamemasters' approval, the character pays for delta grade implants).

While a Reduced (Sense) impairment can be bypassed by transmitting sensory stimuli directly to the brain via a commlink's simsense module and nanotrodes, this option requires an active PAN linked up to some form of external sensor—which may pose a problem if entering a wi-fi controlled environment or if the link is hacked.

Neither replacement nor sensory bypass are available for neurological-based Reduced (Sense) impairments (including those resulting from SURGE or HMHVV-induced transformations).

Simon Wentworth (order #1132857)

A NOTE ON MENTAL DISORDERS

Life in the shadows is full of stresses and strains. Not everyone copes well with them, or has the resources to get help. While treatment of mental illness and psychological disorders has evolved significantly in the 21st century, the SINless denizens of the shadows are rarely in a position to take advantage of the solutions offered by long-term medication and psychotherapy. Roleplaying mental handicaps, disorders or pathologies is not an insignificant challenge, and some psychological Negative qualities should be discussed between player and gamemaster before being chosen.

The following qualities qualify as Mental Disorders or symptoms thereof:

Mental Disorder	BP Bonus	Reference
Delusions	10 BP	p. 163, *Aug*
Dementia	20 BP	p. 163, *Aug*
Hallucinations	10 BP	p. 164, *Aug*
Mania/Phobias	5 to 25 BP	p. 164, *Aug*
Mental Handicap	5 BP	p. 105
Multiple Personality Disorder	20 BP	p. 164, *Aug*
Obsessive Compulsive Disorder	10 BP	p. 164, *Aug*
Paranoia	10 BP	p. 107
Sensory Overload Syndrome	10 BP	p 109

Records on File

Bonus: 10 BP

One or more megacorps (chosen when the quality is taken) possesses a relatively up-to-date record of the character's SIN, biometrics, personal, and possibly medical data. This may be the result of some prior encounter, professional relationship, or previous affiliation. This quality provides agents of the corporation with a +6 dice pool modifier to any tests to identify the character through SIN, biometrics, facial or biometric recognition, or medical data. It also provides a +2 dice pool bonus to Legwork attempts to track her down.

Fortunately for the character, corporations cherish their intelligence and do not usually share information willingly with their competitors, or even other organizations. However, this quality may also provide the corp with leverage or blackmail material against her in the future.

Spammed

Bonus: 5 BP

The character's SIN is just a digit off from another person's, who seems to spend all her time online shopping. The character gets all the ads corporate marketers send to the other person, plus all her own! As a result her inbox is constantly overflowing with spam, and she is constantly inconvenienced by telemarketers and viral spam. Marketing databases attribute large purchases of online porn or other expenses of questionable taste to the character. She gets the occasional wrong bill and may suffer legal prosecution if she doesn't pay, and her credit report reflects multiple late payments or defaults (restricting access to loans and special banking services such as certified credsticks). Anyone doing research on the other person (such as potential employers) will invariably come away with a very negative image of the character.

Sensory Overload Syndrome

Bonus: 10 BP

Sensory Overload Syndrome is a recently identified psychosomatic disorder, an offshoot of AIPS with a similar pathology to epilepsy. The condition has been tracked back to high stress levels and excessive sensory input overwhelming the occipital lobe's capacity to process it.

Individuals with this quality have extreme cases of SOS and are vulnerable to epileptic seizures when subjected to Augmented Reality-saturated environments (including spam zones). It is up to the gamemaster to decide if an environment is an SOS risk, but as a guideline nightclubs, shopping malls, and spamzones should be considered danger zones.

Seizures typically last up to 5 minutes and throw the character into violent convulsions and temporary blindness that render her unable to control her movements or speak. No treatment is currently available for the disorder. While deactivating her commlink or image link is enough to "immunize" the character from SOS, the fact that most spamzones are not clearly identified means a character may walk into one without warning and must either always have their commlink off or in hidden mode.

Signature

Bonus: 10 BP

For whatever reason, a character with the Signature quality feels compelled to announce her involvement in a mission or run. This typically involves leaving behind some signature item or telltale that can be identified as the character's unique trademark (ie. such as leaving a chess piece at the scene of a crime, or using a unique weapon to perform wetwork). Typically, a Signature is enough to identify the character among those who are aware of her Reputation. A Signature provides a dice pool modifier equal to the character's Street Cred (p. 257, *SR4*) to anyone making tests to trace the person to whom the Signature belongs (including Legwork and Data Search Tests).

Vendetta

Bonus: 5 BP

This quality means the character is deeply entangled in a blood feud with an Enemy individual or group. Whatever the initial cause, the vendetta has become as much an issue of face, honor, and reputation as vengeance. The Vendetta quality means that the character is driven into an ongoing exchange of hostile and retaliatory acts and cannot resist an opportunity to confront her foe. The character must also take the Enemy quality (with an Incidence rating of at least 4).

In play, should she encounter the Enemy, she must succeed in a Composure (3) Test to not confront him/her violently. She must always pursue the Vendetta in any way she can if an opportunity presents itself. However, should the target of the Vendetta be killed or neutralized somehow, someone will take up the vendetta in his place (unless the quality is bought off).

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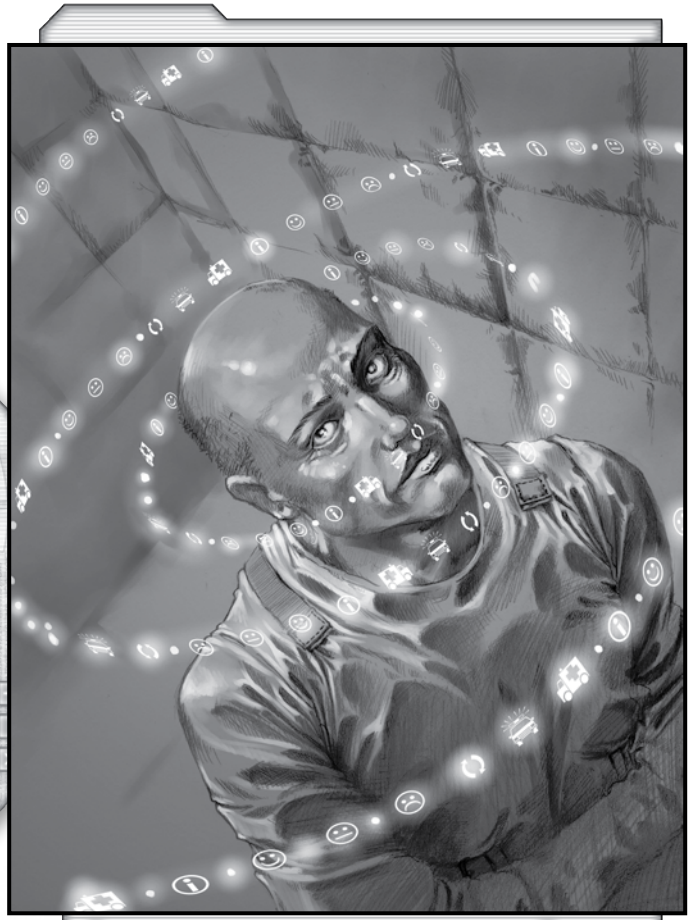

Wanted
Bonus: 10 BP

For some reason (defined when the quality is taken), the character is wanted by the authorities, has a bounty on her head, or a mob contract hanging over her. Such bounties/contracts should be worth at least 20,000 nuyen. Unlike characters with Enemies, a Wanted character is *not* constantly harassed by a single opponent (though the two can be combined). Instead, she will be hunted by anyone who becomes aware of the bounty and is interested in collecting it. It is up to the gamemaster how much this quality impacts the game, but, as a rule of thumb, it should come up at least once every other adventure. This quality may not be bought off, until the reason the character is wanted is resolved through role-playing.

METAGENETIC QUALITIES

Metagenetic qualities are special Positive and Negative qualities that can only be taken by characters with the appropriate genetic background. Only characters that have bought a metavariant metatype (pp. 70–72) or the changeling quality (p. 73) may choose qualities from this section. Unlike normal qualities, metagenetic qualities may never be bought off.

Non-magical metagenetic qualities that do not have a bioware or cyberware equivalent may be introduced into the game via Transgenic Alteration geneware (p. 92, *Augmentation*) at the gamemaster's discretion. Since these would be rare and new transgenic treatments, they would cost at least 0.1 Essence and an absolute BP value x 25,000 nuyen cost. Bonuses from metagenetic qualities that mimic certain cyber or bio-implants or vice versa are never cumulative.

SURGE and Critters

It should be noted that SURGE is not an exclusively metahuman phenomenon. Though rare, both normal and paracritters, have been known to express SURGE traits. Gamemasters wishing to surprise their players, may want to introduce such SURGE critters into their games by applying the rules presented on p. 73 to an animal.

OTHER METAGENETIC QUALITIES

In addition to the metagenetic qualities introduced below, the following qualities available in *Shadowrun, Fourth Edition* qualify as Metagenetic qualities (see *Qualities,* p. 77, *SR4; New Awakened Qualities,* pp. 24–28, *Street Magic*; and Augmented Qualities, pp. 20–22, *Augmentation*).

Other Positive Qualities: Astral Sight, Biocompatibility, Double Jointed, High Pain Tolerance, Magic Resistance, Natural Hardening, Natural Immunity, Quick Healer, Resistance to Pathogens/Toxins, Spell/Spirit Knack, Toughness

Other Negative Qualities: Allergy, Asthma, Albinism, Biosystem Overstress, Disease Carrier, Gene Freak, Low Pain Tolerance, Nano Intolerance, Reduced (Sense), Sensitive System, Uncontrolled Metastasis, Weak Immune System

FREAKS

While body modification has come a long way, the extreme modifications changelings often express are shocking and disturbing to many. Consequently, some particularly glaring Metagenics qualities, both positive and negative, provide social penalties. Such qualities inflict a –3 dice pool modifier on most Social Skill Tests not performed over the Matrix, but offer a +2 dice pool modifier to Intimidation Tests. The effects of social modifiers from multiple Metagenics qualities are not cumulative.

Urgent Message...

POSITIVE METAGENETIC QUALITIES

Depending upon the Class of SURGE picked when buying the Changeling quality (p. 73), the character gains a number of Positive BPs that may be spent on the Metagenics qualities below as well as those listed above.

360-degree Eyesight

Cost: 10 BP

Characters with this quality have a 360-degree field of vision due to a repositioning and/or composition of the eyes. The character may have eyes at the side of the head instead of the front, or may have arthropod-style compound eyes composed of many facets that combine into a single pixellated image, or chameleon-like eyes that can rotate and focus separately. Since the metahuman brain is not fully prepared to process a 360-degree arc of vision, characters with such eyes suffer a 1 dice pool modifier to any tests when in motion, but still have an improved visual field.

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360-degree Vision cannot be augmented with cyber or bioware and is incompatible with eye replacement. The character will normally also incur social modifiers (see *Freaks* sidebar, p. 110).

Animal Pelage

Cost: 5 to 10 BP

Like Unusual Hair (p. 119), a character with this quality develops hair follicles that grow an unusual fur or pelage that has not only cosmetic functions but an environmental function or benefit such as climate protection, predatory behavior, or defense. Animal Pelage counts as Unusual Hair (p. 119) for rules purposes.

Quills (10 BP): The character possesses modified hairs coated with thick plates of keratin that resemble the quills or spines of porcupines, interspersed with bristles, under fur and hair. The quills are 2–4 centimeters long, are sharp as needles, and detach easily when used in close combat. Though quills can be wielded in melee combat using the Exotic Melee Weapon: Quills skill, they are normally used as a defensive mechanism to hold off attackers. If the character is being successfully grappled in close combat (see *Subduing*, p. 152, *SR4*), the attacker takes damage equal to the quills' base damage value ((STR/2 + 1)P, Reach 0, AP+1).

Insulating Pelt (5 BP): A thick warm pelt or fur covers the entire body. Since most pelts insulate their wearer from cold and immersion in water, characters with this Metagenic quality receive a +3 dice pool modifier for Survival and Swimming Tests in frigid environments (such as Arctic and Subarctic regions).

Camo Fur (5 BP): The character is covered by dark-colored or patterned fur that gives her a predatory advantage when operating in the dark or certain environments. Characters with this quality receive a +1 dice pool modifier for Stealth Tests in an environment with partial or lesser light conditions.

This effect of Animal Pelage is incompatible with other natural or artificial hair modifications and with the Feathers and Scales qualities. Pelt and Camo Fur are also incompatible with any natural or augmented skin modification.

Arcane Arrester

Cost: 25 BP

When affected by a spell (including a critter's Innate Spells), the character—and she alone—treats Force-based effects (damage, paralysis, etc.) at half (round down) actual strength. Note that the actual Force of the spell is not actually reduced. For instance, a character with Arcane Arrester targeted by a Force 5 spell would resist it as if it were a Force 2 spell, though the spellcaster could still add hits to improve the effect. Arcane Arrester cannot be combined with Magic Resistance (p. 79, *SR4*). This quality can be taken by characters with a Magic attribute.

Balance Receptor

Cost: 5 BP

The character possesses a statocyst-like balance receptor that works in addition to the mammalian semi-circular canals, augmenting balance. This quality adds a +1 dice pool modifier to all tests involving balance, such as climbing, walking across a narrow platform, landing after a jump and so on.

Beak

Cost: 5 or 10 BP

Instead of mouth and nose, the character possesses a beak and nostrils. The size and shape of the beak can vary significantly. While some possess hard-tipped beaks that can be used for nut-cracking or killing prey, other beaks are sensitive and contain nerves similar to human lips. As beaks cannot be used for chewing, characters with beaks usually swallow their food whole, which is then processed by a specialized stomach (called the gizzard) constructed of thick, muscular walls to grind up food. This quality expands the range of substances the character can process, and so her Lifestyle costs are reduced by 10 percent and she receives a +1 dice pool modifier on tests to resist ingested toxins (see *Toxic Substances*, p. 245, *SR4*).

Characters with Beaks suffer social stigma and modifiers (see *Freaks* sidebar, p. 110).

Raptor Beak (10 BP): This beak can also be used with the Unarmed Skill (Reach of 0 and a Damage Value of (STR/2)P).

Bicardiac

Cost: 10 BP

The character possesses a second heart located in the right half of his torso that augments the normal heart in maintaining the cardiovascular system. Bicardiac characters can perform strenuous exercise for longer periods of time due to increased blood supply and higher pulse rates that would cause tachycardia in normal people. They can take a maximum of 8 boxes of Stun or Fatigue damage instead of the usual 6 (see *Fatigue Damage*, p. 155, *SR4*).

Bicardiac is compatible with synthacadium, though only the cardinal heart can be augmented with bioware.

Biosonar

Cost: 25 BP

Characters with Biosonar possess all the natural organs for a sophisticated biological echolocation system similar to a bat's or dolphin's. They can emit ultrasonic calls and form a mental image of the surrounding space from the echoes that bounce off their surroundings. Treat this quality as if the character had echolocation, vocal range enhancer, and hearing enhancement bioware implants (pp. 63–64, p. 65 and p. 67, *Augmentation*).

This expression also results in a change to the shape and size of the character's outer and inner ear and vocal cords.

Bone Spikes

Cost: 5 BP

Razor-sharp bony deposits erupt from the character's skeletal structure and poke through the skin, as if the character had sprouted bony spikes. Besides being hideous to look at, characters with Bone Spikes cannot wear armor or restrictive clothing because the protruding bone spurs make it too uncomfortable. Specially designed armor and clothing can be purchased at a 50 percent increase in base cost. The bone protrusions also make the character more dangerous in unarmed combat. Add +2 to the Damage Value of any unarmed attacks.

Broad Auditory Spectrum

Cost: 5 BP (choose ultrasound or infrasound)

This natural increased auditory spectrum enables the character to hear outside the range of normal metahuman hearing. The

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user can either hear ultrasonic, high-frequency sound (including ultrasound emitters) or infrasonic, low-frequency noises. He cannot choose or control a certain frequency of this increased spectrum. In game terms, the character may make a Perception Test to detect communication or sounds within his chosen frequency band.

As this kind of hearing can be considered "always on," the character may sometimes be distracted or deafened by noises inaudible to others. This expression results in visible changes to the size and structure of the outer ear.

Camouflage

Cost: 5 or 10 BP

Also known as cryptic or concealing coloration, characters with Camouflage possess skin and hair pigmentation that can change to adopt the coloration of a background. Standard Camouflage changes color only when exposed for a prolonged time to a background with sharp contrasts, like colorful patterns, and it retains the new color for up to 4 hours. When not exposed to a pattern, the skin resumes its normal hue.

Dynamic Coloration (10 BP): Dynamic Coloration changes color slowly with the background as the character moves. Unless the character is mostly nude, however, this does not translate into any benefit for Infiltration Tests, and even nude characters only receive +2 bonus die (+4 if they remain completely motionless).

Camouflage is incompatible with any cybernetic dermal modification.It is still compatible with Body Paint (p. 82, *Arsenal*) and nanopaste disguises.

Celerity

Cost: 5 BP

Characters with this quality benefit from strengthening of the musclature involved in running. Leg muscles become ropy and more prominent. Increase the character's Walking and Running rates (see *Movement*, p. 138, *SR4*) by one-half (round down) its current value.

Claws

Cost: 5 or 10 BP

The character's fingernails and toenails harden and lengthen into claws. This can be claws or talons like those of a natural predator, or spade-shaped digging claws like a dredger. The character may use these claws to attack an opponent using the Unarmed Combat skill, inflicting a Damage Value of (STR/2)P. This effect is incompatible with any cyberweapon or limb replacement cyberware. Digging claws are less effective in this regard, resulting in a –1 dice pool modifier in melee combat, but are excellent for digging and moving earth (+2 to any relevant Tests).

Retractable Claws (10 BP) have the same effect as standard Claws, but can be hidden like retractable cyberweapons. Digging claws cannot be retracted.

Climate Adaptation

Cost: 10 BP (choose desert or arctic climate)

The character's metabolic processes, skin tissue, and regulation cycles are adapted to extreme hot or cold climates (desert or arctic environments), enabling the character to adjust more easily to hot or cold temperatures in a manner similar to heat and cold adaptation geneware (p.91, *Augmentation*). This quality grants a +1 dice pool modifier for Survival Tests and resisting damage from similar sources. The player must select one climate (desert or arctic) when choosing this quality.

Climate Adaptation is not compatible with dermal plating or sheathing, bioware skin augmentations and skin qualities, a metabolic arrestor, or a suprathyroid gland.

Corrosive Spit

Cost: 10 BP

The character possesses salivary glands like those of paracritters that produce a highly corrosive mucus that can be spit at opponents in combat. To strike an intended target, the character rolls a ranged attack using the Exotic Ranged Weapon: Spit skill + Agility, with a range of (Body) meters. The saliva causes Acid damage (see p. 154, *SR4*), with a Damage Value of 4 that can be resisted with half Impact armor (round up). As the saliva must be replenished, this type of attack can only be used once per combat.

Dermal Alteration

Cost: 5 to 15 BP

Characters with this quality possess skin that looks and feels quite different from normal skin and has unique properties. Dermal Alteration is incompatible with any other natural or artificial skin modification.

Bark Skin (10 BP): The character's skin contains woven cellulosic fibers and wooden filaments that make it bark-like in appearance and hardness. Bark Skin confers a +2 bonus to Impact armor only and is cumulative with any worn armor.

Blubber (5 BP): The character possesses a thick layer of vascularized fat under her skin that acts as an efficient thermal insulator. The character receives +2 dice for tests to resist Cold damage, but also suffers a –2 dice pool penalty to Perception Tests involving cold.

Dragon Skin (10 BP): The character possesses a scaly hide that makes him more resistant to heat. The character receives +2 dice when resisting Fire damage, but also suffers a –2 dice pool penalty to Perception Tests involving heat.

Granite Shell (15 BP): The character's skin contains massive calcite inclusions that make it appear grayish and hard as rock. Treat Granite Shell as 3/3 armor that counts as Hardened Armor (p. 288, *SR4*). This quality is not compatible with any worn armor and counts for Armor and Encumbrance (p. 149, *SR4*).

Rhino Hide (10 BP): The character possesses a hard, thick, leathery skin like an elephant or rhinoceros that may or may not form folds. Rhino Hide grants 2/5 Ballistic/Impact armor, is not cumulative with any worn armor, and counts for Armor and Encumbrance (p. 149, *SR4*).

Dermal Deposits

Cost: 10 BP

The character possesses tough and sinewy dermal deposits or osteoderms (bony-cored scales) under or on her skin, much like a troll. These deposits count as natural Ballistic/Impact Armor of 1, which is cumulative with worn armor. If a troll changeling acquires this effect, her dermal deposits become even more widespread and pronounced.

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Defensive Secretion

Cost: 5 BP

The character's skin contains cells that allow her to exude a defensive liquid when agitated or endangered, similar to the defensive secretions of frogs or reflex bleeding of certain beetle species. Though not poisonous in most cases, these secretions are either acidic (creating a burning sensation upon touch) or cause other adverse skin reactions (itching, urticaria). As soon as another person touches the agitated character with unprotected hands, that person suffers a –1 dice pool modifier for all tests made within the next 24 hours (or until treated with a successful Medicine + Logic (2) Test). Defensive Secretions do not work against spirits.

Glamour

Cost: 15 BP

A character with Glamour is paranaturally gifted so that all sapient beings perceive her as moving with unearthly grace, her countenance as always radiant, and her voice as soul-wrenching and laden with emotion. People may describe her as angelic or fairylike, and everyone she speaks to cannot help but feel moved and inspired.

Sapient beings will always respond with awe, deference, and kindness to the character as long as she does not act hostile. The character gains a +3 dice pool modifier to all Social Skill Tests except Intimidation.

This quality renders the character particularly memorable and she suffers from the effects of Distinctive Style (p. 103)

Electrosense

Cost: 10 BP

Characters with this quality have developed the capacity to sense electricity and changes to electric fields in their vicinity, similar to animals like fish or a platypus. Electric charges can be felt through touch (actually the indirect effect of electric charges on hair).

Treat Electrosense like the technomancer echo E-Sensing (p. 146, *Unwired*). To sense electric currents, non-Emerged characters use Intuition instead of Resonance, however. The range of the electric sense is (Essence) meters.

Elongated Limbs

Cost: 5 BP

The character's arms or legs (or both) are elongated, granting her a greater effective reach. In game terms, characters with this trait have an elevated Reach (+1) for combat purposes. This quality is cumulative with any natural Reach modifier (such as a troll's arm length).

The character must buy special clothing to accommodate this unusual physique (+10 percent cost), and may require customization of certain gear (such as armor)

Fangs

Cost: 5 BP

The character's canine teeth are enlarged and sharpened like those of a carnivore. The character can attack with the fangs using Unarmed Combat skill, though fang attacks suffer a –1 Reach penalty. Fangs have a Damage Value of (STR/2–1)P and are incompatible with cyberfang implants (p. 34, *Augmentation*).

Frog Tongue

Cost: 10 BP

The character possesses a long adhesive tongue, which can be extended in a spring-loaded fashion by a muscular trigger. When triggered, it shoots outward to strike at a target and then retracts into the mouth. Though not prehensile enough to manipulate a tool, the tongue is strong enough to snatch an object as long as the object's weight is less than the character's unaugmented Strength x 100 in grams. Because of the tongue's sticky secretions, the object will stick to the tongue until manually removed.

If the character also possesses the Natural Venom quality (p. 115) or has a chemical gland (p. 68, *Augmentation*) implanted in the tongue or within the oral cavity, the tongue can be used to apply the substance with a successful touch-only attack (p. 148, *SR4*) using the Exotic Melee Weapon: Frog Tongue skill.

Functional Tail

Cost: 5 to 15 BP

An animal-like tail grows from the base of the character's spine; this may be scaly (like a lizard), hairy (like a monkey), or hairless (like an opossum's tail). Contrary to a Vestigial Tail (p. 119), a Functional Tail is fully developed and functional.

A **Balance Tail (5 BP)** is usually between one and two meters long, but not under the character's conscious control. It functions instinctively, twitching, swaying, and even wrapping around things at random. It does this to compensate shifts in posture and movement assisting the character's sense of balance in a manner similar to the cybernetic Balance Tail (p. 39, *Augmentation*).

A **Paddle Tail (5 BP)** is broad and scaly like a beaver tail and can be used to steer and paddle when swimming, granting a +2 dice pool modifier for all Swimming Tests. It also increases the character's Swimming Rate by half her basic rate every turn.

A **Prehensile Tail (10 BP)** functions exactly like the Balance Tail, except that the character can consciously manipulate it as if it were an extra limb. The tail can pick up items, though it lacks digits and so cannot finely manipulate objects, pull triggers, and so on. Apply a –2 dice pool modifier to any attempt at fine manipulation of an object with the tail. The tail has an effective strength equal to half the character's unaugmented Strength (round down), but it can hold the character's entire body weight if he chooses to hang from it. Prehensile tails do not provide an extra attack.

A **Thagomizer (10 BP)** is a powerfully muscled prehensile tail which ends in an array of dermal spikes (or a club) and can be wielded like a spiked mace in melee combat using the Exotic Melee Weapon: Thagomizer skill. The weapon has a Reach of 1 and a Damage Value of (Strength/2) + 2P.

The character's clothing must accommodate the tail, and he will find it uncomfortable to sit in certain positions for long periods. The Versatile Tail quality is incompatible with any other tail modification or quality.

Gills

Cost: 5 BP

Amphibian-like gills on the sides of the character's neck allow him to breathe underwater. His respiratory and circulatory systems allow him to reflexively alternate between using lungs (above water) and gills (underwater). These gills offer the same benefits as the Gills bio-implant (p. 65, *Augmentation*).

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Greasy Skin
Cost: 5 BP

The character's skin contains sweat glands that produce a greasy lubricant in stressful or exhausting situations, covering the body with an oily film that gives it a moist sheen. While it does not impair the character's normal actions, the lubricant makes the character harder to tackle, wrestle with, or grab hold of. Attacker's dice pools suffer a –2 dice modifier under these circumstances—but only if more than half the character's body is exposed or unclothed.

Greasy Skin is incompatible with extensive body hair modifications or qualities involving types of fur, as well as cyber skin modifications.

Goring Horns
Cost: 5 BP

A single horn or horns express on the character's head. If a character already has horns, these grow even bigger. This can be anything from ram horns to deer-like antlers to devil horns or even jagged crests of bone around the skull. Unlike most metatype horns, which cannot be used to attack, the character may use these in combat with the Exotic Melee Weapon: Horns skill, though horn attacks suffer a –1 Reach penalty. Horn attacks possess a Damage Value of (STR/2+1)P.

Keen-Eared
Cost: 5 BP

Characters with this quality have extraordinarily keen hearing. As this hearing can be considered "always on," the character may sometimes be distracted or deafened by noises inaudible (or nearly so) to others.

A character with this quality may add 1 die to any hearing-based Perception Tests.

Larger Tusks
Cost: 10 BP

Larger tusks are bigger variants of normal metahuman tusks that resemble the incisor teeth of elephants, warthogs, and walruses. As with Fangs (p. 113), a character can attack with these tusks using her normal Unarmed Combat skill, but without the Fangs' Reach penalty. Larger Tusks have a Damage Value of (STR/2+1) P and are incompatible with mouth implants and modifications (except for the *Proboscis*, p. 115).

Larger Tusks inflict modifiers on social interaction (see *Freaks* sidebar, p. 110).

Low-Light Vision
Cost: 5 BP

The character possesses eyes that provide natural low-light vision and enable her to see normally in light levels as low as starlight. These can be normal eyes resulting from the character's metagenetic background (elf or ork eyes), or feline eyes that are slit, reflective, and glow in the dark.

Magnetosense
Cost: 5 BP

Similar to Electrosense, Magnetosense allows a character to sense changes in magnetic fields nearby. This is accomplished by an elevated level of magnetite in the ethmoid bone of the nose and specialized neural pathways linking to a modified olfactory bulb and olfactory cortex. Characters with this quality can literally "sniff" out the presence, direction, and intensity of magnetic fields, such as those generated by electronics, power supplies, or magnetic anomaly detectors. The character also has an unerring ability to locate magnetic north. The character makes a Perception + Intuition Test to detect these emanations within a range of 5 meters.

Marsupial Pouch
Cost: 5 BP

The character develops a pocket-like pouch on her chest or abdomen, just like the pouch a kangaroo uses to carry its young. This pouch is equivalent to a Skin Pocket (p. 339, *SR4*).

Metagenetic Improvement (Attribute)
Cost: 20 BP

A character with Metagenetic Improvement possesses a genetic expression that enhances the genes connected to the development of a certain Mental or Physical attribute.

In game terms, the minimum and maximum values for one of the character's attributes (as listed in the *Metatype Attribute Table*, p.73, *SR4*) are both raised by 1. This quality may only be taken once for each attribute, but it is cumulative with the Exceptional Attribute quality (p. 78, *SR4*) and genetech such as Genetic Optimization (p. 89, *Augmentation*).

Metahuman Traits
Cost: 5 BP

Characters with this quality possess metagenes that express as certain cosmetic metahuman traits (such as elongated ears, dwarfism, gigantism, high cheekbones or ork tusks). This quality grants a human character the ability to pass or disguise herself as a member of the metatype she resembles (elf, dwarf, ork, or troll) under certain circumstances (similar to a metaposeur). This quality cannot be taken by metahuman characters.

Monkey Paws
Cost: 5 BP

The character possesses monkey- or chameleon-like gripping feet with elongated, prehensile toes that enable her to climb more easily when barefoot. Add a +2 dice pool modifier to non-tumbling Gymnastics and Climbing tests and also to any movement Tests made in micro-gravity.

The character must have shoes that accommodate this unusual physique.

Nasty Vibe
Cost: 5 BP

A character with this quality radiates the ultimate "bad vibe." Sapient beings in her presence feel an indefinable "air of menace," ill-at-ease, and oppressed. Some might even describe the feeling as being in the presence of evil (regardless of whether this is true or not), and the superstitious might attribute something demonic to the character's nature. Add a +3 dice pool modifier to all Intimidation Tests and any attempt to instill fear in a sapient target.

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Natural Venom

Cost: 10 BP

The character's body produces a natural toxin (to which the character herself acquires complete immunity). Treat Natural Venom as a Chemical Gland (p. 68, *Augmentation*) that produces a naturally occurring animal toxin (see *Toxins*, p. 244, *SR4* and p. 84, *Arsenal*) that can be exhaled or spat. If the character also has the Fangs quality (p. 113), the venom can be delivered by injection.

Natural Venom is incompatible with Corrosive Spit.

Ogre Stomach

Cost: 5 BP

The character's unique stomach and intestinal organs (including unusual gut flora) can digest a variety of substances that normal metahumans cannot or have trouble digesting, such as raw meat and cellulose-based plant material (like grass).

In game terms, Lifestyle costs are reduced by 20 percent and the character receives a +2 dice pool modifier on Tests to resist ingested toxins (see *Toxic Substances*, p. 245, *SR4*).

Photometabolism

Cost: 5 BP

The character possesses an organ (chloroplast skin or grass-like body hair, for example) that supplements his energy needs via photosynthesis. Even when the character's organ is fully exposed to sunlight, this process only creates enough nourishment for the recipient to supplement his diet, not to replace it. Characters with Photometabolism see their Lifestyle costs reduced by 10 percent. However, since the character's overall physical well-being and energy increase in the sunlight, the character feels uncomfortable at night or out of the sun. Photometabolism is incompatible with the Nocturnal quality (p. 117) and with chameleon skin, orthoskin, and dermal sheathing.

Proboscis

Cost: 10 BP

The character possesses an elephantine nose (or trunk) instead of a typical nose and upper lip. This is even more versatile than the Prehensile Tail (p. 113). It can be used for small manipulations or even a blunt punch using the Exotic Melee Weapon: Trunk skill. Apply a –2 dice pool modifier to any attempt to manipulate an object with the trunk. It has an effective strength equal to the character's unaugmented Strength. Trunks do not provide an extra attack.

Characters with a proboscis suffer modifiers to social interaction (see *Freaks* sidebar, p. 110).

Satyr Legs

Cost: 10 BP

The character's legs are shaped like a quadruped's hind legs, often with cloven hooves—though other types such as kangaroo or hare legs are possible. The legs also grow more hair, like those of a satyr.

A character with Satyr Legs increases her Walking and Running rates (see *Movement*, p. 138, *SR4*) by one-half (round down). The legs also provide a +2 Strength modifier to any kicking attacks and a +2 dice pool bonus to Gymnastic Tests (including Gymastic Dodge Tests).

Setae

Cost: 10 BP

Also known as gecko hands, these hair-like structures on a character's palms allow the character to move along vertical surfaces just like certain reptilian species.

Treat Setae as Gecko Hands (p. 64, *Augmentation*) for rules purposes.

Shiva Arms

Cost: 15 BP

Certain rare changelings, and one metavariant genetic expression, grant a character an additional set of arms that extend from modified shoulder joints. The character may hold and carry double the number of objects in her hands than would normally be possible.

These so-called Shiva arms or Kali arms can be moved independently, but they will still have one dominant hand unless the character has the Ambidexterity quality (p. 77, *SR4*). A character with Shiva arms can take the Ambidexterity quality multiple times, each time applying the quality to one of her off-hands.

Characters with Shiva Arms can choose to wield multiple weapons (firearms, melee weapons, or a combination of the two) in combat (*Holding Weapons,* p. 161, *SR4*). Weapons wielded in an off-hand suffer the usual penalty; this applies both to firearms (*Attacker Using Off-Hand Weapon,* p. 142, *SR4*) and melee weapons (*Off-Hand Weapon,* p. 148, *SR4*). The character can use the Fire Weapon action (p. 136, *SR4*) with firearms in their extra hands, though the character must still split their dice pool between the firearms, and any penalties for using firearms in off-hands still apply.

This quality may be taken twice for up to six arms.

Thermal Sensitivity

Cost: 5 BP

Like vipers and other kinds of snakes, the character possesses infrared-sensitive receptors next to his olfactory organs that allow him to "see" radiated heat similar to a thermosense bio-modification.

In game terms, treat this quality like the Thermosense Organ (p. 70, *Augmentation*).

Thermographic Vision

Cost: 5 BP

A character with this quality has natural thermographic vision, just like dwarfs and trolls.

Underwater Vision

Cost: 5 BP

The character develops an additional, specially-adapted membrane to the outer eye that enables her to use her normal vision unrestricted in and out of water. This allows the character to ignore underwater visibility modifiers (p.171, *Arsenal*).

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Vomeronasal Organ

Cost: 10 BP

The character's nose contains additional olfactory organelles that augment her sense of smell, granting a higher sensitivity and contrast (sending neural signals not only to the accessory olfactory bulb, but to the amygdala and hypothalamus as well). This enhances a metahuman's innate ability to discern and react to individuals by scent, as well as detecting basic emotional cues (fear, anger, lust) from smells. A character with this quality can also identify individual people and animals by their smell and can recognize clues to a person's emotional state based on body odors. Add a +3 dice pool modifier to any Perception Tests based on smell and a +2 modifier to any Test involving social interaction.

Strong odors and intense background smells (ie. garbage, spicy foods, etc) may diminish this ability or even confuse it, and the character may experience extreme discomfort when confronted with overwhelming odors (i.e. large crowds or offensive smells). To reflect distraction or discomfort, add a –2 dice pool modifier to all tests (though a respirator can reduce these penalties by its rating). Thanks to the neural connections between vomeronasal organs and the behavioral centers of the brain, tailored pheromones provide twice their normal bonus against characters with this quality. If the character also possesses an adrenaline pump (p. 338, *SR4*), the pump may be set off by other people's smells of fear, anger, and lust. In these cases, the character should make a Composure (1) Test.

Webbed Hands and Toes

Cost: 5 BP

The character has webbed hands and toes similar to a seal, duck, or frog. This adds +2 dice to all Swimming Tests, but inflicts a –1 dice pool modifier to any fine manipulations using the webbed hands.

NEGATIVE METAGENETIC QUALITIES

The following introduces a number of new negative qualities that may be taken by characters who have already taken the Changeling quality (p. 73). The gamemaster is free to allow these qualities to be used by other characters if appropriate to their background—escaped labrats, victims of flawed gene therapies, mutations due to genetic infusions, mutants, etc.

Adiposis

Bonus: 15 BP

The character is clinically obese due to metabolic or genetic dysfunction and possesses more than 30 percent body fat. Because of her massive weight and abdominal girth, she is slow to react and cumbersome. Reduce her Walking and Running rates (see *Movement*, p. 138, *SR4*) by half (round down). Additionally, the character receives a –3 dice pool modifier to all physical activities including combat (and Dodge), and becomes out of breath much faster than a healthy person. Use half the character's Body Attribute when determining the number of Turns before the character starts taking Fatigue damage (p. 155, *SR4*). Because adiposis is metagenetic in nature, it cannot be fully countered by Dietware or Slimworms (pp. 62 and 71 respectively, *Augmentation*), though each treatment reduces the dice pool modifiers by 1, to a minimum of –1.

Astral Hazing

Bonus: 10 BP (for non-Awakened characters),
15 BP (for Awakened characters)

A character with this quality has expressed metagenes that somehow catalyse and feed on the character's darker emotions and negative feelings, disturbing the character's aura and any ambient mana in her vicinity. For reasons not yet understood, the character becomes an aspected domain in her own right and taints astral space around her wherever she goes; a generator of tainted astral background count (similar to a cyberzombie).

This astral haze affects all attempts to cast magic on, at, or in the vicinity of the character. Whatever the ambient mana conditions are, the character always stands at the heart of a Rating 4 background count (see p. 117, *Street Magic*) that extends a number of meters from her body equal to her Essence; this background count also impairs her own actions if the character is Awakened. If she remains in one place for long, the background count expands by one meter in every direction every two or three hours (at the gamemaster's discretion).

Berserker

Bonus: 10 BP

Characters with the berserker quality have a very little self-control and are prone to falling into a primal rage caused by hormonal or psychic imbalance. Unlike the Berserk adept power (p. 175, *Street Magic*), the character has no control over this sudden fury. The gamemaster may choose to trigger the Berserker rage at any point when the character becomes emotionally agitated—though he should call for a Composure (3) Test (p. 130, *SR4*) to see whether the character can repress the urge.

While enraged, the character is subject to frenzied bloodlust and will attack foes (and even friends) without regard for his own safety. The Berserker rage adds +1 to all of the character's Physical attribute ratings, but lowers his Mental attribute ratings by 1 (to a minimum of 1) for the duration of Willpower x 1D6 Combat Turns.

If the character has an adrenaline pump (p. 338, *SR4*), the berserker rage always triggers the bio-implant.

Bioluminescence

Bonus: 5 BP

The character produces the pigment luciferin and the enzyme luciferase in her hair and/or skin, creating a "cold-light" green-to-blue glow via a chemical reaction. Though too weak to observe in normal light, it is bright enough to spot, locate, or target the character in partial light or full darkness, negating visibility modifiers. The glow is sufficient to enable a character with low-light vision to see as if in daylight.

Cephalopoidal Skull

Bonus: 10 BP

The character has a kraken-like head consisting of a nacre-like substance instead of bone and a pallium-like ectoderm that ends in tiny tentacles covering the shoulders and upper thorax. The skull and the upper torso are soft, imposing a –3 dice pool modifier when resisting damage in this region.

A Cephalopoidal Skull inflicts modifiers on social interaction (see *Freaks* sidebar, p. 110).

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Critter Spook
Bonus: 5 BP

Something about the character's presence or smell seems threatening to animals and paranormal critters. Any animals within 5 meters of the character will react with fear and hostility (apply a –2 dice pool modifier to attempts to control, soothe, or pacify them). If drawn into combat, the critters will go out of their way to attack this character first.

Cyclopean Eye
Bonus: 10 BP

Instead of two eyes, the character possesses a single huge eye directly above the nose, with the same natural vision abilities of her metatype. Because she lacks binocular vision cues, such as stereopsis and parallax, accurate hand-eye coordination is complicated (such as catching a basketball). In game terms, characters with a Cyclopean Eye receive a –1 dice pool modifier for all Combat Tests and all technical and physical skill tests that require precision (at the gamemaster's discretion).

Cyclopean characters lack the cerebral lobe development and neural connections to process binocular vision cues, and so cannot compensate for this Negative quality with a cybereye.

Deformity
Bonus: 5 or 25 BP

A character with genetic Deformity has abnormal and asymmetrical facial and body features. Given that many characters with this quality have misplaced sensory organs (for example, both eyes on the left side of the face or the nose centered on the forehead), the condition is known on the streets as a "Picasso" (5 BP for a severe facial deformity). Significant physical deformities are sometimes called a "Quasimodo" (25 BP for a severe physical deformity).

Even in 2070, characters with this quality who do not hide their abnormalities will suffer social marginalization (double the modifiers offered in the *Freaks* sidebar, p. 110). Depending upon whether the deformation affects sensory or motor functions, the character receives a –2 dice pool modifier to Perception (Picasso Face) or –1 dice pool modifier to Physical Active Tests (Quasimodo). These deformities are too extensive to be corrected without (severe) biosculpting (p. 129, *Augmentation*) or corrective gene therapy (p. 88, *Augmentation*). If the quality is not bought off with Karma first, complications arise during surgery that cause the doctors to halt the procedure.

Extravagant Eyes
Bonus: 5 BP

The character's irises, whites, or possibly even entire eyes take on an unusual color. For example, a character may develop bright green irises, both eyes may turn light silver, or one eye may turn white and one black. Many onlookers will simply assume the character has cybereyes. Altered eye color has no effect on the character's vision. This effect is incompatible with cybereyes or bioware eyes.

Feathers
Bonus: 5 BP

The character sprouts feathers that replace her regular body hair or cover other parts of her body. These feathers may be fine and downy (and water-resistant to a degree, like a duck's) or fluffy and vibrant. Feathers offer no protective value and are incompatible with the Unusual Hair and Scales Metagenetic qualities.

Insectoid Features
Bonus: 5 BP

The character possesses insectoid features such as compound eyes, mandibles or insect wings (butterfly or dragonfly-type). Though the modifications are merely cosmetic (the character cannot fly, compound eyes have no effect on the character's vision and are in normal eye sockets), the resemblance to insect spirit flesh forms usually creates a hostile reaction that might provoke an attack (at the gamemaster's discretion). If drawn into combat, people may attack this character first (to remove the apparent threat).

Insectoid Features can seriously affect social interactions (see *Freaks* sidebar, p. 110).

Mood Hair
Bonus: 5 BP

Mood hair changes colors according to the character's emotional state (for example, it may turn deep red when the character is agitated). Because the character's emotional state is clearly visible and cannot be hidden, add a +2 dice pool modifier for all Judge Intentions Tests (p. 130, *SR4*) against the character if the person is aware of this fact.

Mood Hair is incompatible with any hair modification and the Feathers and Scales qualities.

Neoteny
Bonus: 10 BP

Neotenous characters have halted during development and retain the physical traits of a child or adolescent (up to a 13-year old) even though they are legally adults. They are usually quite short and may have underdeveloped sexual attributes (though this is not the case with metavariants). Given the absence of certain traits common to adults (height, body and pubic hair, facial changes, deeper voice, and so on), they can easily be mistaken for children or teenagers. Gamemasters may modify certain Social Tests depending on how an NPC will interact with the character. People often underestimate children, which may give a neotenous character an advantage.

The character's lack of physical development reduces his default Physical Condition Monitor to 6+ (Body/2, rounded up) boxes, and may result in social modifiers (see *Freaks* sidebar, p. 110).

Nocturnal
Bonus: 10 BP

A character with this quality has an abnormal circadian rhythm. Instead of a typical diurnal human bio-cycle, the character has the opposite—she normally sleeps during the daytime and is active at night, though a crepuscular schedule (so-called twilight activity) is also possible. All Mental attributes are reduced by 1 during daylight hours.

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Progeria

Bonus: 30 BP

Progeria syndrome is an extremely rare condition in which some aspects of aging are greatly accelerated. Though life expectancies have increased due to advances in genetic engineering and biotech, the character has only a few more years to live (the exact number is up to the gamemaster), unless he undergoes life-prolonging techniques such as age rejuvenation (p. 88, *Augmentation*) or gets infected by HMHVV (which turns the character into a vampire, halting the progeria) during game play. Though biogenetic treatments have diminished some of the effects during the character's childhood, progeria has halted his physical development in an early stage, making him look like an ancient child (small stature and childlike features coupled with wrinkled skin). Such a character may be mistaken for a child, similar to Neoteny (p. 117).

A character suffering from progeria is also experiencing side effects of the syndrome such as atherosclerosis and cardiovascular problems, resulting in a –3 dice pool modifier to all Physical Tests.

Impaired (Attribute)

Bonus: 5 BP

The character sees one of his Mental or Physical attributes Impaired and finds it impossible to achieve the natural maximum level of his metatype in that attribute. Permanently reduce one of the character's metatype attribute maximums by 1 (for example, a human character would have one attribute with a natural maximum of 5 rather than the usual 6). This quality also decreases the augmented maximum by the appropriate ammount. This quality can only be taken once for each attribute. Note, if taken during play, this may reduce a character's current attribute rating in the affected attribute.

Scales

Bonus: 5 BP

The character has scaly skin, similar to a lizard or snake. The scales may cover her entire body or only certain sections, but must be obvious and visible to onlookers. The scales might grow in certain patterns, or may appear in unusual colors (bright red, turquoise blue, etc.). The character will also periodically shed her scaly skin as a new layer grows in underneath. Scaly skin offers no protective value.

This quality is incompatible with dermal sheathing, bioware skin augmentations and other skin-related qualities.

Scent Glands

Bonus: 10 BP

The character possesses scent glands that produce a foul odor best described as a combination of rotten eggs and skunk spray. While the normal level of smell is stinky at best and may diminish with extensive use of strong perfumes or patchouli, it becomes highly offensive under stress. The scent is difficult to remove from clothing. Add a +2 dice pool modifier to locate the character by scent (+3 when the character is stressed) and a –2 dice pool modifier to all Social Tests whenever the odor is not masked (–3 when stressed).

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Slow Healer

Bonus: 10 BP

A Slow Healer recuperates from wounds more sluggishly than normal characters do, taking typically longer to heal wounds, fatigue, and pathogen and toxin effects. Apply a –2 dice pool modifier to all Healing Tests made by or for the character, including magical healing.

Striking Skin Pigmentation

Bonus: 5 BP

The character's skin takes on an unusual color, either in its entirety or in patches. For example, a black character's hands, feet, and face may turn Caucasian-pale, a Caucasian character may acquire brown leopard spots across her neck, shoulders, and arms, or a character's skin may turn entirely orange, blue, or golden. The value of this quality is contingent on the striking skin color being obvious and visible, and affecting a character's chances of being noticed, recognized, or encountering prejudice.

This metagenetic quality is incompatible with dermal sheathing and bioware skin augmentations.

Stubby Arms

Bonus: 5 BP

Instead of normal arm length, the character has stubby arms resulting from skeletal dysplasia. If wielding a melee weapon in combat, reduce the weapon's Reach by 1. In addition, the reduced length of the arms imposes a –1 dice pool modifier for all non-Combat Tests requiring limberness and dexterity with the arms or hands (at the gamemaster's discretion).

Symbiosis

Bonus: 10 BP

If the character sets up residence in a certain location for a sustained period of time (more than a season, though the gamemaster determines the specific time period) she gradually becomes attuned to the place and her surroundings. While this grants the character a preternaturally intuitive understanding of the environment and its inhabitants, the bonding can be fatal when it occurs in polluted or desolate urban environments.

In game terms, the character's biorhythm and senses gradually adapt to the environment (Essence x 500 meters) around her permanent residence—the place where she spends most of her time. The character has little control over this symbiotic bonding, but may resist the process each month with a successful Body + Willpower (3) Test (though such characters often feel incomplete or lost when unattuned). Once the bond is formed, it can only be broken if the character changes her home to form a new bond.

Symbiosis provides the character with preternatural insight and connection to everything living within her sphere of attunement. This grants her a +1 dice pool modifier on any Skill Test from the Outdoor Group as well as a modifier to all Social Tests with individuals residing within the area. In addition, the character possesses an intuitive grasp of what's going on around her and is emotionally affected by the condition of the land. If a fire breaks out, she will instantly become alarmed. If all inhabitants in the area coexist peacefully, she will be blissful and healthy. On the other hand, environmental and social problems—like drug abuse, gang violence, and pollution—will produce a somatic response in the character, leaving her sick and depleted (treat as a persistent Mild Allergy until the situation is rectified).

Symbiosis should be seen as chance for storytelling as much as a form of enhancing or impairing a character.

Third Eye

Bonus: 5 BP

A third eye appears in the middle of the character's forehead. This eye incurs no vision modifiers, except that the character may still perceive depth with one eye closed. Even when the third eye is closed, an onlooker can detect its presence with a Perception (2) Test.

Third Eye is incompatible with Cyclopean Eye (p. 117) and incurs social modifiers (see *Freaks* sidebar, p. 110).

Thorns

Cost: 10 BP

Hard, sharp protrusions a centimeter long protrude through the character's skin. These points resemble plant thorns. They are, in fact, a modified form of keratin growing naturally from a subdermal layer and painfully emerging from under the skin. They regrow over a few days if cracked or broken.

Thorns make the character mildly more dangerous in unarmed combat. Add +1 die to the Damage Value of any Unarmed attack. Unfortunately, the character is in constant discomfort (+1 to all Physical Tests) which varies from pain when a thorn emerges through the skin to itchiness when they harden and dry with time. The character must have clothing that accommodates her unusual physique and may require customization of certain gear (like armor).

Unusual Hair

Bonus: 5 BP

The character's hair changes to an unusual color or texture, or grows from her body in unusual patterns or areas. For example, a character's hair may be naturally violet, or she may sport a luxurious lion-like mane from her head down her shoulders and back, or she may be entirely covered in a soft, downy fur like the Night One elven metavariant or the monkey-like Haruman.

Unusual Hair is incompatible with other natural or artificial hair modifications.

Vestigial Tail

Bonus: 5 BP

A normal or stumpy tail grows from the base of the character's spine. This tail may be scaly (like a lizard), hairy (like a dog or cat) or hairless (like a rat). The tail may be wagged slightly with effort, but has no other function.

The Vestigial Tail quality is incompatible with the Functional Tail (p. 113), cybernetic or bioware tails.

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BASIC SR4 POSITIVE QUALITIES

Quality	Cost	Reference
Adept	5 BP	p. 77, *SR4*
Ambidextrous	5 BP	p. 77, *SR4*
Animal Empathy	10 BP	p. 77, *SR4*
Aptitude	10 BP	p. 77, *SR4*
Astral Chameleon	5 BP	p. 77, *SR4*
Blandness	10 BP	p. 78, *SR4*
Codeslinger	10 BP	p. 78, *SR4*
Double Jointed	5 BP	p. 78, *SR4*
Exceptional Attribute	20 BP	p. 78, *SR4*
First Impression	5 BP	p. 78, *SR4*
Focused Concentration	10 or 20 BP	p. 78, *SR4*
Guts	5 BP	p. 78, *SR4*
High Pain Tolerance	5 to 15 BP	p. 78, *SR4*
Home Ground	10 BP	p. 78, *SR4*
Human Looking	5 BP	p. 78, *SR4*
Lucky	20 BP	p. 79, *SR4*
Magician	15 BP	p. 79, *SR4*
Magic Resistance	5 to 20 BP	p. 79, *SR4*
Mentor Spirit	5 BP	p. 79, *SR4*
Murky Link	10 BP	p. 79, *SR4*
Mystic Adept	10 BP	p. 79, *SR4*
Natural Hardening	10 BP	p. 79, *SR4*
Natural Immunity	5 or 15 BP	p. 79, *SR4*
Photographic Memory	10 BP	p. 80, *SR4*
Quick Healer	10 BP	p. 80, *SR4*
Resistance to Pathogens/Toxins	5 or 10 BP	p. 80, *SR4*
Spirit Affinity	10 BP	p. 80, *SR4*
Technomancer	5 BP	p. 80, *SR4*
Toughness	10 BP	p. 80, *SR4*
Will to Live	5 to 15 BP	p. 80, *SR4*

BASIC SR4 NEGATIVE QUALITIES

Quality	Bonus	Reference
Addiction	+5 to +30 BP	p. 80, *SR4*
Allergy	+5 to +20 BP	p. 80, *SR4*
Astral Beacon	+5 BP	p. 81, *SR4*
Bad Luck	+20 BP	p. 81, *SR4*
Codeblock	+5 BP	p. 81, *SR4*
Combat Paralysis	+20 BP	p. 81, *SR4*
Elf Poser	+5 BP	p. 81, *SR4*
Gremlins	+5 to +20 BP	p. 81, *SR4*
Incompetent	+5 BP	p. 82, *SR4*
Infirm	+20 BP	p. 82, *SR4*
Low Pain Tolerance	+10 BP	p. 82, *SR4*
Ork Poser	+5 BP	p. 83, *SR4*
Scorched	+5 BP (+10 for hackers/technomancers)	p. 83, *SR4*
Sensitive Neural Structure	+5 BP (+10 for hackers/technomancers)	p. 83, *SR4*
Sensitive System	+15 BP	p. 83, *SR4*
Simsense Vertigo	+10 BP (+15 for hackers/technomancers)	p. 83, *SR4*
SINner	+5 or +10 BP	p. 83, *SR4*
Spirit Bane	+10 BP	p. 83, *SR4*
Uncouth	+20 BP	p. 83, *SR4*
Uneducated	+20 BP	p. 83, *SR4*
Weak Immune System	+5 BP	p. 84, *SR4*

POSITIVE AWAKENED QUALITIES

Quality	Cost	Reference
Astral Sight	5 BP	p. 24, *Street Magic*
Latent Awakening	5 BP	p. 25, *Street Magic*
Spell/Spirit Knack	5 BP	p. 26, *Street Magic*
Spirit Pact	Spirit's Edge x 5 BP	p. 26, *Street Magic*

NEGATIVE AWAKENED QUALITIES

Quality	Bonus	Reference
Aspected Magician	+5 to 10 BP	p. 26, *Street Magic*
Cursed	+5 BP per rating (max. 4)	p. 26, *Street Magic*
Focus Addiction	+5 to 30 BP	p. 26, *Street Magic*
Geas	+10 BP	p. 27, *Street Magic*

POSITIVE AUGMENTED QUALITIES

Quality	Cost	Reference
Biocompatability	10 BP	p. 20, *Aug*
Genecrafted	5 BP	p. 20, *Aug*
Genetic Heritage	10 BP	p. 20, *Aug*
Type O System	30 BP	p. 20, *Aug*
Wild Card Nano Prototype	30 BP	p. 20, *Aug*

NEGATIVE AUGMENTED QUALITIES

Quality	Bonus	Reference
Augmentation Addict	+10 BP	p. 21, *Aug*
Assensing Rejection	+10 BP	p. 163, *Aug*
Biosystem Overstress	+10 BP	p. 21, *Aug*
Buggy 'Ware	+5 BP per Rating (max. rating 4)	p. 21, *Aug*
Chronic Dissociation Syndrome	+10 BP	p. 163, *Aug*
Cyberpsychosis	+10 BP	p. 21, *Aug*
Delusion	+10 BP	p. 163, *Aug*
Dementia	+20 BP	p. 163, *Aug*
Emotion Leak	+10 BP	p. 163, *Aug*
Gene Freak	+10 BP	p. 21, *Aug*
Hallucinations	+20 BP	p. 163, *Aug*
High-Maintenance Implant	+5 BP	p. 22, *Aug*
Implant-Induced Immune Deficiency	+10 BP	p. 22, *Aug*
Mania/Phobia	+5 to 25 BP	p. 164, *Aug*
Mystery Mod Noise	+5 BP	p. 22, *Aug*
Multiple Personality Disorder	+20 BP	p. 164, *Aug*
Nano Intolerance	+5 BP	p. 22, *Aug*
Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder	+10 BP	p. 164, *Aug*
Temporal Lobe Epilepsy	+10 BP	p. 22, *Aug*
Uncontrolled Metastasis	+10 or 20 BP	p. 164, *Aug*
Will to Die	+10 BP	p. 164, *Aug*

POSITIVE MATRIX QUALITIES

Quality	Cost	Reference
Chatty	5 BP	p. 36, *Unwired*
Intuitive Hacking	5 BP	p. 37, *Unwired*
Latent Technomancer	5 BP	p. 37, *Unwired*
More than Metahuman	5 BP	p. 37, *Unwired*
Obscure	5 BP	p. 37, *Unwired*
Paragon	5 BP	p. 37, *Unwired*
Resonance Bond	Sprite's Edge x 5 BP	p. 37, *Unwired*
Synthetic Sympathy	10 BP	p. 37, *Unwired*

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NEGATIVE MATRIX QUALITIES

Quality	Bonus	Reference
AIPS	+5 BP/level	p. 37, *Unwired*
Data Shadow	+5 BP/level	p. 37, *Unwired*
Media Junkie	+5 to 30 BP	p. 37, *Unwired*
Reality Impaired	+5 BP	p. 38, *Unwired*
Virtual Personality	+5 BP/level	p. 38, *Unwired*
Wild Technomancer	+10 BP	p. 38, *Unwired*

NEW POSITIVE QUALITIES

Quality	Cost	Reference
Adrenaline Surge	15 BP	p. 96
Analytical Mind	5 BP	p. 96
Bilingual	5 BP	p. 96
Black Market Pipeline	10 BP	p. 96
Born Rich	10 BP	p. 96
Catlike	10 BP	p. 96
College Education	5 BP	p. 96
Common Sense	5 BP	p. 96
Deep Cover	5 or 10 BP	p. 97
Digital Doppelganger	10 BP	p. 97
Erased	5 or 10 BP	p. 97
Escaped Clone	5 BP	p. 97
Fame	5 to 15 BP	p. 97
Gearhead	5 or 10 BP	p. 98
Hawk Eye	5 BP	p. 98
Inspired	5 BP	p. 98
Juryrigger	10 BP	p. 98
Linguist	5 BP	p. 98
Lightning Reflexes	15 BP	p. 98
Made Man	10 BP	p. 98
Mistaken Identity	10 BP	p. 98
Natural Athlete	10 BP	p. 100
Night Vision	5 BP	p. 100
Outdoorsman	10 BP	p. 100
Perceptive	5 or 10 BP	p. 100
Perfect Time	5 BP	p. 100
Privileged Family Name	5 BP	p. 100
Restricted Gear	5 BP	p. 101
School of Hard Knocks	5 BP	p. 101
Sense of Direction	5 BP	p. 101
Sensei	5 BP	p. 101
Speed Reading	5 BP	p. 101
Technical School Education	5 BP	p. 101
Tough as Nails	10 per level	p. 101
Trust Fund	10 or 20 BP	p. 101
Trustworthy	5 or 20 BP	p. 101
Water Sprite	5 BP	p. 101

NEW NEGATIVE QUALITIES

Quality	Bonus	Reference
Amnesia	+10 or 25 BP	p. 102
Asthma	+15 BP	p. 102
Albinism	+10 BP	p. 102
Bad Rep	+5 BP	p. 102
Bi-Polar	+10 BP	p. 102
Big Regret	+5 BP	p. 102
Borrowed Time	+20 BP	p. 102
Computer Illiterate	+5 BP	p. 103
Cranial Bomb	+10 BP	p. 103
Day Job	+5 to 15 BP	p. 103
Distinctive Style	+5 to 35 BP	p. 103
Dependent(s)	+5 to 15 BP	p. 104
Enemy	+Variable (max. 25)	p. 104
Evil Twin	+10 BP	p. 104
Flashbacks	+5 or 10 BP	p. 105
Hung Out to Dry	+10 BP	p. 105
Illiterate	+10 BP	p. 105
In Debt	+5 to 30 BP	p. 105
Judas	+10 BP	p. 105
Liar	+5 BP	p. 105
Lost Loved One	+5 BP	p. 105
Mental Handicap	+10 per level (max 3 levels)	p. 105
Mysterious Implant	+5 to 25 BP	p. 106
Night Blindness	+5 BP	p. 107
Oblivious	+5 BP	p. 107
Pacifist	+5 or 10 BP	p. 107
Paranoia	+10 BP	p. 107
Paraplegic	+10 or 15 BP	p. 107
Poor Self Control	+5 to 15 BP	p. 107
Prejudiced	+5 to 25	p. 108
Quadriplegic	+20 BP (10 BP if in Full Immersion Lifestyle)	p. 108
Reduced (Sense)	+5 to 15 BP	p. 108
Records on File	+10 BP	p. 109
Spammed	+5 BP	p. 109
Sensory Overload Syndrome	+10 BP	p. 109
Signature	+10 BP	p. 109
Vendetta	+5 BP	p. 109
Wanted	+10 BP	p. 110

POSITIVE SURGE QUALITIES

Quality	Cost	Reference
360-degree Eyesight	10 BP	p. 110
Animal Pelage	5 to 10 BP	p. 111
Arcane Arrester	25 BP	p. 111
Balance Receptor	5 BP	p. 111
Beak	5 or 10 BP	p. 111
Bicardiac	10 BP	p. 111
Biosonar	25 BP	p. 111
Bone Spikes	5 BP	p. 111
Broad Auditory Spectrum	5 BP	p. 111
Camouflage	5 or 10 BP	p. 112
Celerity	5 BP	p. 112
Claws	5 or 10 BP	p. 112
Climate Adaptation	10 BP	p. 112
Corrosive Spit	10 BP	p. 112
Dermal Alteration	5 to 15 BP	p. 112
Dermal Deposits	10 BP	p. 112
Defensive Secretion	5 BP	p. 113
Glamour	15 BP	p. 113
Electrosense	10 BP	p. 113
Elongated Limbs	5 BP	p. 113
Fangs	5 BP	p. 113
Frog Tongue	10 BP	p. 113
Functional Tail	5 to 15 BP	p. 113
Gills	5 BP	p. 113
Greasy Skin	5 BP	p. 114

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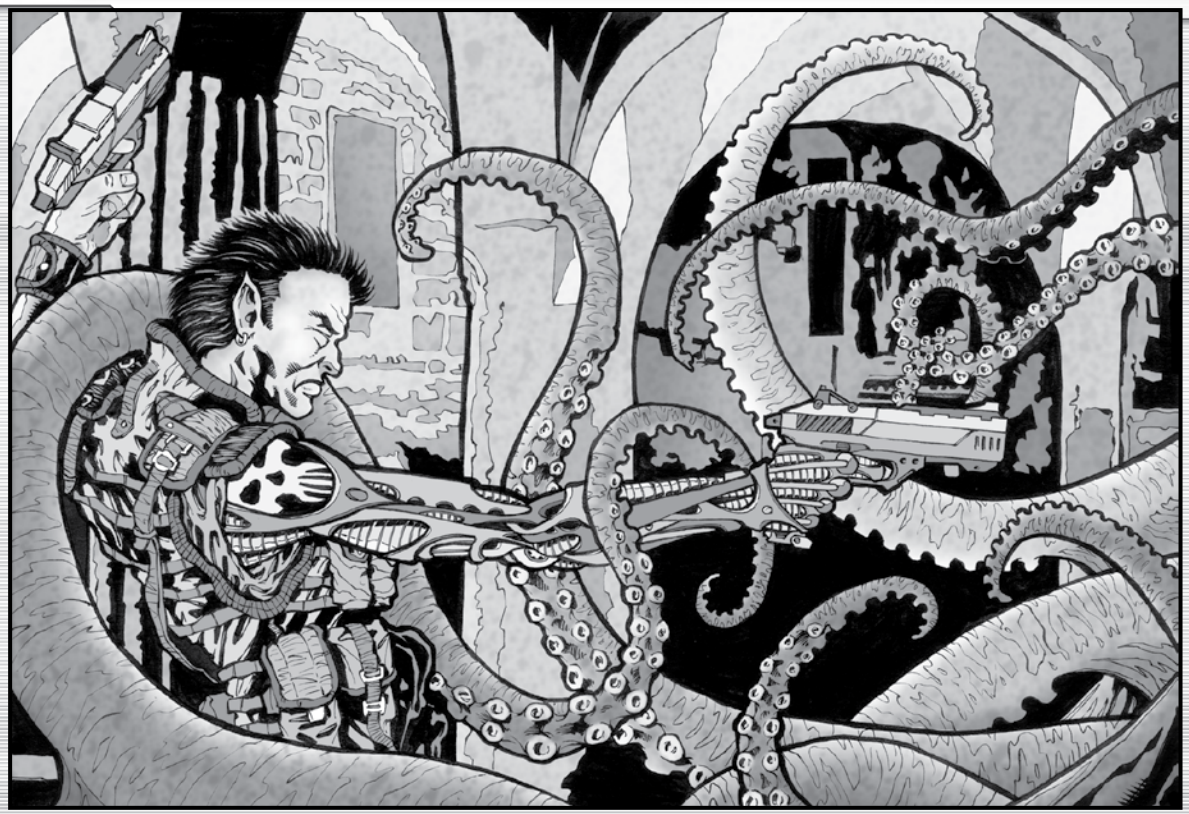
POSITIVE SURGE QUALITIES (CONT.)

Quality	Cost	Reference
Goring Horns	5 BP	p. 114
Keen-Eared	5 BP	p. 114
Larger Tusks	10 BP	p. 114
Low-Light Vision	5 BP	p. 114
Magnetosense	5 BP	p. 114
Marsupial Pouch	5 BP	p. 114
Metagenetic Improvement (Attribute)	20 BP	p. 114
Metahuman Traits	5 BP	p. 114
Monkey Paws	5 BP	p. 114
Nasty Vibe	5 BP	p. 114
Natural Venom	10 BP	p. 115
Ogre Stomach	5 BP	p. 115
Photometabolism	5 BP	p. 115
Proboscis	10 BP	p. 115
Satyr Legs	10 BP	p. 115
Setae	10 BP	p. 115
Shiva Arms	15 BP	p. 115
Thermal Sensitivity	5 BP	p. 115
Thermographic Vision	5 BP	p. 115
Underwater Vision	5 BP	p. 115
Vomeronasal Organ	10 BP	p. 116
Webbed Hands and Toes	5 BP	p. 116

NEGATIVE SURGE QUALITIES

Quality	Bonus	Reference
Adiposis	+15 BP	p. 116
Astral Hazing	+10 BP (15 BP for Awakened characters)	p. 116
Berserker	+10 BP	p. 116
Bioluminescence	+5 BP	p. 116
Cephalopoidal Skull	+10 BP	p. 116
Critter Spook	+5 BP	p. 117
Cyclopean Eye	+10 BP	p. 117
Deformity	+5 or 25 BP	p. 117
Extravagant Eyes	+5 BP	p. 117
Feathers	+5 BP	p. 117
Insectoid Features	+5 BP	p. 117
Mood Hair	+5 BP	p. 117
Neoteny	+10 BP	p. 117
Nocturnal	+10 BP	p. 117
Progeria	+30 BP	p. 118
Impaired (Attribute)	+5 BP	p. 118
Scales	+5 BP	p. 118
Scent Glands	+10 BP	p. 118
Slow Healer	+10 BP	p. 119
Striking Skin Pigmentation	+5 BP	p. 119
Stubby Arms	+5 BP	p. 119
Symbiosis	+10 BP	p. 119
Third Eye	+5 BP	p. 119
Thorns	+10 BP	p. 119
Unusual Hair	+5 BP	p. 119
Vestigial Tail	+5 BP	p. 119



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. . . ADVANCED CONTACTS . . .

Riser slouched in his chair at the Bloody Fist, kicked back against the back wall, waiting. Most of the patrons of the bar were the hard-drinking, hard-hitting type that knew enough to mind their own business. Right now, that business was a pirated 'trid broadcast of some Azzie blood-sports.

When Cole walked in, no one looked at him. Oh, everyone *saw* Cole—a black skinned human, wearing a tailored grey suit, walking like an executive into a boardroom—but no one in this bar would dare look the man in the face. Riser stood when Cole walked up. He waited until Cole sat before he took his own seat.

"Riser," Cole said, picking up the beer that had materialized—almost like magic—at his fingertips.

"Cole," Riser nodded at the gang boss. "Nice suit. Business is good?"

"Profits are up, losses are down," Cole replied, smiling. "What's up?"

"I'm hoping to take a quick trip," Riser said. "I'm flying into DC and I hate checking baggage."

Cole took another long drink of his beer. His eyes flicked to the emerald and topaz studs in Riser's left ear. Riser wasn't a Cutter anymore, but no one in the gang would question his right to wear the colors.

"What sort of *baggage*?"

Riser sent the list he'd prepared over to Cole, using the current encryption protocols of the Cutters. Cole read through the list, smiling.

"A Barret 121," Cole said. "I can see why you'd want to pick it up there. Airlines are such sticklers on sniper rifles." Riser gave a slight shrug, amused, as Cole kept reading. Riser knew when he hit the last item, from the way Cole's elegantly shaped eyebrows winged up, emerald and topaz studs winking in the dim light.

"Riser, man, do I look like a fucking pansy-assed elf to you?" Cole said.

"Nah, you're not nearly pretty enough," Riser replied, smiling.

"Ten doses of Laës, in injections, strong enough to make a troll forget his own mama?" Cole said. "What, do you think we're the damn Ancients? Where do you expect my DC brothers to get that for you?"

Riser slouched back in his chair, studied the ganger in front of him as he slowly sipped his own beer. "You mean to say there's a drug out there that the Cutters can't get?"

Cole glared at him, then jerked his head. "I'll make a call, asshole." Cole's dark eyes got that unfocused look that said he was using his internal 'link, and Riser patiently waited. Finally, Cole's attention snapped back.

"It's done," he said, with a tight smile. "But our *friends* in DC are going to be charging you for the hassle of dealing with those damn pixies."

"My nuyen's good," Riser replied.

"Oh, Riser," Cole chuckled. "They know your name. They know who you are, *what* you do. I don't think they'll be asking for *nuyen*, my brother."

Riser sighed inside. Having a large circle of friends could be a blessing... and a curse.

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IT'S WHO YOU KNOW

Life in the shadows starts and, all too often, ends with your character's contacts. Contacts find jobs and gear, purchase hot commodities, and provide intelligence for jobs. Contacts are the NPCs that provide every shadowrunner's first recurring link into the communities of the Sixth World.

Because of that connection, it's vital that a character's starting contacts reflect where they've come from and what they aspire to become. If your character is a retired ganger, are members of her old gang contacts? If they are, then that's an important part of the character's history. If they're not, the absence may still be crucial. Either choice provides your gamemaster with hooks for future scenarios.

Similarly, if your character was a mercenary, it'd be surprising if he didn't know an arms dealer. Choosing a contact who can provide replacement ammunition and repairs seems a reasonable choice. However, if that character's decision to enter the shadows came after his supplier was killed, it makes perfect sense to develop a replacement contact through game play. Again, either choice provides options for your gamemaster in designing scenarios.

Consider how your character knows each of his contacts when selecting them. If your character is a smuggler, is it reasonable for him to know a megacorp VP? If he knows him, defining their relationship through loyalty is crucial. While it's improbable that they'd have a close relationship, that relationship could lead to dozens of game sessions, if that's the direction your gamemaster chooses to go.

GROUPS AS CONTACTS

Sometimes, it's hard to split out just one person from a group of people with whom you work well. In cases like these, it's often more appropriate to consider an entire organization as a single contact. However, the basic contact rules (p. 278, *SR4*) are not intended to encompass such organizations. While the basic Loyalty and Connection rating concepts remain consistent, these rules don't accurately address the resources that an organization can bring to bear on a situation.

To address this expanded scope, groups add in a modifier to their Connection rating before calculating BP cost. Use the Group Connection Modifiers table as a reference to calculate the modified Connection rating. The modified Connection rating is written in the same way as a modified attribute. Note that this modified rating will exceed 6 for many organizations. While this system could allow for a megacorp or a government as a contact, that will exceed the scope for most campaigns. For a street-level campaign, the largest appropriate contacts would generally have a modified Connection rating of 14 or less.

Keep in mind when choosing a group's resources and membership that the Connection rating only identifies what it can immediately access. As with non-group contacts, the Loyalty rating will determine which of those items the group may be willing to use to help a player character. Groups can also use networking (p. 280, *SR4*) just as a non-group contact. However, because of the number of people involved, this sort of networking is far more prone to information leaks. For purposes of calculating a glitch, apply the Rushing the Job rules (p. 59, *SR4*) to group networking tests.

Membership

Membership addresses the number of individuals associated with the organization. When a player chooses to take a group contact for a character, that character becomes tied to all of the individuals within that organization. The character won't necessarily know all members well, but they will have a mechanism for easily identifying fellow members. Recognition could be based on such things as a handshake, an ARO, a facet of one's aura, or a lapel pin. A member of the contact group's willingness to help will, as usual, be based upon their Loyalty rating.

Area of Influence

Area of Influence modifiers deal with the region where the group has active members. An urban tribe might only have members within one neighborhood of a sprawl. A church could draw members from all over a sprawl. Many policlubs have members throughout an entire nation, with chapters of like-minded individuals easily accessible. A megacorp has international offices in most major cities, with resources readily available to help their employees from other branches.

Magical Resources

This enables a group to have active Awakened members. Only about 1% of the population has any magical ability at all, so it's uncommon for small groups to have these resources. However, magical theory has shown that there are advantages to organized rituals. Limited magical assets would refer to a group with a few members who have knacks, minor talents, or a very low magic rating. When most members have magical talents, this could constitute a small initiatory group or an organization dedicated to magical research. In instances where vast magical resources are available, either all members of the organization are fully Awakened adepts or magicians, or a powerful magical entity is closely involved with the group. These organizations are usually initiatory groups, but they can serve additional purposes as well—teaching, magical research, or physical agents of metaplanar beings.

GROUP CONNECTION MODIFIERS TABLE

Membership		Area of Influence		Magical Resources		Matrix Resources	
+1	2–19 members	+1	District	+1	A minority have limited magical assets	+1	Active Matrix presence
+2	20–99 members	+2	Sprawl-wide	+4	Most members have magical talents	+2	Broad reaching resources
+4	100–1000 members	+4	National	+6	Vast magical resources	+4	Pervasive Matrix integration
+6	1000+ members	+6	Global				

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Matrix Resources

Matrix resources are those that exceed the scope of a typical commlink and a Matrix address. Groups with an active Matrix presence run a well-known and well-established node dedicated to their specific interests. Those with broad reaching resources are involved with a range of different Matrix nodes across multiple grids. Pervasive Matrix integration refers to groups whose Matrix presence is intrinsic to the Matrix–they might have a spyware utility that commonly runs on most nodes, or they might be involved in the design of common Matrix hardware.

Jim decides that Buzzkill, his ex-ganger, is a former member of the Spikes. Buzzkill left the Spikes with their permission, and he still has regular contact with them. He decides that their relationship extends to a Loyalty rating of 2. The Spikes are a well-established gang, but they're not the friendliest bunch. In light of this, he chooses to give the gang itself a base Connection rating of 2. Then, Jim considers the Spikes are a decent-sized group, but not huge. So, he assigns them a Membership modifier of +4. As the gang is only active in Tacoma, he adds a +1 Area of Influence modifier. The gang doesn't have an appreciable magical or Matrix presence, so he does not apply either of these modifiers. This leaves the group with a final Connection rating of 2(7). Using standard Build Point costs, the group contact costs (Loyalty 2 + Connection 2 (7) = 9) 9 BP.

LARGE GROUPS

Note that the same large group can sometimes have different modifiers depending on the level of the overall organization a particular character is in touch with.

For instance, the Membership modifier for a character possessing a 10-member Mothers of Metahumans neighborhood chapter as a contact would be different (+1) from one who is connected to the international leadership of the thousands-strong organization (+8). Similarly, depending on how high up in the widespread organization the character's connections go, the applicable Area of Influence modifier might vary. For instance, one character might have a local branch office of the Atlantean Foundation as a contact (+2), while another might have the Atlantean Foundation's board as a contact (+6 since it's global in area of influence). Such details must be decided when the contact is chosen, and will limit the information and resources the character's particular group contact has at hand.

SAMPLE GROUP CONTACTS

The Sixth World has a broad range of organizations, and these are only a tiny sampling. Keep in mind that the same groups won't necessarily have the same uses for different characters.

9x9

Uses: Political and corporate information, distractions, technological gear
Places to Meet: Matrix forums, teahouses, clubs
Similar Contacts: Pendragon Underground, White Resistance

Often, the groups that are directly opposed to the ruling establishment are the ones who have the most information about them—even better than those on the inside. For obvious reasons, they also tend to be much more willing to part with that information if they think it will harm their oppressors (justified or not). If you're working a job against your despotic authorities or simply fighting the Man, talking to the resistance can be a great place to start. In a closely controlled environment, groups like this can only survive if they have solid intelligence on their oppressors. The hardest part in obtaining this information is often proving that you're not another mole.

9x9 is an active disruptive force in Hong Kong. Their leadership, consistent membership, and structures have remained a mystery to the city's totalitarian regime. However, their methods and their causes are well known. They closely focus on destabilizing the city through an endless series of protests, both violent and non-violent. Their message has always been the same—enable democracy and remove corporate power. It's theorized that they use a Matrix-based social networking tool to organize their events.

Anarchist Black Cross (AB+)

Uses: Government intelligence, criminal records, safe houses
Places to Meet: Pirate trid stations, condemned buildings, parking garages
Similar Contacts: Anarchist Black Crescent, Black Star

It's hardly surprising that there are elements in modern society who cannot cope with society's oppressions. Founded in 1905, the Anarchist Black Cross devoted its time and resources to protecting Russia against the Cossack Army and offering assistance to political prisoners and their families. Through the years, AB+ has continued this line of work and has updated its services as the times have changed. Today, the Anarchist Black Cross provides aid to persecuted anarchists and prisoners of revolutionary groups. This group is eager to help those who have committed crimes because the inequalities in society pushed them over the edge.

WHEN A GROUP IS NOT A GROUP

Urgent Message...

It is important to note that an initiatory group (p. 62, *SM*) or a technomancer network (p. 140 *Unwired*), in which a character is a member, is not a contact. While the character should know the group's other members, those groups are not defined with Connection or Loyalty ratings. In that context, unless a gamemaster chooses to grant those NPCs or the group as a contact, it is, instead, a group focused on helping the character advance along their chosen path.

Conversely, a group contact might help a character *find* an initiatory/submersion group, but it won't help you initiate/submerge, unless the character later meets the requirements and pays the karma costs to join. The group contact has both a Connection and a Loyalty rating. So, it can help a character with your legwork, obtain a rare item, or perform a favor–though it may expect a favor in return (see *Maintaining Contacts*, p. 131).

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If a character is on the run from politicians or corporations, then AB+ can provide a safe haven to lay low. Members maintain up-to-date profiles on oppressive politicians and their enforcers for any region in which they operate. The AB+ also synthesizes some of best fake SINs in the business. If you need to escape a dangerous situation, this is the one stop organization for the anarchist on the run.

Argus

Uses: Intelligence services, government strategies, corp interests
Places to Meet: Corporate offices, coffee shops, nightclubs
Similar Contacts: The ERLA, The Watchers, Aegis Cognito

Argus is one of the world's premiere independent intelligence agencies. Initially established as the intelligence arm of the MET 2000 mercenary group, Argus has almost outgrown their parent organization. With thousands of agents, Argus serves as a contract intelligence agency to hundreds of governments, corporations, and policlubs. They are particularly relevant to global political organizations expressly prohibited from maintaining standing militaries, such as the United Nations and the Allied German States. Based in the AGS, it's believed that a large part of their funding also comes from that entity's black-ops budget.

Depending upon their contract situation, Argus clients may be subject to exclusive access to data. The wording on some of these contracts can also specify the consequences of data leaks. Consequently, an agent who might be willing to share information in one matter with a shadowrunner might be dangerously defensive about sharing information on another.

Atlantean Foundation

Uses: Magical theory, archaeology, mythology, jobs
Places to Meet: Fine restaurants, academic institutions, hotels
Similar Contacts: Dunkelzahn Institute of Magical Research, The Apep Consortium

With 20 million card-carrying members worldwide, the Atlantean Foundation is the largest and most successful organization dedicated to the unearthing of ancient artifacts and the pursuit of the secret history of Atlantis. They offer a comprehensive array of educational materials that encompass even the most esoteric ancient belief systems. In addition, their funding for modern theoretical magic research is first class. Their membership includes academics, field operatives, and public relations specialists, all of whom focus on furthering their research.

That dedication to first class research is also their Achilles' heel. The Foundation will go to extreme lengths to recover nearly any ancient magical artifact or to gain access to any newly discovered magical technique. While they offer a vast array of information to the public, they conceal even greater resources. Their avarice for magical antiquities is unparalleled. If a shadowrunner has somehow obtained a mysterious artifact, the Atlantean Foundation probably knows what it is, how it works, and is willing to provide a generous honorarium for the artifact. Of course, they also probably know where it came from—which could be a problem in many situations.

Humanis Policlub

Uses: Jobs, distractions, community information
Places to Meet: Country-western bars, private resorts, government offices
Similar Contacts: Ghoul Liberation League, Outreach Association, Mothers of Metahumans

People are always happy to find someone other than themselves to blame for their problems. Hate groups gladly provide a target for this yearning. Organizations like the Humanis Policlub spend most of their time maintaining a charismatic public image and presenting "reasonable" arguments to the media via press releases, advertisements, and interviews. They strive to integrate into a community, so that they can be the friendly neighbors who are always so helpful. They contribute generously to carefully chosen charitable organizations, sometimes even running them. All of these activities are carefully coordinated to enable them to frame their message of hate. It's harder to disagree with a person who has been so friendly and helpful.

As a contact, Humanis Policlub lodges are centers for community gossip. Their members know who is doing what, with whom, and when. They remember who has metahuman relatives, who associates with the wrong sort of people, and who has the wrong sort of attitude. They'll rarely resort to terrorist activities, but they'll often be willing to fund those jobs circumspectly.

Komun'go Ring

Uses: Body disposal, smuggling, drugs
Places to Meet: Snohomish clubs, Everett docks
Similar Contacts: White Lotus Triad, Tamanous operation

Sometimes you need to ditch a body in a hurry. Every good 'runner knows that can be a quick source of some extra income instead of an inconvenience. For times like that, it's great to have connections with some organleggers. Conversely, if you're in the market for used 'ware, a group like this is always acquiring new inventory. It takes a special sort of person to work in this field, so these groups will frequently be involved in other unsavory activities as well.

The Komun'go Ring is one of the Korean Seoulpa Rings active in Seattle. Recently, they gained control of the tempo drug trade within the sprawl. Dealing in an Awakened drug has dramatically increased their knowledge of and access to other magical resources. These new resources have complemented their existing trades to propel them to newfound levels of wealth and influence. Chulsoon Gray-Wolf retains leadership of the organization, and he aggressively continues to extend his efforts to carve out his own full-blown syndicate from the ravaged Seattle underworld, and establish his organization as a regional power player via alliances with several Salish and Tsimshian criminal groups.

Locked in a blood feud with Shotozumi-rengo for months now, Chulsoon has ensured the Seattle Mafia remains neutral with a non-aggression pact with Dona O'Malley. The Komun'go are ideally suited as an intelligence source on Yakuza activity within the sprawl and cross-border smuggling operations.

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Project Monad
Uses: Matrix development, technomancer rumors, corp policies
Places to Meet: Chat rooms, cybercafes
Similar Contacts: Caerleon Labs, Parashield Research

It's always nice to cut right to the chase and get information fresh from the source. When that information deals with the bleeding edge, there's nothing like having a connection to a group of researchers who constantly obsess about the issue at hand. Their insights are infinitely more valuable than secondhand reports, and their latest data is always a year or two ahead of the most recent publications. After all, publication just sets the project team up as extraction targets.

A workgroup within the Mangadyne division of Manadyne Corporation, Project Monad tightly focuses on investigating technomancers and the nature of Resonance abilities. It's rumored that their ultimate goal is to develop a hitcher jack that could allow others to fully experience a journey into the Resonance realms. However, that development is still a long ways off. In the meantime, the project concentrates on discerning the physiological interactions associated with a technomancer's biological transmitter. They'll need to understand that before they can hook any cyberware up to it.

Rusted Stilettos
Uses: Smuggling, muscle, drugs
Places to Meet: Bars within the Redmond Barrens
Similar Contacts: Ghostriders, Scatterbrains, Steppin' Wulfs

When looking for information on a neighborhood, small gangs can be one of the best resources that a shadowrunner can find. They know everyone by sight. If someone's involved in illegal activity, they make sure to get their cut. If someone has hidden resources, they probably know about it and have plans to obtain them. They know their neighbors and can readily distinguish who is prey and who is a fellow predator.

An irradiated pack of orks and trolls, the Stilettos hold territory in the Glow City district of the Redmond Barrens in Seattle. The radiation, the drugs, and the other mindbenders have done quite a bit of damage to their physiques and their minds. However, they remain a potent and knowledgeable resource within their neighborhood, even if a 'runner probably wouldn't want to venture into their radioactive turf to find a safe house. Of course, that same radiation has made these mutants some of the scariest muscle in all of Seattle. Just be careful when you're dealing with them. Psychopathic coworkers can make any job unpredictable.

TerraFirst!
Uses: Jobs, corporate espionage, gear
Places to Meet: Food co-ops, Zen gardens, Matrix forums
Similar Contacts: Awakened Liberation Front, GreenWar, Primeira Vaga

Some people are willing to take extreme measures for causes in which they believe. For some, religious motivation can provide justification for violence. Others choose political, scientific, or humanitarian battle cries. For members of TerraFirst! (TF!),

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the salvation of the environment is their cause of choice. Those who tamper with Mother Nature—through pollution, genetic manipulation, or resource exploitation—must be stopped at any cost. Scientists, corporate wageslaves, ineffective politicians, or even careless campers are all viable targets. For 'runners who like to feel that they're on the side of justice, TF! membership may be the cause they seek.

TF! is organized via a cell structure, with minimal communication between cells and no central leadership. This means that their activities may be poorly coordinated and limited in scope. It's unlikely that members of one cell will know members of another cell. Their crusade to stop ecological damage and their willingness to use violence in the name of their cause unites the organization. Never underestimate their resources or the extremes to which they'll go for their cause.

The Unseen

Uses: Ares corporate rumors, magical training, espionage
Places to Meet: NAN enclaves, Knight Errant precinct houses
Similar Contacts: Dr. Faustus Society, Lone Star Department of Magical Research

As a small, secretive group of Native American shamans, the Unseen are more of a rumored organization than an established one. Classified corporate memos and inter-office mailings refer to the Unseen as a special-ops group that can be utilized when magical infiltration and surveillance is required. The group frequently receives generous funding from a number of different Ares subsidiaries. However, they are clearly not a subsidiary, nor do they participate in Ares training exercises.

Field reports have repeatedly shown that all members of this group are highly talented and trained. They have most often worked in conjunction with Knight Errant, though they have also been involved in operations with other Ares subsidiaries. Their ultimate agenda is unknown, though it is believed that a high-ranking member of Ares' board may be their unidentified patron.

VIRTUAL CONTACTS

When AR is an ubiquitous part of life, not every contact needs to have a physical body. The Matrix provides a vast entity for legwork. Anyone with a commlink can perform a Data Search (p. 219, *SR4*) to try to identify relevant information. Instead of depending upon a utility to perform the search, a good Matrix node may already have that information compiled. Of course, just as in the meat world, a relationship with a node can save time. Nodes like this—databases, social networks, and message boards—are virtual contacts. The Groups as Contacts rules (p. 124) also represent these virtual contacts.

There are three types of virtual contacts. General networks are those that have the general public as their membership, with no specific interest shared among members. A focused network has an interest that its members share, such as rigging, games, guns, movies, or politics. A specialized network has a very specific topic, such as rigging aircraft, family board games, pistols, romantic comedies, or a specific political party. Focused networks have roughly the same scope as a Knowledge skill, and specialized networks are similar in scope to Knowledge skill specializations (p. 127, *SR4*). The gamemaster has the final word on the type of a specific network.

The more specific the interest of a virtual contact, the more likely it is to offer aid or advice. Add two bonus dice to a legwork test for an appropriate focused network or four bonus dice for a specialized network. However, a virtual contact can rarely offer assistance outside its bailiwick. Add six to the threshold of any test involving a focused or specialized virtual contact that is outside its area of expertise.

Virtual Connection Rating

With regards to virtual contacts, the Connection rating represents the diversity and level of expertise available. Different networks may attract different members who focus on different aspects of a hobby. While some might cater to novices, others might attract seasoned professionals. This variation in membership serves to determine the Connection rating. Make sure to apply the modifiers for the number of members in the network and the Matrix resources of the network from the Group Connection Modifiers Table (p. 124) when calculating the Connection rating.

Loyalty Rating

The Loyalty rating of a virtual contact represents the character's reputation within that network. Rather than describing a personal connection, the Loyalty rating of a virtual contact is a measure of how well well-known and well-liked the character is among the network's members. In all other ways, a virtual contact's Loyalty rating acts like the Loyalty rating of a normal contact.

OPTIONAL RULE: VARIABLE CONNECTION RATING

People who participate in social networks join, drop out, take sabbaticals, and simply do not stay up-to-date, all without any regularity. As a result, the Connection rating of a virtual contact may be more fluid than that of a normal contact. The Connection rating of a virtual contact at any given time is variable, and the gamemaster rolls it using the Connection rating column of the following table. If the contact was purchased with a Membership modifier (Groups as Contacts, p. 124), add the cost of that modifier to the dice roll for the Connection rating before dividing. If the result from the table is 0, then the virtual contact is unable to offer any aid to the character. The gamemaster determines the time between rolls, choosing to roll once for each run, each session, or each request.

Type	Connection Rating	Cost
General	2D6 / 4*	1** + Loyalty rating
Focused	2D6 / 3*	2** + Loyalty rating
Specialized	2D6 / 2*	3** + Loyalty rating

*Round down
**Apply modifiers for the number of members in the network and the Matrix resources of the network from the Group Connection Modifiers Table (p. 124).

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SAMPLE VIRTUAL CONTACTS

These groups are just a small sampling of the various networks available on the Matrix. There's at least one network available for every career, hobby, fetish, or pop culture icon imaginable.

The Exchange

Uses: Favors, jobs, karmic payback

The Exchange is a seemingly anonymous virtual private network (VPN) established for doing and receiving favors. Its central focus is the notion of "pay it forward." The Exchange works as a background utility that tracks a member's location and situation. It constantly analyzes the member's situation and compares this information with the physical locations and assets of other members. At those times when another member might be of assistance to a member, it may call on one of those other members for an act of minor assistance. Members who respond to the VPN's requests for assistance become more likely to receive assistance in the future.

The favors that The Exchange will grant or request are minor things. However, these minor actions may have enormous repercussions. A car might block an alley just in time to allow a member to escape pursuit. A loud noise might divert someone's attention at just the right instant. The backdoor to a club might open just as a member needs to get inside.

It's unclear who has access to The Exchange database. However, it's important to realize that the entity behind the VPN knows a great deal about the personalities, locations, and activities of all of the members.

The Outpost

Uses: Mercenary news, training, recruiting, jobs
Similar Contacts: MET2000 Sub-Contractor Node

The Outpost is a globally accessible virtual private network focused on facilitating communication between mercenary units. It was established in the late 2040s and has grown and expanded in the decades since. There are active forums and constant chats where members trade war stories, find job openings, and discuss the latest in bleeding edge weapon tech.

The Outpost maintains a close watch on media outlets for any conflicts, and it can send automated alerts to members about potential contracts from the War Room. News of force build-ups, excessive casualties, changes in alliances, or any number of other criteria can trigger these alerts. Further, the membership constantly rates the factions in ongoing conflicts, based upon their payment reliability and assignment risks.

A combat simulator, "The Range," runs constantly on the site. Hackers can practice their cybercombat skills in a non-lethal manner here. Similarly, combat specialists can enter an AR environment where they can compete in ongoing tournament play.

ShadowSEA

Uses: Shadow news, jobs, fencing
Similar Contacts: The Helix, The Broken Arrow

ShadowSEA is a well-established virtual private network (VPN) for those who are active in the shadow community of the Seattle sprawl. Membership ranges from respected prime runners to the youngest wannabes. Fixers and Mr. Johnsons sometimes recruit teams using the profiles that freelancers maintain on the site. ShadowSEA also maintains an active marketplace where members can negotiate deals to exchange illicit goods.

Members constantly update an extensive library of profiles on the activities of the movers and shakers in Seattle's. These include figures involved in the sprawl's political, criminal, and corporate factions. Additional information is also maintained for facilities most likely to be targeted by shadowrunners. One of the most common ways for a member to build their reputation is to upload floor plans, procedural manuals, and corporate organizational charts from recent jobs. The downside is that the most up-to-date information generally reflects a facility that's on high alert due to a recent hit. As a consequence, this information can rapidly become outdated.

The anonymity that ShadowSEA requires dictates that it's not a secure resource. Teams have been set-up by contacts met through ShadowSEA—especially after bragging about particularly successful jobs.

Warezhouse 24

Uses: Hacker updates, file-sharing, warez and patch trading
Similar Contacts: London Eye, Trading Post, The Black Hat

This illegal cracker operation has been around since shortly after the Crash 2.0. It is a virtual private network whose physical location remains a mystery. Though most of the users are North American, the hardware is rumored to be in some legal no-man's land like Bogotá, Lagos or Caracas. Finding and connecting to the appropriate node involves a blind drop of an identification key to an address in the Caracas Matrix. Once this is verified the user receives an read-and-wipe email with a link to the VPN's current address.

Initial access is by invitation from an active member only. Applicants undergo a vetting process and must complete a hack determined by a randomly selected current member. If approved, hackers gain access to the boards, freeware, exploit intel updates, new software reviews, security systems and IC specifications, hack logs, and other Matrix intel.

Like other such groups, Warezhouse 24 offers accredited peer-to-peer program and patch-trading. With 85 members and growing, someone is always willing to trade for or sell a specific program or patch. Many regulars prefer trading one for one though, rather than selling their warez to leechers and scriptkiddies.

Unlike some hacker nodes, Warezhouse 24 has no bias against either technomancers or AIs, and both are welcome.

Warezhouse 24 also possesses a reputation system linked to hacker feats and the quality of software the user designs. A constantly updated job board contains work for hire offers and people looking to cooperate in software design and programming projects.

LEGWORK

Obtaining information is often the most critical step to successfully completing a job. An easy way to determine how much information a relevant contact has about a situation is for the GM to make a Connection + Connection Test for the contact. The results of this test can determine how many ranks of information the contact knows about the question. Refer to the Relevant

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RELEVANT INFORMATION TABLE

Threshold	Type of information
0	Nothing relevant
1	Common knowledge readily available
2	Details about the specific situation
3	Facts that extend beyond what has been released to the media or in police reports
4	Relevant shadow ties to the question at hand
5+	The exact data files, names, or connections to simplify completing a shadowrun

Information Table. A PC then makes a Charisma + Etiquette + Loyalty Test. The contact will reveal, for free, a number of levels of information equal to the hits obtained on the test. If the contact knows more, additional information will require a payment to the contact or a favor.

Sometimes a contact won't be familiar with the situation in question. Even the best-informed contact can overlook an opportunity. When this happens, it's best to check in with another contact. Other times, a contact only has peripheral knowledge of a situation. In these cases, he might recall reading a screamsheet article or having caught something in an ARO. This sort of common information might turn up with a Data Search, but a contact can provide it more quickly. When this happens, the contact will generally be willing to network for additional information or might be able to point a character in the right direction to continue her search. This sort of information is comparable to a tagline or a circulating rumor.

Often, a well-connected contact will have detailed information relevant to the task at hand. When this happens, they might personally know one of the people involved, or they might have just heard something from a friend. Alternatively, they might have obtained the primary documents from a police report or raw footage from a trid station. In this situation, they'll generally be willing to help make a direct connection to one of the people involved. Alternatively, they might be able to redirect the inquiry to another person who has also been investigating the matter.

In some cases, the contact will already have secondhand information about the questions asked. They've spoken to witnesses or even the people involved, and they have an inside scoop that goes beyond what is readily available. In these cases, they know the names and the faces of the people involved. They've taken the time to identify commcodes, frequented locales, and aliases of the people involved.

Occasionally, a contact is familiar with the bigger picture. They know why something happened, not just how it happened. In these situations, they can explain the ramifications associated with the situation. They know who wants what done, when, and why. They can warn the character of previously unexpected risks and long-term consequences. Contacts with this level of information either are involved or have reasons to be very interested in the situation and the likely outcomes. It's likely that the contact will want the situation to be resolved in a specific manner. Depending upon their Loyalty rating, they may invoke a favor to change how the character approaches the situation.

Rarely, a contact will know everything about the matter at hand. They might be the target or the sponsor of the job that led to the inquiry. In these cases, they have all of the information—including information that the inquiring character doesn't yet know that they want. In situations like this, Loyalty plays a crucial factor. The contact may be putting their neck on the line to provide this information. Acting on this information may go directly against the contact's interests and could cause a drop in Loyalty rating.

OPTIONAL RULE: MAINTAINING CONTACTS

Loyalty can be a double-edged sword. If a character has a contact with a Loyalty rating higher than 3, that contact expects to interact with the character in non-business situations. The character in question might be a lover, family member, or just a long-time friend. It isn't easy to reach this level of interaction, and it requires effort on the part of both parties to maintain.

Contacts at these Loyalty ratings should be regularly occurring characters. If a character does not regularly interact with these contacts in a positive manner, then the Loyalty rating may decrease. These interactions should not just be working relationships. Instead, the close friend will expect to spend social time together. Some of these interactions may fall under the category of general lifestyle costs. However, if a character doesn't maintain a comparable lifestyle to the contact, or if the group enjoys playing through non-job related scenes, then it's a good idea to flesh out these encounters and track the associated expenses. Gifts or favors may offset the need for these social activities.

Keep in mind that contacts can be proactive in these matters. An ignored contact might make a call at an inconvenient time to request a seemingly mundane favor. There's nothing worse than getting a frantic call from a buddy that needs help moving out of his apartment right now. Unless, of course, that call comes when sneaking out of an Aztechnology research facility with priceless materials in hand and a hellhound sniffing around the corner.

Any month that the character and contact don't interact in a non-work related manner, make a Charisma + Etiquette Test, with a threshold equal to the contact's Loyalty rating. If the test fails, the contact's Loyalty rating drops by a point. Recovering that point of Loyalty is possible, but it will require a Favor (p. 281, *SR4*) from the player character of a rating equal to the rating just lost.

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ENEMIES

It's easier to make enemies than it is to make friends. When grand theft, manslaughter, and other felonies are all part of a night's work, this becomes a truism. A veteran shadowrunner may be the target of numerous oaths of vengeance, vendettas, and mob contracts. To reflect this, a character may choose to accept enemies at character creation. Build points recovered in this manner fall under the Enemies Negative quality cap (p. 104). Further, just as characters may earn and advance contacts through game play, they may also earn enemies due to the consequences of their actions.

An enemy is someone who is actively seeking to make the character's life miserable and, usually, shorter. An enemy won't slash a foe's tires—they'll cut the brake lines. Depending upon the enemy's background, they may discredit, frame, blackmail, rob, or even attempt to assassinate the character. Enemies play dirty. Whether their motivations are vengeance, greed, or psychosis, they hate the character with enthusiasm. The only time they might cooperate with their opponent is if it's to save their own lives. Even then, they might sacrifice themselves if it means taking their opponent with them.

Enemies are the antithesis of typical contacts. However, they use a similar set of game mechanics. Generally, an enemy should be a 400 BP character approved by the gamemaster. Enemies will use the Hand of God (p. 277, *SR4*) to reappear even when they should, by all rights, be dead. In addition to normal skills and attributes, an enemy also has a Connection rating and an Incidence rating. Enemies are worth additional BPs equal to the sum of their (modified) Connection rating plus their Incidence rating. Each enemy raises the character's Notoriety by one.

The Connection rating functions in the same manner as with a contact (p. 278, *SR4*). Some enemies may be groups. If so, use the Group Connection Modifiers Table (p. 124) to calculate their modified Connection rating. It's possible that a character has alienated a gang, a magical group, or has even become the target of a megacorp. Other characters might have Virtual Enemies—nodes that are dedicated to causing complications in their life. In those cases, use the rules for Virtual Contacts to calculate the enemy's BP value, substituting Incidence rating for the Loyalty rating.

Enemies replace a contact's Loyalty rating with an Incidence rating. Incidence reflects the frequency with which they appear in game.

At the start of every scenario, the gamemaster should make an Incidence Test and consult the Incidence Thresholds Table. If a character has multiple enemies, make a separate test for each one. In the event that multiple enemies are slated to appear in the adventure, the gamemaster may choose to have them work together against the character.

If only a single scene appearance is called for, the appearance should be peripheral to the focus of the adventure. Perhaps someone tampered with the character's vehicle, or their commlink receives an endless stream of spam messages. In these situations, the enemy is largely an inconvenience. They might delay the character, but the enemy probably doesn't threaten their life.

If the enemy is to serve as a recurring subplot, then a larger complication arises. The enemy may work directly against the character on their current job. Alternatively, the foe actively complicates the character's life, but in a way that doesn't directly relate to the job. A hacker might work his way through the character's fake SINs, progressively hacking each one as the adventure continues. A gang might rough up each of the character's contacts, immediately after the character meets with them. The problems will be significant, and the character needs to address them, but they shouldn't dominate the scenario.

When the enemy is the central focus of the scenario, the entire adventure is built around their conflict. The enemy may have kidnapped the character's loved ones, framed the character, or called in a skilled hit squad to assassinate him. The conflict between the enemy and the player character has come to a head. These game sessions should focus on their bitter feelings of seething hatred. The enemy foresees a moment of triumph and a long awaited chance to claim justice. In these scenarios, it's unlikely that both will survive without spending Edge.

INCIDENCE RATING TABLE

Rating	Incidence
1	**Competition:** Either the enemy doesn't get out much or travels in very different circles from his foe.
2	**Rival:** The enemy is well-known and seen regularly. Most of the character's regular acquaintances are aware of the feud.
3	**Adversary:** The enemy is a thorn in the character's side. The frequency of their actions often makes jobs more difficult.
4	**Antagonist:** The characters move in the same social circles and are in frequent competition. Everyone in the local shadow community is aware of their conflict.
5	**Foe:** It seems like the enemy is stalking the character. No matter where they go or with whom they deal, the enemy always seems to put in an appearance.
6	**Nemesis:** The enemy has dedicated his or her life to making the character's life more difficult. Every waking thought and action focuses upon how to do harm to the character. The character's other contacts all know about the enemy and will often mention this person in conversation.

INCIDENCE THRESHOLDS TABLE

Threshold	Result
0	The enemy does not appear.
1	The enemy appears for a scene and acts against the character.
2	The enemy's actions against the character should be a subplot throughout the scenario.
3+	The enemy is the central focus of the scenario.

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A THOUGHT ON ENEMIES

When creating enemies, remember that the player character isn't necessarily a nice person. It's entirely possible that, through all of this hatred, the enemy is actually the one operating on the side of truth and justice. An enemy might easily be an honest cop, a government agent, or a corporate hacker. Some enemies might even be affiliated with charitable organizations, such as the Sylvestrine order. It's even possible that the PC created the enemy when they fled from a situation that intended for their own good.

Enemies shouldn't be two-dimensional villains. They should be fully fleshed out NPCs who have a justifiable reason to have an agenda that runs completely counter to their PC foe. Not every enemy is going to focus entirely on violence. When creating an enemy, also try to consider what sort of actions they will take against the character. While a ganger might always attempt violence, a fixer might attempt to coordinate other teams to underbid the character when negotiating for jobs. These motivations and styles are what make an enemy become a living part of an ongoing campaign.

While considering these actions, also remember to keep in mind that the enemy's Connection rating dictates the scope of their resources. A squatter will be unlikely to be able to send an Ares Firewatch team after the character. Conversely, a great dragon probably won't spam the character's commlink with pharmaceutical messages.

Urgent Message...

OPTIONAL RULE: FACTIONS

When a gamemaster begins a new campaign, they may decide that a number of organizations are integral to the campaign. These organizations will generally be in conflict. In this situation, the characters will be pawns in the game of chess that they play. The groups involved could be criminal organizations, competing corporations, policlubs, tribes, or government entities. Generally, a gamemaster will choose to present three to nine different factions. Faction scores with each faction can be ranked from –6 to +6. By default, all characters will begin play with 0 Faction rating with each organization.

Most factions will not be in direct competition in every scenario. In some cases, two factions might even be working together. Characters who have a strong allegiance with one faction might choose to betray a hiring faction in an effort to maintain or build their reputation with another faction. Faction can become a valuable political tool in game play, especially if player characters have different—or even conflicting—allegiances.

When the gamemaster has chosen to use factions, a character may begin play with an established affiliation with one or more of these groups. A positive affiliation with a faction may be purchased at character creation at a cost of 1 BP per point of positive Faction. Alternatively, a character may recover build points at a value of 1 BP per point of negative Faction. (These recovered BPs count against the Negative quality cap.)

In game play, characters will gain bonus dice or suffer dice pool penalties for each point of Faction they have for social interactions dealing with NPCs belonging to those groups. For example, when attempting to negotiate with a Mr. Johnson affiliated with the Casquilho Mafia, characters who have two points of positive Faction will have an extra two dice for any negotiation attempt. Characters can also gain or lose standing through game play, depending upon the actions they choose to take in support or opposition of any of the factions present in the campaign. When calculating character awards at the end of a scenario, also make sure to modify the Faction scores of the characters, based on actions taken during the adventure.

Urgent Message...

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SAMPLE CONTACTS

These contacts expand the spectrum of options presented in *Shadowrun, Fourth Edition* and in the *Contacts and Adventures* booklet. Gamemasters are encouraged to modify these characters to best suit their campaigns. Modifications may include changes to metatype, gear, skills, and implants.

AMERINDIAN TRIBESPERSON

Metatype: Human
Uses: Rural contact, guide, telesma
Places to Meet: Small towns, nature preserves
Similar Contacts: Ranger, environmentalist, survivalist

A Native American tribe member can expose a shadowrunner to an entirely new world. His habitat is the world beyond the sprawl—one that is generally foreign and novel to a typical street-savvy 'runner. He can offer tribal secrets, hideouts, smuggling routes, and even places of magical power, if his tribe and his people will also benefit. However, remember that his loyalty to the tribe always comes before loyalty to an outsider.

The tribesperson will visit the sprawl when business calls for it. Sometimes this will involve tribal concerns, but it could mean working the shadows. He isn't naive or ignorant—he knows the score, and can pass that information on to you.

B	A	R	S	C	I	L	W	EDG	ESS	Init	IP
3	4	4	3	4	4	3	3	2	6	8	1

Active Skills: Archery 3, Athletics 4, Etiquette 2, First Aid 4, Infiltration 3, Longarms 3, Negotiation 2, Unarmed Combat 3
Knowledge Skills: Botany 3, Geology 2, Paranormal Creatures 2, Tribal Lore 4

ANTIQUITIES AND ODDITIES DEALER

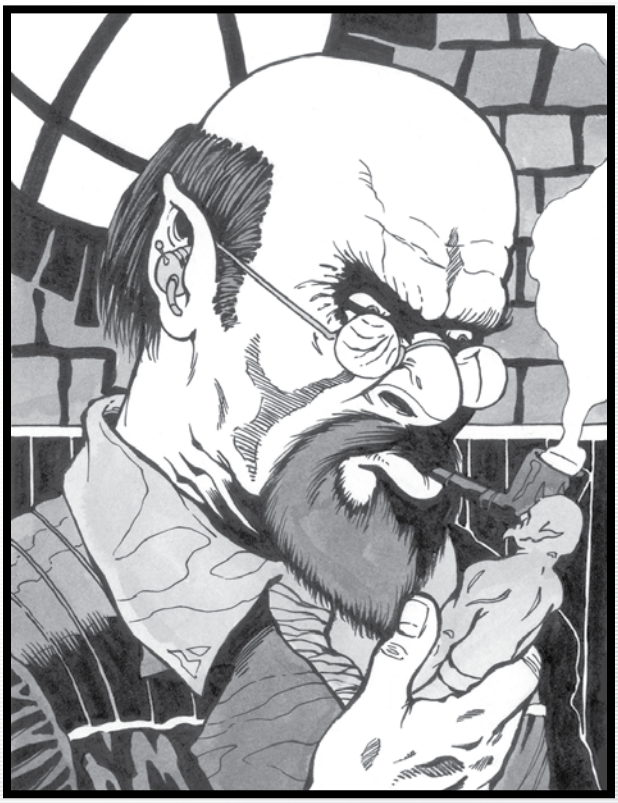
Metatype: Elf
Uses: Fencing, identification, ancient history
Places to Meet: Bazaars, soykaf shop, library
Similar Contacts: Librarian, professor, pawn broker

The antiquities and oddities dealer constantly searches for ancient and esoteric magical objects. As many of the most interesting objects are in dangerous, hard to find places, he's also interested in dealing with people willing to travel to those places. He's far more concerned with an object's history and purpose—these mean far more to his diverse tastes than any associated power or financial value.

The dealer has an eclectic smattering of information, much of which can be critically useful when least expected. The ancient histories and latest research rumors can provide the crucial missing bit of information to understand the motivations for a job.

B	A	R	S	C	I	L	W	M	EDG	ESS	Init	IP
2	3	3	2	4	3	4	3	4	1	6	6	1

Active Skills: Assensing 3, Etiquette 3, Infiltration 2, Negotiation 3, Spellcasting 3, Summoning 2,
Knowledge Skills: Anthropology 5, Archaeology 5, Magical Theory 5, Mythology 4, Talismongering 4



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BOOKIE

Metatype: Elf
Uses: Gambling, loans, underworld information
Places to Meet: Race track, casino, arena
Similar Contacts: Pimp, snitch, gambler

It's not about the entertainment, it's about the action. After all, if you don't have anything riding on it, why bother watching it? Any sport, any event, anything with a variable—if the outcome is in question, the bookie's got the numbers, and the odds are in his favor. Bookies have to keep on top of things in order to keep their edge; every bit of information they can get about a boxer's pre-fight drinking binge, a thoroughbred's bad morning workout, or a politician's secret indiscretions helps him massage the percentages to keep him coming out on top. This means he's always on the lookout for the latest word on the street, and he'll trade some dirt of his own for the right tip. He might also be willing to modify percentages to make sure that a fix stays in place.

B	A	R	S	C	I	L	W	EDG	ESS	Init	IP
3	3	3	3	4	3	4	3	2	6	6	1

Active Skills: Computer 2, Data Search 2, Etiquette 2, Negotiation 3
Knowledge Skills: Current Events 3, Gambling 5, Local Crime Scene 4, Mathematics 2, Professional Sports 4

CLUB HOPPER

Metatype: Human
Uses: Socialite news, street rumors
Places to Meet: Nightclubs
Similar Contacts: Bartender, waitress

Corp life is dull. After a week of 12-hour days, boring meetings, and a salary that barely covers the rent in corp housing, it's time to party! The hours away from the office are the hours when she's alive, sometimes just to dance and ogle, sometimes to make sure she's seen at the newest and hottest clubs, and other times to make the pub-crawl and erase all the memories of the past week. She knows what's in, what's out, who's sleeping with whom, and what all the right people are wearing, dancing to, and talking about. At the same time, on any given night at any given club, she's just one of hundreds with the same goal. Blending in like this means she might be the one whose commlink photos have appeared on a social network node with a person of interest in the background.

B	A	R	S	C	I	L	W	EDG	ESS	Init	IP
2	2	3	3	4	4	2	3	2	6	7	1

Active Skills: Computer 2, Etiquette 3, Gymnastics (Dance) 2(4),
Knowledge Skills: Accounting 3, Celebrity Gossip 4, Local Club Circuit 5, Local Music Scene 4

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COMPANY MAN

Metatype: Ork
Uses: Sensitive corporate information, higher-level corporate contacts
Places to Meet: Back rooms in bars, private places
Similar Contacts: Corporate security guard, corporate wage slave, hit man

A generous, steady paycheck and a fantastic benefits package long ago purchased the company man's continued loyalty. Now, if the company needs a problem to go away, he makes sure that the disappearing act happens. Cold as ice on the job, these professionals make it clear that it's never a personal matter—they're just taking care of business. Of course, if they're betrayed by their organization or led to believe they've been betrayed, they know where all the skeletons are kept. Their loyalty to the parent corporation can also be a valuable tool. In their role, they often see and hear things about their competitors, and they're always willing to share that information.

B	A	R	S	C	I	L	W	EDG	ESS	Init	IP
6	4	4(6)	6	3	4	3	4	2	4.3	8(10)	3

Active Skills: Electronics 3, Etiquette 3, Infiltration 3, Pilot Ground Craft 2, Pistols 4, Unarmed Combat 4
Knowledge Skills: Corporate Politics 4, Corporate Security Procedures 6, Local Area Knowledge 4, Local Criminal Groups 3
Basic Augmentations: Skillwires (Rating 5), Synaptic Booster (Rating 2), Synthacardium (Rating 2)

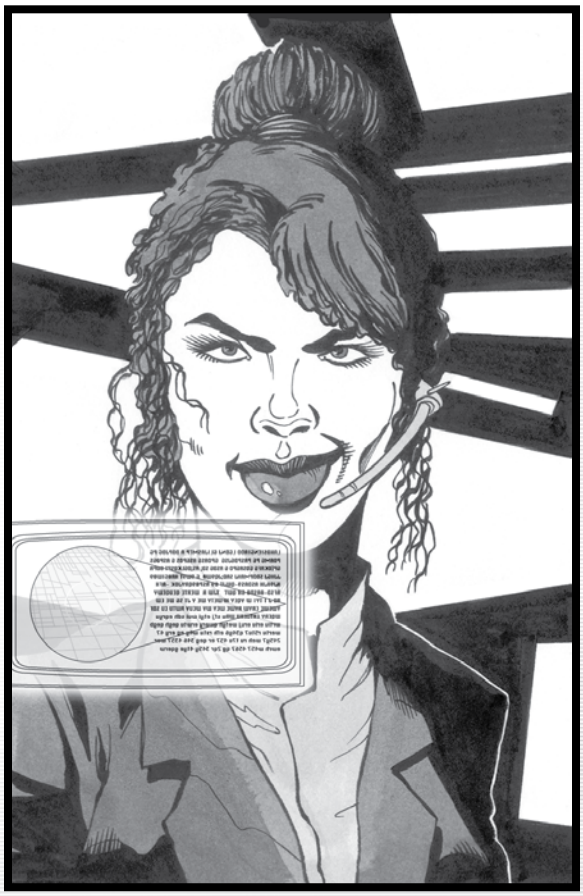
CORPORATE HEADHUNTER

Metatype: Human
Uses: Corporate politics, science rumors
Places to Meet: Expensive restaurants, Shadowrunner bars
Similar Contacts: Fixer, Mr. Johnson, corporate manager

Big R&D budgets are for corps that aren't paying attention. Any great idea already has somebody working on it. So, the trick is to find them, bring them in-house, and get them to finish just the last stages of project development on your dime. The corporate headhunter and her underlings find those people that have products that are almost ready to go to market. Some are found through the Matrix, poring over corporate, financial, and scientific journals. Others she discovers by talking with the right people. She's always looking for the hottest new thing, so she and her corp can be the first ones to bring it to market.

B	A	R	S	C	I	L	W	EDG	ESS	Init	IP
3	4	3	3	5	4	5	4	2	5.3	7	1

Active Skills: Computer 4, Data Search 4, Etiquette 4, Leadership 4, Negotiation (Bargain) 4(6), Perception 2
Knowledge Skills: Corporate Politics 6, Corporate Rumors 5, Cutting Edge Science 5, Data Havens 4, Economics 3, Fashion 3, Local Shadowrunners 4
Basic Augmentations: Attention Coprocessor (Rating 1), Commlink, Datajack, Tailored Pheromones (Rating 1)



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CORPORATE WAGE SLAVE

Metatype: Human
Uses: Information on the corporation, other corporate connections
Places to Meet: Favorite lunch spots, corporate shopping malls, arenas
Similar Contacts: Corporate manager, corporate secretary, corporate hacker

The corporate wage slave clocks in to work every morning and clocks out every evening. She's not an expert in her field, but she's good enough to do the job that she's underpaid to perform. She knows how her parent corporation likes to run things. She knows that the real power lies with the administrative staff and human resources. She's heard the latest rumors on the company's unofficial employee forums. She's not particularly loyal—they haven't done anything to buy her loyalty—but this job is all she has, so she sure doesn't want to risk losing it. Of course, if the datatrail points to a rival instead of her, she just might be willing to tell all.

B	A	R	S	C	I	L	W	EDG	ESS	Init	IP
2	3	2	2	3	3	3	3	2	6	5	1

Active Skills: Computer 2, Data Search 2, Etiquette 2
Knowledge Skills: Corporate Politics 2, Professional Knowledge skills at rating 3

CULT MEMBER

Metatype: Ork
Uses: Street rumors, religious theories
Places to Meet: Airports, public parks, museums
Similar Contacts: Squatter, corporate wage slave, ganger

Almost everyone in the Sixth World is looking for something that gives a sense of belonging. The variety of sources is almost as diverse as the variety of people seeking them. The extreme examples stand out—the guy in the aluminum costume holding up a sign to welcome aliens. Of course, most do a better job than that at blending in with society. The woman in the tres-chic corp suit sipping a latte at the neighborhood soykaf joint or the clean-cut kid with the picture of Dunkelzahn on his t-shirt could just as easily belong to a ritualistic sect. A strong sense of belonging or identification with their organization characterizes cult members. Belief in the cult's tenets is often less important than the friendships and security they've developed from their membership. Loyalty, at nearly any cost, is what gives meaning to their lives. Overcoming that loyalty for a glimpse at the hidden mysteries—or another member's secrets—can be the biggest challenge to working with a cultist.

B	A	R	S	C	I	L	W	EDG	ESS	Init	IP
5	3	4	3	2	4	2	2	2	6	8	1

Active Skills: Computer 2, Etiquette 2, Infiltration 2, Negotiation 2
Knowledge Skills: Comparative Religion 4, Conspiracy Theory 3, Cult Propaganda 4, Psychology 2, Religious Hierarchy 4

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DOCKWORKER

Metatype: Troll
Uses: Smuggling, criminal information, security procedures
Places to Meet: Docks, dive bars, noodle shop
Similar Contacts: Taxi driver, bartender, janitor

The dockworker is sick of his job, hates his boss, and is constantly viewed as menial labor. All that resentment means that he's more than willing to look the other way, help something fall off a truck, or tell it like he saw it, if the opportunity comes along. He sees things, and the people he hates generally dismiss that fact. He always has a pretty good idea of who is doing what when it comes to his docks. If you need something that's traveling through his hands, need to get something in or out of town, or just need to make something go away, then he's ready to help out for a little cred incentive.

B	A	R	S	C	I	L	W	EDG	ESS	Init	IP
10	3	3	10	2	3	2	3	1	6	6	1

Active Skills: Athletics 3, Intimidation 2, Pilot Ground Craft 2, Unarmed Combat 1
Knowledge Skills: Local Bars, 4, Maritime Lore 3, Smuggling 4, Union Procedures 2, Urban Brawl Teams 3

FIREFIGHTER

Metatype: Ork
Uses: Building blueprints, gridguide access, municipal rumors
Places to Meet: Bars, diners, bowling alley
Similar Contacts: Beat cop, paramed, political intern

It takes a special kind of person to willingly and repeatedly charge into a burning building. All the enhancements in the world don't change the fact that it's a hazardous environment, and one wrong move can be lethal. When lives are in danger, the dedicated firefighter shrugs off the risks and does the job that needs to be done. He takes a lot of pride in his work—he won't put people at risk for you or anybody else, but for appropriate compensation, he might be persuaded to share a few details about what started the fire. He also has access to all of the city's building schematics and a pair of tickets for a charity ball that he hasn't been able to sell.

B	A	R	S	C	I	L	W	EDG	ESS	Init	IP
5	3	4	5	3	4	3	4	1	5.75	8	1

Active Skills: Athletics 5, Blades 2, Clubs 2, Exotic Ranged Weapon (Fire hose) 4, First Aid 4, Pilot Ground Craft 2
Knowledge Skills: Firefighting 5, Gambling 3, Local Bars 4, Local Politics 3
Basic Augmentations: Internal Air Tank

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FORENSICS EXPERT

Metatype: Human
Uses: SIN checks, genetic analysis, morgue access
Places to Meet: Fast food restaurant, museum
Similar Contacts: Corporate scientist, paranormal investigator, street doc

Every crime leaves a trail, no matter how well it has been obscured. The forensics expert uses the tools of science, and sometimes thaumaturgy, to follow that trail. Blood spatter, skin flakes, hair strands, even a boot print can be all that this detective needs to track down a criminal. The bane of shadowrunners everywhere, these professionals have led to the end of many an illustrious career.

Of course, if they happen to be your friend, that view changes. Evidence can become conveniently misplaced, contaminated, or inconclusive. Alternatively, it might point in another direction completely. Other times, they might just happen to be working a case that's directly related to a job at hand. After all, Lone Star doesn't pay nearly as well as a megacorporate think tank.

B	A	R	S	C	I	L	W	EDG	ESS	Init	IP
3	3	3	3	2	6	5	4	2	6	9	1

Active Skills: Biotech 5, Electronics 4, Etiquette 3
Knowledge Skills: Biology 4, Chemistry 4, Criminology 5, Evidence Analysis 5, Physics 4, Police Procedures 5

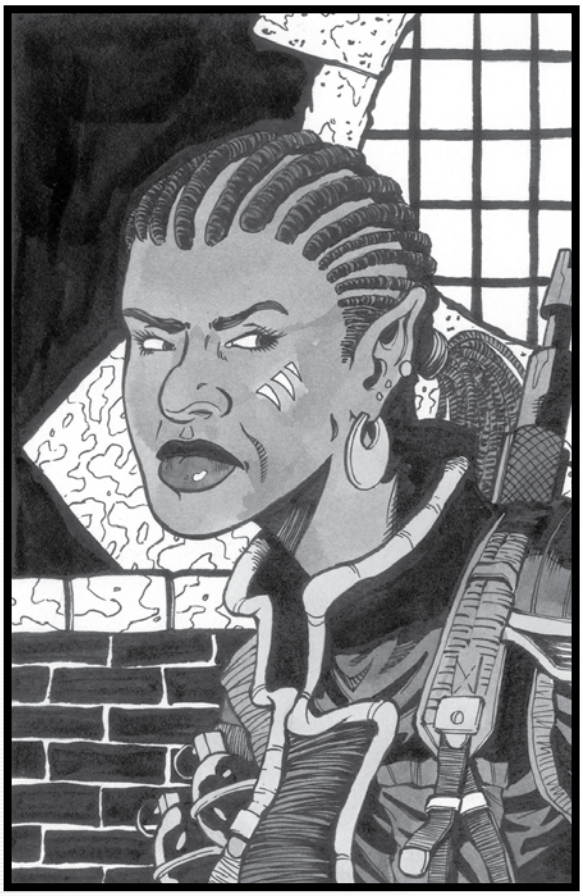
FREEDOM FIGHTER

Metatype: Elf
Uses: Political information, gear, jobs
Places to Meet: Smuggling dens, arms dealers, docks
Similar Contacts: Ecoterrorist, anarchist radical, cartel soldier

The freedom fighter is a doomed optimist who seeks to trade in her current oppressors for a new set—usually a megacorporate-sponsored one. She's confident that the alternative will be a huge improvement over the current oppressors, no matter what history has shown. Every day, her people suffer. Every day, more of her people die. Her people can't afford to be patient, so change must come soon. While her beliefs and her cause are crucial, fair terms for her oppressors are not. Guerilla tactics, forbidden weapons, and the latest innovative weapons are all terrific solutions for her people. If a team expects her help, they either need to show that they're working toward the same ends or make sure that she gets something to aid her cause.

B	A	R	S	C	I	L	W	EDG	ESS	Init	IP
4	4(5)	4(5)	4(5)	3	3	3	4	2	4.6	8	2

Active Skills: Armorer 4, Automatics 4, Automotive Mechanic 3, Intimidation 4, Pistols 3, Survival 5, Unarmed Combat 4
Knowledge Skills: Current Events 4, Guerrilla Tactics 5, Political Ideology 5, Trid Pirates 4
Basic Augmentations: Muscle Replacement (Rating 1), Reaction Enhancers (Rating 1), Smartlink



Simon Wentworth (order #1132857)

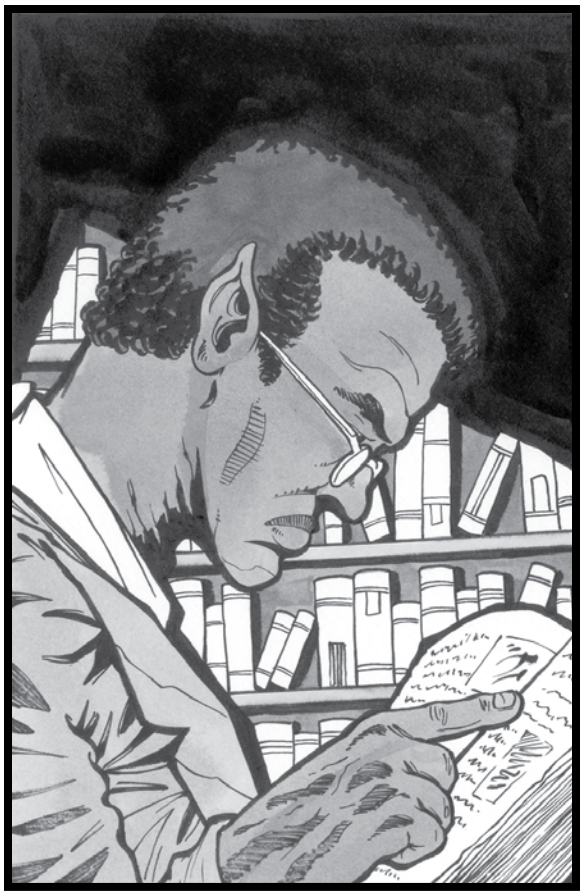
GANG LEADER

Metatype: Human
Uses: Information, muscle, connections with other organized crime
Places to Meet: Any street or back alley, neighborhood bar, gang safe house, jail
Similar Contacts: Ganger, smuggler, fence

Every pack has an alpha, and the gang leader fulfills that role for his turf's young thugs. He and his group of five to fifty buddies control a neighborhood, and they get a piece of any action that happens there. They might run a protection racket, they might deal BTLs, or maybe they just like to have their own violent flavor of fun. He's instantly aware of everything that happens in his neighborhood. Sometimes, that means he needs to pass word up to a larger criminal syndicate. Other times that means he needs to bring his crew in to take care of business. Of course, if you need to know about his turf, then he has all the answers.

B	A	R	S	C	I	L	W	EDG	ESS	Init	IP
4	4	5	5	4	3	3	4	2	6	8	1

Active Skills: Blades 3, Clubs 3, Etiquette 3,Intimidation 4, Leadership 3, Pilot GroundCraft 3, Pistols 3, Unarmed Combat 4
Knowledge Skills: Police Procedure 3, Smuggling Routes 2, Underworld Politics 4



HERMETIC ACADEMIC

Metatype: Elf
Uses: Magical theory, parazoology, academic rumors
Places to Meet: Libraries, museums, college campuses
Similar Contacts: Professor, talismonger, paranatural historian

Knowledge is power. For the business world, that means stock trading, corporate espionage, and market projections. The hermetic academic, however, is interested in knowledge of a more esoteric, yet still practical, nature. Some of that knowledge comes from ancient, moldy tomes and scrolls. Other bits come from expeditions to the metaplanes. No matter the source, if that knowledge is novel, or at least rare, then this expert craves it—especially if it can lead to a publication. If you happen to have the information he needs, it can be surprisingly easy to convince him to part with some data of his own. You'd be amazed at the stuff he finds in some of those books, and he never forgets anything. You might also be surprised at some of the powerful organizations with whom he's connected.

B	A	R	S	C	I	L	W	M	EDG	ESS	Init	IP
3	3	3	2	5	4	5	5	5	2	6	7	1

Active Skills: Arcana 5, Assensing 3, Conjuring 4, Etiquette 3, Instruction 4, Sorcery 4
Knowledge Skills: Academic Politics 5, Magical Theory 6, Parazoology 4, Talismongering 4

Simon Wentworth (order #1132857)

HIGH STAKES NEGOTIATOR

Metatype: Elf
Uses: Jobs, rumors, special access
Places to Meet: Fine dining, backstage, among glitterati
Similar Contacts: Fixer, Mafia consiglieri, Mr. White

Don't waste the high stakes negotiator's time on small-time business. His fee for a conference call is more than you received for your last three jobs. He deals with rainmakers—the people whose decisions change the business world. He doesn't waste his time unless the job will finance his next yacht, and he doesn't do charity. Now, if you have some data that might give him an edge in his other jobs, he wants to talk.

Similarly, if you have a proven track record and references from the right Johnsons, then he has an offer you can't afford to turn down. His reputation depends upon the quality of your work. You'll need to be on your toes when you work with him, because you're playing in the big leagues now.

B	A	R	S	C	I	L	W	EDG	ESS	Init	IP
3	3	3	3	7	5	3	5	2	4.65	8	1

Active Skills: Computer 3, Etiquette 6, Intimidation 4, Leadership 3, Negotiation (Bargaining) 5 (7)
Knowledge Skills: Corporate Law 5, Corporate Politics 5, Fine Dining 6, Local rainmakers 6, Local Shadowrunners 5
Basic Augmentations: Attention Coprocessor (Rating 2), Commlink, Datajack, Math SPU, Tailored Pheromones (Rating 3)

ORK NATION ORGANIZER

Metatype: Ork
Uses: Metahuman rumors, political rumors
Places to Meet: Political office, soup kitchen, church meeting room
Similar Contacts: Grassroots politician, radical, political intern

Orks have a very hard time fitting into a society that wasn't designed to accommodate them. They mature faster, live shorter, and have families that are dramatically larger than human families. For them, the government system is broken. They can't take a job, drive a car, buy a drink, or even get married for years after they mature. None of them could ever hope to live to retirement age, assuming they managed to land a job that would offer a retirement plan in the first place.

The Ork Nation organizer wants to see this fixed, and he can't afford to wait for the fix to happen. The only way things will change is if he manages to get a whole lot of media attention. So, he's willing to do whatever it takes to get that attention.

B	A	R	S	C	I	L	W	EDG	ESS	Init	IP
6	3	3	5	3	4	3	3	1	6	7	1

Active Skills: Clubs 2, Demolitions 2, Leadership 3, Negotiation 3, Pilot Ground Craft 2, Pistols 1, Unarmed Combat 4
Knowledge Skills: Civil Disobedience 4, Civil Rights Movements 4, Discrimination Law 2, Ork History 4

Simon Wentworth (order #1132857)

PARAMED SHAMAN

Metatype: Human
Uses: Healing, street rumors, natural remedies
Places to Meet: Firehouse, talismonger, blue-collar bar
Similar Contacts: Street doc, paramed, tribal witchdoctor

Mainstream modern medicine is rarely a practical solution for healing an Awakened entity. The paramed shaman helps to solve this conundrum by specializing in medical care for magicians and other paranormal entities. Some of them treat everything from paracritters to sentient creatures like shapeshifters and sasquatches. She knows the procedures best suited for working with patients who don't react as well to modern medical practices.

The wrong treatment can prolong or even worsen the medical outcome. It's far safer to know one of these folks if you're a magician or adept, and keeping this contact happy is always in a team's best interest. Contributing to her clinic (with nuyen or gear) is always welcome, and she appreciates it when patients are steered her way.

B	A	R	S	C	I	L	W	M	EDG	ESS	Init	IP
3	3	3	3	5	4	4	5	5	1	6	7	1

Active Skills: Assensing 4, Etiquette 3, First Aid 5, Medicine (Magical Health) 3(5), Pistols 2, Spellcasting 4, Summoning 3
Knowledge Skills: Anatomy 3, Herbalism 4, Magical Background 3

PIMP

Metatype: Human
Uses: Street rumors, distractions, personal services
Places to Meet: Red light district, brothel, cheap hotel
Similar Contacts: Gang leader, fixer, madam

Prostitution may be the oldest profession, but it's an intrinsically dangerous one. For almost as long, the pimp has been there to grease the wheels and take a cut off the top. Some of them maintain an almost parental view toward their girls, treating them well and running their operation like a business manager, while others are little more than thugs who keep the girls in line with drugs and intimidation. Whatever their proclivities, pimps tend to be flamboyant individuals, with strong connections to one of the criminal syndicates. Based on their clientele, they'll always hear rumors of things that seem out of place. Based on their lifestyle, they'll always be happy to share their rumors—for the right price.

B	A	R	S	C	I	L	W	EDG	ESS	Init	IP
4	3	3	5	3	3	3	3	1	6	6	1

Active Skills: Clubs 4, Etiquette 3, Intimidation 3, Negotiation 5, Pistols 3
Knowledge Skills: Economics 2, Local Area Knowledge 4, Organized Crime Territories 4, Police Procedures 2, Psychology 3
Basic Augmentations: Minor Biosculpting

Simon Wentworth (order #1132857)

POLICE CHIEF

Metatype: Elf
Uses: Political and street rumors, government resources
Places to Meet: Expensive restaurants, sporting events
Similar Contacts: Beat cop, corporate manager

A modern police chief is just an administrator promoted away from the job that brought him into his career. As a corporate employee, he's one of dozens in any city. He's generally almost as disenfranchised with the contract legal system as most criminals. He's under constant pressure from above to solve the crimes that lead to the best press releases and from below to provide the tools needed to keep his officers safe, if not the streets themselves.

The police chief can't be seen talking to shadowrunners on an "official" basis, but he's been around the block enough to know that runners often have their fingers on the pulse of the underworld even more than the cops do. He'll never turn down useful information.

B	A	R	S	C	I	L	W	EDG	ESS	Init	IP
3	3	3	3	5	4	3	3	2	6	7	1

Active Skills: Clubs 2, Etiquette 3, Intimidation 4, Negotiation 3, Pistols 3
Knowledge Skills: Administration 4, Law 4, Organized Crime 3, Police Procedures 5, Psychology 2

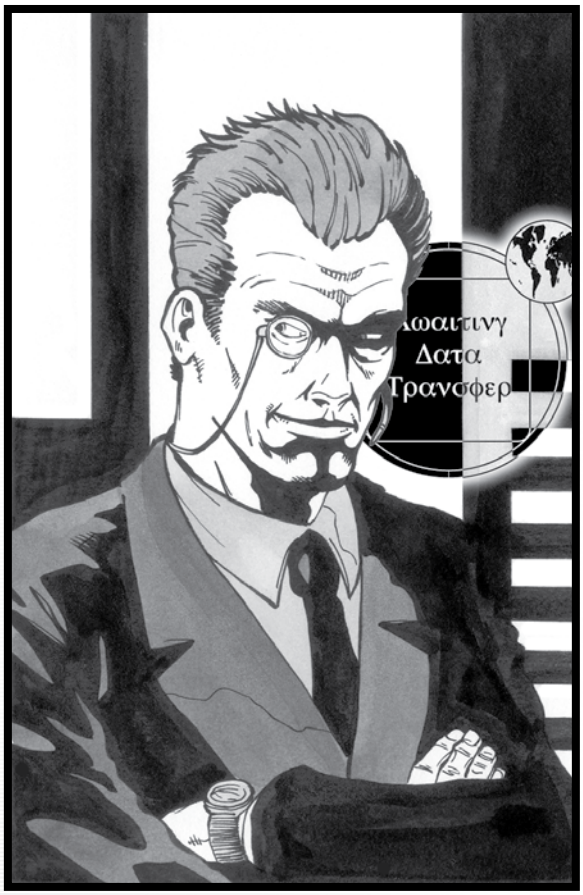
SHARK LAWYER

Metatype: Human
Uses: Criminal rumors, political aid
Places to Meet: Jail, bail bondsmen office, courthouse
Similar Contacts: Corporate lawyer, fixer, bounty hunter

There comes a time in every professional criminal's life when she needs legal representation. It's awfully handy if you already have the commcode for your representation before you're sitting in the holding cell deciding who gets your one free call. The shark lawyer is the man you want when that situation arrives. He's not troubled by useless morals. Money talks, and his clients walk. He knows the loopholes to squeeze through, the palms to grease, and the honest people to avoid. Of course, since he's not concerned about violating client confidentiality, he's always willing to tell what he knows about his past clients. That can be good for you, if you're looking for information, or bad for you, if he's in the process of selling you out.

B	A	R	S	C	I	L	W	EDG	ESS	Init	IP
3	3	3	3	5	4	3	3	2	6	7	1

Active Skills: Etiquette 3, Intimidation 2, Negotiation 6
Knowledge Skills: Law (Loopholes) 6(8), Local Judges 4, Local Politics 5, Oration 4



Simon Wentworth (order #1132857)

SIMSENSE STAR

Metatype: Human
Uses: Distractions, corporate rumors
Places to Meet: Expensive restaurants, clubs, private resorts
Similar Contacts: Dancer, pro athlete

Looks, fame, popularity, and enormous piles of money aren't everything, but they're probably enough. The simsense star lives a life of hedonistic pleasure, thanks to the ability to emote appropriately on cue. The paparazzi follow him everywhere, but that's the price of fame. That's also why he has his agent, his bodyguards, and the rest of his entourage. He's a household name, and he expects and receives special attention no matter where he goes because of it. That also means that he's a terrific distraction when needed. Of course, people are always willing to tell him their life's story, which is awfully handy if you happen to be investigating someone he's talking to. He also knows that the real money's in screenplays, and his looks won't hold out forever. If you've got a story to share that might make for a good sim, he might just be willing to cut you in on the deal.

B	A	R	S	C	I	L	W	EDG	ESS	Init	IP
3	4	3	3	5	3	3	2	2	5.5	6	1

Active Skills: Etiquette 4, Gymnastics(Dance) 3(5), Negotiation 1
Knowledge Skills: Acting 4, Celebrity Rumors 4, Entertainment Law 2, Simsense Production 3
Basic Augmentations: Minor Biosculpting, Simrig

SQUATTER

Metatype: Ork
Uses: Street rumors, salvage, neighborhood dynamics
Places to Meet: Alleys, noodle shops, homeless shelters
Similar Contacts: Street vendor, ganger, prostitute

Nearly everyone hits a streak of bad luck in their lives. In the Sixth World, there's no safety net when that streak comes along. If things go astray, it's easy for someone to go from a successful job and an expensive apartment to life on the street in a matter of weeks. Squatters come from every race, metatype, creed, and gender. Some have a loose grip on sanity—possibly due to Awakening or AIPS—while others maintain a razor sharp mind and are just waiting for their next opportunity.

To many people, the squatter is just a part of the scenery. They've seen so many panhandlers that ignoring them is second nature. When that happens, it is amazing the bits of paydata that a squatter can pick up without any effort at all.

B	A	R	S	C	I	L	W	EDG	ESS	Init	IP
5	2	3	4	2	4	2	2	1	6	7	1

Active Skills: Athletics 2, Hardware 2, Infiltration 4, Locksmith 2, Palming 4
Knowledge Skills: Homeless Shelters 5, Local Area Knowledge 4, Local Police 3, Panhandling 4

Simon Wentworth (order #1132857)

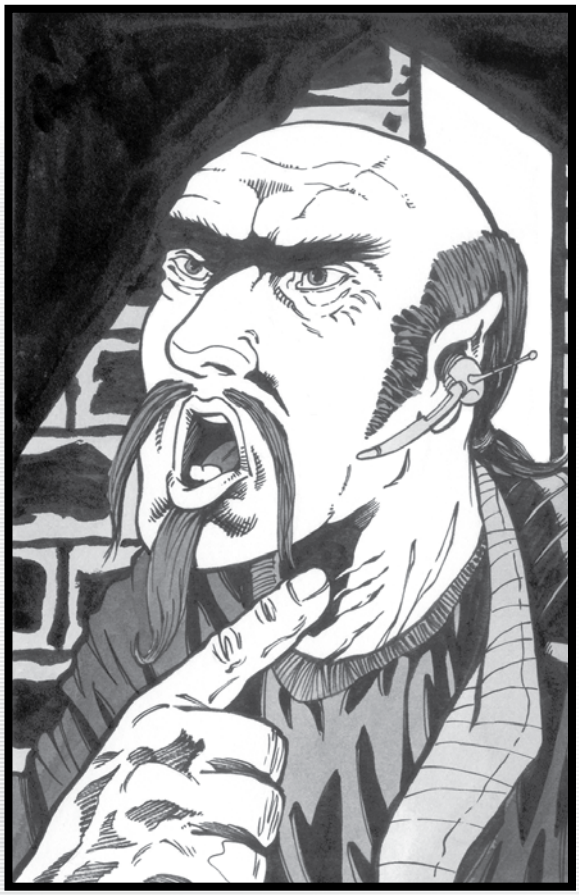
STREET VENDOR

Metatype: Dwarf
Uses: Street rumors, gang information, smuggling
Places to Meet: Street corners, dive bars, coffin hotel
Similar Contacts: Squatter, ganger, nomad

The street vendor is an omnipresent resource that's just another part of the scenery to every sprawl dweller. If you need a fast soydog or a frozen treat, they're just the person you need. The rest of the time, you probably don't even notice they're there. Of course, that doesn't mean they don't notice you. They see everyone on their route every day—whether they're customers or not. They have a pretty good idea of who is doing what, and they've got the time and the lack of distractions to try to discover what all of them do. They might not know everyone's names, but they do know their faces, their routines, and they recognize most of their AR profiles. In addition, somebody who's mobile, unnoticed, and pushing a rolling storage device can be a crucial asset for a shadowrunner looking to make a special delivery.

B	A	R	S	C	I	L	W	EDG	ESS	Init	IP
3	3	3	3	3	3	2	3	2	6	6	1

Active Skills: Etiquette 1, Infiltration 2, Negotiation 2
Knowledge Skills: Fencing 4, Local Area Knowledge 3, Local Gangs 3



SUPPLY SERGEANT

Metatype: Ork
Uses: Military equipment, military rumors
Places to Meet: Warehouse, abandoned storefront, parking lot
Similar Contacts: Armorer, fixer, fence

The military has access to an amazing range of equipment—weapons, armor, survival gear, uniforms, and so much more. Some is just variations on things available at any Stuffer Shack. Other pieces of gear are a bit harder to come by. No matter which category it falls into, the supply sergeant has access to it. For the right price, he can make sure that a shadowrunner has access to it as well. After all, there are an awful lot of items that his troops need that the military doesn't see fit to supply. It's only fair that if he can supply something, he gets something in return. He also knows a guy in data services who has access to information of a more virtual nature, if that's what's needed to finish a transaction.

B	A	R	S	C	I	L	W	EDG	ESS	Init	IP
5	3	4	4	3	3	2	3	1	6	7	1

Active Skills: Automatics 3, Etiquette 3, Infiltration 4, Negotiation 5, Unarmed Combat 2
Knowledge Skills: Black Markets 4, Duty Stations 3, Military History 2, Military Procedure 4, Supply Chain 3

Simon Wentworth (order #1132857)

TALISLEGGER

Metatype: Human
Uses: Telesma, magical rumors, fencing parazoological specimens
Places to Meet: Smuggling dens, bazaars, nature centers
Similar Contacts: Smuggler, talismonger

Government regulations on Awakened gear are unbelievably strict. There's a solid ID check required for most spell formulae, foci, fetishes, and a lot of enchanting gear. If your SIN might not qualify, or if the gear isn't supposed to be available to anyone, then the talislegger is just the person you need to talk to. Don't ask her where the gear came from—either you don't want to know or she doesn't want to tell you. Don't expect a bargain either—the ATTF's been working even closer with the border patrol lately. But if you need it, she can find it. From the other side of things, if you found it and need to sell it, she's already got a buyer lined up.

B	A	R	S	C	I	L	W	M	EDG	ESS	Init	IP
3	4	4	3	5	4	4	5	3	2	6	8	1

Active Skills: Arcana 3, Assensing 3, Enchanting 3, Pistols 3, Sorcery 4, Summoning 4, Survival 3
Knowledge Skills: Botany 4, Law 2, Lore Shops 4, Magical Locations 5, Magical Talismans 6, Parazoology 3, Smuggling 4, Talismongering 6

TERRAFIRST! ACTIVIST

Metatype: Elf
Uses: Jobs, environmental threats, corporate policies
Places to Meet: Public parks, anarchist bars, weapons dealer
Similar Contacts: Grassroots politician, freedom fighter, terrorist

Everyday, the megacorporations commit another act of atrocity against Mother Earth. They must be stopped, at any cost! If a few people who were thoughtlessly harming the environment get hurt along the way, those are acceptable losses. Some would call her a terrorist, but she believes she's just another freedom fighter. If only metahumanity would turn down their AR feeds and pay attention to the world around them, they'd hear her constant pleas for help. Decades of peaceful demonstrations, informative fliers, and gentle reminders haven't worked. Now is the time for escalation. You're either on her side, and willing to save the planet, or you're against her, and just another opponent in her war for the planet's salvation.

B	A	R	S	C	I	L	W	EDG	ESS	Init	IP
3	3	4	3	5	4	3	4	2	6	8	1

Active Skills: Demolitions 2, Gymnastics 3, Infiltration 3, Pilot Ground Craft 2, Unarmed Combat 2
Knowledge Skills: Chemistry 3, Ecology 5, Environmental Law 4, Megacorporate Policies 2, Nature Trails 3, Public Relations 3

Simon Wentworth (order #1132857)

TROLL STREET DEALER

Metatype: Troll
Uses: Underworld rumors, jobs, fencing
Places to Meet: Back alleys, syndicate fronts, barrens
Similar Contacts: Squatter, street vendor, fixer

Every fixer has to start somewhere. Many of them started out as shadowrunners, until they realized how much nuyen they could make as a fixer, without putting their ass on the line. The troll street dealer did that math recently, and he's working on moving up the food chain. He's still establishing his networks—in terms of both shadow assets and clients. So, sometimes he's willing to break with protocol a bit, if it'll help things develop more quickly. He also understands that sometimes you have to take a risk or accept a lower profit margin when you're starting out. This can be good and bad for the teams that he hires. He'll sell out anybody if it means the right connection, but he also remembers what it's like to be sold out, so he won't do that...unless the team has it coming.

B	A	R	S	C	I	L	W	EDG	ESS	Init	IP
9	3	4(5)	9	2	3	2	3	1	4	8	2

Active Skills: Automatics 4, Blades 4, Etiquette 3, Gymnastics 3, Negotiation 5
Knowledge Skills: Fencing 4, Local Area Knowledge 4, Local Gangs 4, Local Mafia 3, Local Yakuza Clans 4
Basic Augmentations: Wired Reflexes (Rating 1)

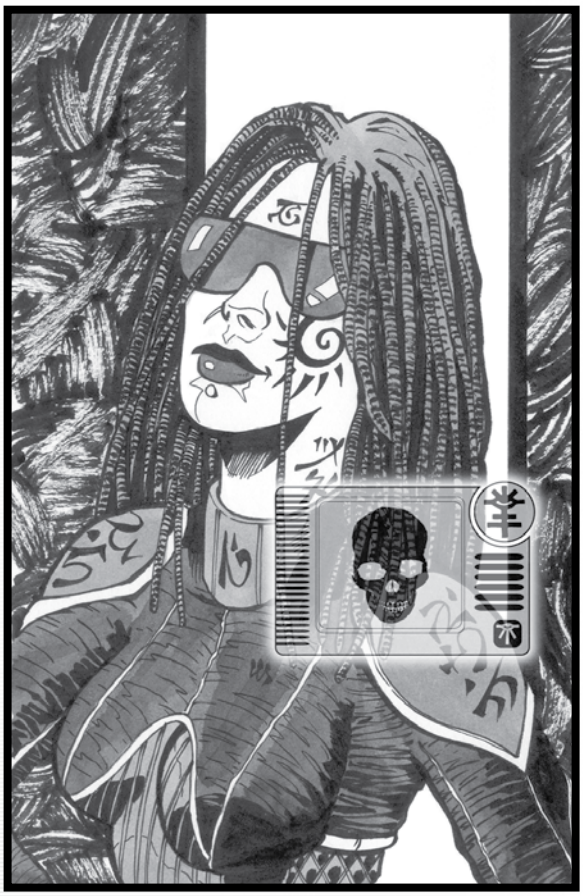
WIZ KID GANGER

Metatype: Human
Uses: Gang rumors, magical activity, awakened muscle
Places to Meet: Ganger bars, talismongers, racetrack
Similar Contacts: Gang leader, street shaman

When the wiz kid ganger Awakened, she knew she had a whole new kind of muscle to flex. That power scares the people around her, and she revels in that sense of fear. Sometimes she'll hang with others who tread the mystic paths, but more often, she'll travel with her former compatriots in tow, lording her abilities over them. Either way, she's willing to tell the stories about the Awakened sights she's seen. Of course, you're going to pay a price for getting the help from someone with her rare and vaunted expertise. If you treat her right, she can hook you up with the kind of gear you won't find in a licensed talismonger shop.

B	A	R	S	C	I	L	W	M	EDG	ESS	Init	IP
3	3	4	3	4	3	5	6	3	2	6	7	1

Active Skills: Clubs 2, Etiquette 2, Intimidation 2, Pilot Ground Craft (Bike) 2(4), Pistols 2, Spellcasting 4, Summoning 3, Unarmed Combat 3
Knowledge Skills: Black Market 3, Gang Territories 4, Local Area Knowledge 3, Magical Theory 1, Underworld Politics 2



Simon Wentworth (order #1132857)

Contact Name	Reference
Amerindian Tribesperson	p. 134
Antiquities and Oddities Dealer	p. 134
Armorer	p. 4, CA
Bartender	p. 282, *SR4*
Beat Cop	p. 282, *SR4*
Blogger	p. 282, *SR4*
Bodyguard	p. 4, *CA*
Bookie	p. 135
Club Hopper	p. 135
Club Owner	p. 5, *CA*
Company Man	p. 136
Corporate Headhunter	p. 136
Corporate Manager	p. 5, *CA*
Corporate Scientist	p. 6, *CA*
Corporate Secretary	p. 6, *CA*
Corporate Wage Slave	p. 137
Cult Member	p. 137
Dockworker	p. 138
Firefighter	p. 138
Fixer	p. 283,*SR4*
Freedom Fighter	p. 139
Forensics Expert	p. 139
Gambler	p. 6, *CA*
Gang Leader	p. 140
Go-Ganger	p. 7, *CA*
Grassroots Politician	p. 7, *CA*
Hate Group Member	p. 7, *CA*
Hermetic Academic	p. 140
High Stakes Negotiator	p. 141
ID Manufacturer	p. 8, *CA*
Janitor	p. 8, *CA*
Mafia Consiglieri	p. 283,*SR4*
Mechanic	p. 284,*SR4*
Mr. Johnson	p. 284,*SR4*
Nomad	p. 8, *CA*
Ork Nation Organizer	p. 141
Paramed	p. 9, *CA*
Paramed Shaman	p. 142
Parasecurity Expert	p. 9, *CA*
Pawn Broker	p. 9, *CA*
Pimp	p. 142
Pirate	p. 9, *CA*
Police Chief	p. 143
Political Intern	p. 10, *CA*
Radical	p. 10, *CA*
Rent-a-Cop	p. 10, *CA*
Shark Lawyer	p. 143
Simsense Star	p. 144
Slumlord	p. 11, *CA*
Snitch	p. 11, *CA*
Spider	p. 12, *CA*
Squatter	p. 144
Street Doc	p. 284, *SR4*
Street Vendor	p. 145
Stripper	p. 12, *CA*
Supply Sergeant	p. 145
Talent Scout	p. 12, *CA*
Talislegger	p. 146
Talismonger	p. 285,*SR4*
Tamanous Member	p. 13, *CA*
Taxi Driver	p. 13, *CA*
TerraFirst! Activist	p. 146
Trid Pirate	p. 13, *CA*
Troll Street Dealer	p. 147
Urban Anthropologist	p. 14, *CA*
Vory Shestiorka	p. 14, *CA*
Wiz Kid Ganger	p. 147

SR4, *Shadowrun, Fourth Edition*
CA, *Contacts and Adventures* booklet

Simon Wentworth (order #1132857)

. . . ADVANCED LIFESTYLES . . .

"Nice view...bad neighborhood. Good neighborhood, but definitely no privacy," Kat thinks to herself as she flips through an online renter's forum. While she could afford any of these places, she wants somewhere out of the way for a while. After looking at a few more condos, she gets bored. She focuses back on the party, a little disappointed in not finding a place. Kat sips on a banana daiquiri and then jumps out onto the dance floor. At the end of the song, she notices an incoming IM.

"Looking for a getaway? I know of a few places in Tacoma. Meet me at midnight at the Pleasant Harbor condos in Tacoma—Larry, real-estate agent."

While not the most unusual meet she's ever had, it's certainly up on her list. What kind of real estate agent sets up a meeting at midnight? She decides to go, but goes prepared. Driving on down, she checks out the neighborhood. Some dilapidated buildings, but better than the Barrens. She arrives at the Pleasant Harbor Condos, a five story housing complex with a Sound view...over some loading docks. "Well, at least it looks ok, and it would have a great view from the upper floors," Kat says to herself optimistically.

"Of course it's a terrific view from the penthouse," interrupts a gravelly-voiced man. "It's also very quiet. Don't let the exterior fool you; that's just to keep the place inconspicuous. Hi, I'm Larry." A man in a yellowish-tweed jacket walks out from the shadow of the building. "Please, come inside. I'll show you the penthouse."

Kat follows him in. "So, how did you know I was looking?" The entry looks better than the outside, with a polished floor and new carpet smell.

"I specialize in finding places for those in your line of work." He opens up the elevator, and she steps in. There's a strong ammonia smell in the elevator, and she sneezes.

"I apologize for the smell. Just finished some remodeling."

As the elevator opens, Kat marvels at the penthouse. While cozy, there are a few higher-end amenities and comforts. Music plays in the background from a surround sound setup as Larry goes on about the Obsidian SPU, the Drone chef, and the MajorDomo CHN, but something nags her in the back of her mind. Why is it familiar? Larry shows her the bedroom, talking about the double layer elevator security, when one of her songs starts playing in the background.

The bedroom is a perfect replica of one of her previous bedrooms. Now she realizes why the place seems so familiar.

"What's the deal here, Larry? You a stalker?" she asks, backing out of the bedroom.

He pauses, then looks up at her, smiling, "I'm not a stalker, just a big fan." Kat hears the elevator open up.

"My friends downstairs do the stalking for me..."

Kat turns to see pale faces and sharp pointy teeth.

"Ghouls," she mutters. "The worst kind of neighbors."

Simon Wentworth (order #1132857)

LIFESTYLES

The following section offers optional rules to the Lifestyle options presented in the *Shadowrun, Fourth Edition* core rulebook (p.84). The options add greater depth and variety to the Lifestyles selected by characters, making them an integral rather than incidental feature of the game.

TOYS AND TOOLS

In 2071, having a variety of timesaving appliances, household drones, and electronic toys is the norm, not the exception, for everyone in a Medium lifestyle or above. Even a Low lifestyle may have second-hand or outdated drones, though they might be prone to frequent malfunctions.

Most Low lifestyle or better homes are also fully networked, with wireless capabilities. A central node, accessible in the home by data terminals or (more frequently) the homeowner's subscribed commlink, has replaced the household computer. Home Management Software Suites (HMSS) are standard in all homes above the Squatter lifestyle, although the features, ease of use, and reliability certainly increase with higher lifestyles. The rating of the Central Home Node's (CHN) system, response, signal, and firewall, as well as the rating of programs it may run and drones or appliances it may subscribe, depend on the Necessities level purchased. Characters may upgrade the ratings of the hardware and software via the normal upgrade rules (see, p. 240, *SR4*), although the quality of the appliances, drones, and other systems within the home limits their functionality. Therefore, a character may only increase the system and response rating of the CHN one level above the rating of Necessities chosen. The firewall can be raised independently, per standard rules.

The HMSS are run by the central home node and therefore are limited by the system rating of the node. Most HMSS include a host of features, including the ability to monitor subscribed systems (such as the utilities, appliances, and home drones), order repairs, schedule maintenance, and alert homeowners to basic home-related hazards or problems (such as fire, carbon monoxide, burglary, air quality, etc) sensed through appropriate sensors (such as a built-in smoke detection system). Higher-end systems include IC and security measures, while a Luxury lifestyle typically includes round-the-clock patrols by a security spider.

A hacker who infiltrates the CHN can use it for a variety of nefarious actions, including monitoring communications, using internal sensors to spy on occupants, accessing home files, manipulating systems subscribed to the node (including drones), and otherwise having fun tormenting residents (or playing Peeping Tom).

COMFORT FOOD

A century ago, cooked meals were three dishes in healthy portions, but pre-made food and instant gratification has since reduced it to one all-encompassing meal. Convenience replaced nutrition, and cooking became automated. Who wants to spend an hour or more in the kitchen after a long workday, when you can quickly microwave a Nutrisoy meal or even tell your soy processor what to prepare when you arrive, while you're still commuting? Corporations push for more efficient and profitable crop production, focusing on the super-yield crops, such as soy and krill. With rising allergies and the desire to eat "organic," several corporations, such as GGW, Ingersoll & Berkeley, Horizon, and Genetique have come up with alternatives for the common metahuman. However, the primary dietary staples for many sprawl citizens remain the same.

Soy

Between pollution and corporate desire for easy profitability, soybeans have become the prime focus for mass production. Genetic modification and alternatives to traditional farming have boosted production of the other staple food sources (rice, corn, wheat, and potato), but with the widespread marketing and popularity of soy, no one has noticed. Because of overexposure, it is estimated that 1 in 30 have an allergy to soy, a disturbing trend that continues to grow. There are alternatives to soy, without resorting to the luxury of all "real" food.

Krill

These tiny little shrimp have filled the meat vacuum, and aquaculture farms are booming around the world because of them. Large silo farms contain millions of these guys swimming happily in their tank. Come harvest time, the meat from krill can be blended and pressed together, then sold in a variety of forms, including powder for use in processing units and shakes. Other animal protein variants include frog farms and cricket hatcheries.

Mycoprotein

Mycoprotein comes from mushrooms called *fusarium venenatum*. Large volumes can be grown in small spaces and with cheap resources similar to fermenting beer. They are pressed into shaped meals or powder for processing units. Mycoprotein is the next best, nutrition-wise, to soy.

CENTRAL HOME NODE

Ares DoCoMo (Low)	Response 1, Signal 2, System 1, Firewall 2
Horizon MajorDomo (Middle)	Response 3, Signal 3, System 3, Firewall 3
Evo LifeManagement Series (High)	Response 4, Signal 3, System 4, Firewall 5
Evo LifeManagement A-Class Series (Luxury)	Response 5, Signal 3, System 5, Firewall 5

HOME MANAGEMENT SOFTWARE SUITE

Low	Rating 1
Middle	Rating 3
High	Rating 4, IC rating 3 standard
Luxury	Rating 5, IC rating 4 standard, with patrolling hacker

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Algae

Algae, most commonly blue-green algae, is scooped off the top of freshwater lakes and processed into foodstuffs and vitamin supplements. On the coast, kelp is farmed and ground into powder to be used in the same fashion.

Processing Units

A Soy Processing Unit (SPU) is the most widespread household appliance outside the trideo entertainment system and commlink, frequently replacing the standard microwave and oven in Low and Middle lifestyle homes. SPUs range in size from microwave to refrigerator. Like a desktop forge, a SPU moves cooking from just being poured, mixed, and cooked to being architecturally built from the ground up. The soy-pulp/paste is injected with artificial flavors and color, sculpted into a given shape, and then texturized with additives before being microwave zapped to harden it at appropriate points to recreate culinary delights. While called "soy processors," all models are capable of handling alternative ingredients to some extent.

SPUs are controlled by the HMSS to allow them to receive updates, swap recipes, order ingredients, and otherwise manage the culinary tasks of the household. Low-end processors, including the SiA 200, create basic shapes with optional flavoring, while high-end processors like Sapphire Blue use fuzzy logic to create more realistic and varied dishes. Specialized units, such as the Mr. and Mrs. Soy line, provide upgraded options for single items, such as chips, salads, and eggs. Regardless of the kind of unit, the SPU is included in the category of Necessities.

DRONES

Drones are ubiquitous in any middle class home. They perform household chores and home maintenance, provide companionship and security, and take care of the very young and elderly. The number and quality of the household drones are included in the category Comforts. Household drones are rarely rigger-enabled, being (generally) very simple, single-purpose robots. They are controlled by their own limited pilot capabilities and can be commanded via the CHN (to which they are slaved, p. 55, *Unwired*). Homeowners, through the CHN, can monitor and command the drones, verify their locations, view sensor data, etc. A savvy runner may also be able to use the household drones in their work, by hacking the CHN. (Runners should note, however, that at the Luxury lifestyle, drones are often replaced by metahuman domestic staff).

The following drones are samples of some of the most common drones used in homes, businesses, and daily life in the '70s. (For more drones, see *Drones,* p. 116, *Arsenal*)

BusyBuddy

This compact cleaning drone with two caterpillar tracks vacuums, wet/dry sweeps, mops, polishes, and shampoos an extensive variety of floorings. Sensors in the drone analyze flooring composition and condition to provide optimal cleaning results.

Similar Models: MCT Floor+Stairs Bot, Aztechnology GrimeBuster

Standard Upgrades: Holding Tanks (Cleaning Solution), Extended Arms

Horizon LeafMan

A mid-size drone, with four wheels and multiple attachments, the LeafMan is an all-in-one yard and garden maintenance drone. Its functions commonly include lawn-mowing, edging, leaf collection, and weed identification and eradication. It comes with standard mulching capabilities and has been touted as the "eco-friendly" yard drone.

Similar Models: Telestrian GreenThumb

Standard Upgrades: Holding Tanks (5 liters), Autosofts (Gardening 3, Pest Control 1), Special Machinery (lawnmower, clippers, sprayer)

Aztechnology SafeNSound

A wheeled home safety drone, the SafeNSound has the capability to sense fires, smoke, carbon monoxide, and other hazards, alert the Central Home Node and local fire or paramedic services, and provide first-response fire suppression. Standard software also includes the ability to analyze residents and summon paramedic assistance in case of a medical emergency.

Similar Models: Horizon Firefighter, Honda HomeSec

Standard Upgrades: Autosofts (Firefighting 2, First Aid 2), Special Machinery (air quality test kit, smoke/fire detection, biomonitors), Holding Tanks (10 liters, fire suppression)

GM Mr. Fix-It 2071

The classic mechanic's assistant has a new face for 2072, with advanced plug & play tool interfaces and a higher level autosoft interface. The industrial line has been a mainstay in mechanic shops for years, while the premiere of a home-hobbyist version last year has had phenomenal success. Standard tool kits include auto shop, plumbing, HVAC, electrical, and carpentry. An entire line of specialty tool kits is available for home-hobbyists.

Similar Models: Evo MetaAssistant, Horizon HandyMan

Standard Upgrades: Autosofts (Any Build/Repair, Rating 3), Tool Kit, Mechanical Arms (Strength 4)

Drone	Size	Accel	Speed	Device Rating	Pilot	Body	Arm	Sens	Avail	Cost
BusyBuddy	Small	5/15	15	2	1	2	0	2	2	2,000¥
Horizon LeafMan	Medium	3/10	10	3	3	2	1	3	2	4,000¥
Aztechnology SafeNSound	Small	5/20	40	3	2	2	1	3	2	3,500¥
GM Mr. Fix-It 2071	Medium	5/15	15	3	3	3	2	3	4	6,000¥

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ADVANCED LIFESTYLE SYSTEM

The Advanced Lifestyle rules break down lifestyles into five separate categories that replace the single lifestyle system presented in *Shadowrun, Fourth Edition*. These categories are Comforts, Entertainment, Necessities, Neighborhood, and Security. Players pick the value for each category and then add up their associated Lifestyle Points (LP) to determine their monthly lifestyle costs (see Lifestyle Point/Cost Table, at right). There are several values where the Lifestyle Point system lines up exactly with the basic lifestyle costs presented in *SR4.* This is deliberate. If a player does not want the extra detail involved in picking each category, but the gamemaster wishes to use this expanded system, the player can instead simply choose one of *SR4*'s basic lifestyle categories. In that instance, each category would be at the level picked. For example, a player could simply choose a Middle lifestyle for her character, and she would then have each of the five categories at a Middle level and would pay a flat 5,000¥ a month.

Note that lifestyles can be customized even further with the Lifestyle qualities.

Mark is creating a lifestyle for his character, Mitzy the Hacker. He decides Mitzy lives in the Crimson Crush ork gang-controlled area of Redmond (Low Neighborhood: 2 LP), in a larger loft apartment—she needs room for her electronics shop—with dependable access to electricity and the wireless Matrix through illegal taps maintained by the gang (Middle Necessities: 3 LP). Since Mitzy wants her gear and electronics shop to be safe, she depends on her ganger contacts for security, plus she has some good security systems in her apartment (Middle Security: 3 LP). She likes her simsense and her VR games and has to feed her mild simsense addiction (Middle Entertainment: 3 LP). Since she spends most her time building gear, playing VR games, and immersed in simsense, she doesn't care about furniture, art, or fancy household drones (Squatter Comfort: 1 LP). Mark totals the costs: 2+3+3+3+1=12. Referring to the costs table, Mitzy's lifestyle will cost 3,200¥ per month. This reflects the total nuyen paid to the gang, her landlord, grocery services, AR/VR subscriptions, and simsense.

Limitations

Some categories and selected values have limitations on how they can be combined, to avoid unbelievable combinations (such as Luxury Entertainment with Street Necessities—if you're living on the street, chances are you aren't going to have anywhere to put your elaborate full-VR immersion simsense studio). Gamemasters can enforce or ignore these limitations, depending on how they best work within their campaigns. While most luxury neighborhoods aren't likely to allow someone to reside there with Necessities: Street, a character may very well have a great backstory that provides the exception to the rule. In the end, gamemasters have final say over what will work in their campaigns.

LIFESTYLE POINT/COST TABLE

Points	Cost	SR4 Equivalent
0	0¥	Street
1	100¥	
2	200¥	
3	300¥	
4	400¥	
5	500¥	Squatter
6	800¥	
7	1,100¥	
8	1,400¥	
9	1,700¥	
10	2,000¥	Low
11	2,600¥	
12	3,200¥	
13	3,800¥	
14	4,400¥	
15	5,000¥	Middle
16	6,000¥	
17	7,000¥	
18	8,000¥	
19	9,000¥	
20	10,000¥	High
21	15,000¥	
22	20,000¥	
23	30,000¥	
24	40,000¥	
25	50,000¥	
26	60,000¥	
27	70,000¥	
28	80,000¥	
29	90,000¥	
30	100,000¥	Luxury
31+	Add 25,000¥ per additional level	

SPOOFING ADVANCED LIFESTYLE CATEGORIES

Some characters may choose to utilize the Lifestyle Spoofing rules presented in *Unwired* (see *Spoofing Life,* p. 99, *Unwired*). To utilize this with the Advanced Lifestyle rules, the character must spoof each category separately. The thresholds for each category remain the same as presented in *Unwired*. However, the intervals are significantly reduced for each category. While the interval to spoof an entire lifestyle, based on the basic lifestyle rules, is one day, the interval to spoof any category of the Advanced Lifestyle rules is six hours. Any glitches on any of the tests result in a Negative Lifestyle quality (to be chosen by the gamemaster). The results are good for one month of living expenses. While the lifestyle may be increased at any time during the month, Negative qualities remain in effect for the duration of the month.

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LIFESTYLE CATEGORIES

The following section introduces the five advanced Lifestyle Categories: Comforts Entertainment, Necessities, Neighborhood, and Security.

COMFORTS

This section is all about making your house a home. This includes the quality and quantity of furnishings, interior design, artwork, and household conveniences, such as drones, self-cleaning windows, work-from-home networks, and other things to make your life easier. Comforts represent things that other people desire, and if you have a level of Comforts that is higher than your Security or Neighborhood, thieves, burglers, and other undesirables may consider your home a free-for-all shopping opportunity. You know the saying about a fool and his gold...

Street (0 LP)

Comfort?

Examples: Hopefully, you have a coat, shoes, and a hat. Gang graffiti art decorates your alley.

Squatter (1 LP)

You own a few pieces of furniture, but if anyone comes over, they'll probably have to sit on the floor. What you do have is scavenged, barely functional, and outdated.

Examples: There's a bare mattress on the floor, crates for a table, and a stolen folding chair.

Low (2 LP)

You own some cheap furniture, purchased second hand or at a mass-market retailer. Still, your chairs probably match, and you have somewhere to sit while enjoying your AR. You might have a single household drone to help with chores; sure, it's prone to glitches, but at least you don't have to vacuum. Your walls are decorated with cheap AR paints.

Examples: You have a complete bed, matching table and chairs, and a sofa. You have a limited subscription to a virtual wall space program to decorate the apartment.

Middle (3 LP)

Your home has enough comfortable furniture to fill it. It's probably mass-produced, but it won't break when someone sits on it. You probably have three or more household drones and a multi-function soy processing unit. Your walls are fully covered with AR paint or wallpaper. You may even have a collection of knick-knacks. Your CHN is secure enough that you could telecommute. This is the lifestyle of typical wageslaves.

Examples: You have a full bedroom set, a matching living room set, and a full subscription to a virtual wallspace program with virtual weather and virtual windows. You have three or four useful drones, such as the BusyBuddy, including drone or virtual pets.

High (4 LP)

You have all the furniture and accessories you want, including the matching curtains. Your furniture is higher end or antique, and well-made. You have real art in your home, plus as much virtual art and décor as you want. Your household drones are efficient and well-maintained. In addition, you might have a metahuman housekeeper.

Examples: Your furniture is made of real wood, and it might be heirloom antiques. You eat on real china plates and drink from crystal wine glasses. Work around the house is done by a Renraku Manservant drone or a live housekeeper.

Luxury (6 LP)

You have priceless antiques and original art by famous artists in your home. Your furniture is custom designed by well-known designers, and your interior décor looks like it belongs in the center feature of a home and garden trid show. You have a full staff.

Examples: The wall paneling is made from precious hardwoods, and the faucets are gold-plated. There's a Picasso on the wall, a library of rare manuscripts and first editions, and a domestic staff of 4–5.

ENTERTAINMENT

This section details how much fun your life is. You get what you pay for, so characters who want to enjoy themselves should invest in this category. This includes both in-home entertainment and life out on the town. Although much of the personal entertainment in the 2070s is accessed via a personal commlink, the capabilities of your home restrict the level of external entertainment equipment you can install, as well as your access to the wireless Matrix, so Entertainment is limited by your Necessities (not to mention that if you're not dressed right, you certainly won't get into those exclusive clubs). As a result, you cannot choose an Entertainment rating more than one level higher than your Necessities. For example, if you pick Low Necessities, you can have Entertainment at the Middle rating or lower. In addition, while the purchase of a commlink is *not* included in Entertainment, the monthly subscription to a (legal) Matrix Service Provider (MSP) and various subscription services is.

Street (0 LP)

Entertainment is whatever amuses you, is accessible, and free.

Examples: You watch devil rats fight and read SPAM.

Squatter (1 LP)

You have a meager, inconsistent budget for entertainment, which can be hampered by the level of Necessities or Neighborhood.

Examples: You go out for occasional drinks at a local dive or attend a dogfight. You watch the occasional pirated trid or cheap AR program on your 'link.

Low (2 LP)

You have a budget to cover some basics and enough to pay for a monthly subscription or two, all of it commercial-laden or low quality. You also can afford a few date nights and basic personal care.

Examples: You have a subscription to a few trid shows, music, or casual AR gaming sites with a vanilla avatar. Date night consists of a show at the local simsense theatre and dinner at the soy-noodle stand. You hang out at the local hole-in-the-wall club & bar with synthahol and recorded music. You make a monthly visit to the barbershop or low-end salon.

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Middle (3 LP)

Your home is well equipped, and you can afford subscriptions to multiple entertainment sites. Date nights are more frequent, and you can go to the occasional large event. At this level, you can keep up pampering treatments and can budget for a modest vacation annually.

Examples: You have an assortment of shows to watch at home, either on the trid or in AR. You eat out regularly at a popular chain restaurant and have season tickets to a sporting event or occasional tickets to a rock concert (nose-bleed seats). People know your name at a neighborhood bar or club. You can take a five day cruise ship vacation or spend a week camping in the NAN territories. You can afford occasional minor cosmetic surgery (tummy tuck, nose-job).

High (4 LP)

You have state-of-the-art entertainment technology in your home, and you have access to commercial-free or exclusive on-line entertainment. You don't have to worry about budgeting for date night and can have a few standing reservations to exclusive restaurants or clubs. Your entertainment access and tech is enough to make your friends envious and impress your dates. Vacations last longer or occur more frequently.

Examples: You have access to Underworld 93 in Seattle. You always get front row seats at a concert or a box at your favorite sporting arena. You take a ten day cruise to someplace warm in the winter or weekend hops to ski resorts at a whim. You get a little gene therapy now and again.

Luxury (6 LP)

Life exists to entertain you. If you want it, you can have it.

Examples: Top artists grace private parties at your home, you tour the set of your favorite tridshow whenever you like, and you play customized VR games made just for you and your friends. You have a regular table on the bottom floor of Dante's (yes, in Hong Kong, London, and Seattle). You can afford exclusive treatments at Evo's Red Star Clinic. You take a vacation on Evo's Shibanokuji Freefall Resort, just to get away from it all.

THE NECESSITIES

The necessities cover those aspects of life every metahuman needs to survive, namely food, water, clothing, and shelter. The necessities also cover the basics of sprawl life, such as access to a wireless system, electricity, waste disposal, and other modern sprawl essentials.

Street (0 LP)

Hey, devil rat is free! At the street level, you scavenge garbage or hunt rats for food, you drink water from polluted puddles or streams, and you steal your clothing from other homeless people. Your shelter is a spot under a bridge, a doorway, or a dumpster. You might use public restrooms, but most neighborhoods with those amenities won't let you in with the way you smell... You generally go cold and hungry.

Examples: You live under an overpass, eat a dead rat, and wear stolen clothes—what more could anyone want?

Squatter (1 LP)

You have a roof and three or four walls to keep you dry and keep the elements out. There's enough room for you to have a visitor, but if they want to spend the night, it'll be very cozy. You have limited power, light, and heat, either heavily rationed or with enough fuel to run portable sources a few hours a day. You might not suffer from malnutrition, but you certainly aren't the picture of health. Wireless coverage is spotty, at best.

Examples: You live in an abandoned building, a homeless shelter, a shantytown hut, or a coffin motel. You have enough food to eat at least one solid meal a day, but it's unprocessed, unflavored soy, and you drink rainwater or second-hand bottled water with it. You wear clothing from charity bins or the Salvation Army. You might have an army surplus sleeping bag and a flashlight.

Low (2 LP)

Your home has all four walls, a mostly watertight roof, and you might even have a balcony (or at least a large window). There's room for you and a roommate. You have water and electricity for your place, although they might come from an illegal tap or be subject to rationing, so a backup generator and bottled water are a good idea. Wireless coverage is available but at a low signal rating. You don't go hungry, but there isn't much variety. Your in-home SPU is cheap but functional.

Examples: You live in a small studio or one bedroom apartment in a large block apartment building, a room in a communal house, or a dormitory. There's a garage or lot to park your car. You eat soy nutria-bars or universal patties with flavor packets, you wear clothes from a second hand store or the sales rack at Kong Wal-Mart, and you do your laundry at a coin-op facility.

Middle (3 LP)

Your home is comfortable and cozy. You have stable utilities, although the occasional peak-usage brownout still occurs. Your home has room for a small family, with perhaps an extra guest room.

Examples: You have a 90–100 square meter home with a small yard or an apartment with patio/porch. It comes with a designated parking space in an underground garage or a garage attached to the home. Soy is prepared on a multi-function soy processor and is almost indistinguishable from the real thing, and you can occasionally splurge on real food like coffee on Sundays. You can afford bottled water, you have centrally controlled appliances that work, such as a laundry machine and dishwasher, and you have mid-priced new clothing, or items you bought on sale from Mortimer of London or Vashon Island.

High (4 LP)

Your home is beyond cozy, with enough space for a few guests or entertaining visitors at home. All your basic needs have been met, and you are working on indulgences. Only exceptional situations interrupt your utilities.

Examples: You have a 300 square meter condo or apartment, or a 200 square meter single family home with a large yard and nice garden or magical lodge. You have at least two private parking spaces in a secured underground facility or a two-car garage. You eat real food prepared by drones or metahuman staff and indulge in high-priced real chocolate and milk. Your appliances have all the bells and whistles. You wear current trendy styles of clothing and jewelry or tailored Berwick suits and a few Zoé business suits.

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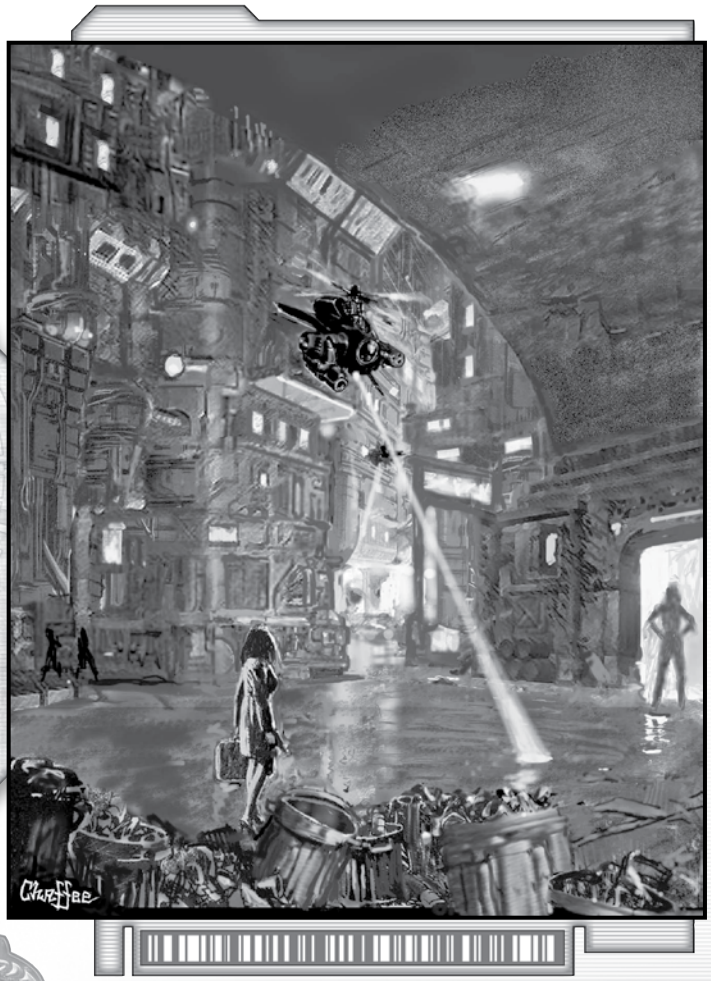
Luxury (6 LP)

You have more room than you know what to do with, and your comforts rival those of royalty. Only your imagination and the time to get the ingredients limits your cuisine.

Examples: You live in a 750 square meter villa, a mansion with extensive grounds, or a multi-story penthouse. Your appliances are kept up to date or bleeding edge, you eat quail eggs and peacock tongue for breakfast, and you only drink wine that has aged for more than 50 years, all prepared and served by a small domestic army of servants. The water on tap is from melting glacial ice you ship in. You shop the fashion shows in Paris and have a private account at Zoé.

NEIGHBORHOOD

Real estate wisdom through the ages has held that the utmost value is in *location, location, location.* This is even more true in the sprawls of 2070. From the dangerous barrens to the luxury corporate enclaves, where a character lives is a primary concern. In game terms, Neighborhood is measured by the security level of the area. Once a player determines the security level of their Neighborhood, they can then refer to location books (such as *Runner Havens, Corporate Enclaves,* or *Feral Cities*) to pick appropriate neighborhoods.



Street – Z-zones/Barrens (0 LP)

Your neighborhood isn't much of a neighborhood at all. These are the worst areas possible on Earth, the most dangerous of barrens, the vicious slums of a feral city, the lawless spread of destroyed and uninhabitable tenements or urban blight. Your neighbors are the homeless and desperate, society's outcasts, such as chipheads, ghouls, and numerous vermin (metahuman or otherwise). There is no security here, beyond what you can provide with your own strength. It's not all gloom, however—at least you won't be hassled by police, since even the cops know better than to venture into these areas.

Limitations: All other categories are limited to Street level.

Examples: Ajegunle Slums (Lagos), Worst areas of Kowloon Walled City (Hong Kong), Chicago Downtown/The Zone (UCAS), Worst areas of Redmond Barrens (Seattle)

Street (0 LP)

The streets—or the sewers, almost uninhabitable condemned buildings, rusted-out car frames, or the ever popular underside of a bridge—are a miserable, dangerous place to live. The down and out you call neighbors consist of other homeless, drug addicts, criminals, transients, and street gangs. There is little to no police presence. For the most part, the gangs provide security to those who can afford it (and prey on the rest).

Limitations: You cannot choose higher than Low for Comforts.

Examples: San Bernardino (LA), Most of Redmond Barrens (Seattle), Downtown Chi-Town (Chicago)

Squatter (1 LP)

A step up from the lawless chaos of the streets, this neighborhood has some (mostly) inhabitable buildings, some shops or markets (which probably deal in barter or certified cred only), and a neighborhood watch or larger gang to provide security. Of course, anyone walking the streets had better be armed, but chances are you won't be killed just for your shoes. Police presence is minimal, although they will enter the area (heavily armed, of course) if there are major problems, such as high-profile serial killers. Residents tend to live crammed together in squatted buildings, but at least they have a roof and three or four walls. Garbage is collected by scavengers, or it accumulates in the alleys.

Limitations: You cannot choose higher than Middle for Comforts.

Examples: Most of Puyallup Barrens, parts of Everett (Seattle), Pomona (LA), parts of Kowloon Walled City (Hong Kong)

Low (2 LP)

The Low lifestyle neighborhood actually has some community to it. Most people live in apartments or multi-family housing and even pay rent. This is a typical part of the sprawl, with dilapidated buildings, petty crime, and little maintenance or public services. There is power and water available, although the utility companies probably ration it. The residents are low-paid wage slaves, factory workers, day laborers, and the skillwired workforce. The neighborhood may have a contract with a police corp, or it may pay a gang or criminal syndicate for security (response times of 10 - 20 minutes). Either way, you can walk the streets during the day without being mugged, and a sturdy lock will keep your things safe.

Examples: The Verge (Seattle), San Fernando Valley (LA), Snohomish (Seattle)

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Middle (3 LP)

The Middle lifestyle neighborhood is a pleasant, well-kept community. It may be a mix of high-density housing and shops, or it could be a suburban neighborhood. The public utilities, such as electricity and water, are reliable, the wireless coverage is up 24/7, and the neighborhood has a standing contract with a reputable police corporation or well-respected criminal syndicate (response times of less than five minutes). Drones patrol the streets, and you can go out at night without body armor. There are probably several popular chain restaurants to choose from, the grocery delivery services are well-stocked, and there might even be a park or green space. Your neighbors are middle management, white-collar wage slaves, entrepreneurs, and successful criminals. Neighborhood watches are common, and street crime is not. On the down side, most Middle neighborhoods will require all metahumans to broadcast a SIN and ID at all times.

Examples: Fort Lewis (Seattle), Tarislar (Seattle), Mid-Levels (Hong Kong), Orange County (LA)

High (4 LP)

Home to executives, doctors, mafia accountants, and other well-to-do, a High neighborhood is a community of nicer condos in a prosperous downtown area or a gated suburban community with larger homes and pretty gardens. Police drones patrol the streets, scanning everyone for their ID and SINs, as well as contraband, and metahuman officers are quick to respond to any issues (response times of less than three minutes). Neighborhood watches will report anyone who doesn't fit in with the right "look" to the police. The neighborhood has a park or rooftop gardens, nicer restaurants that are members-only, and community features, such as swimming pools or tennis courts, are maintained by a homeowners association. Corporate enclaves are generally in the High category.

Limitations: You cannot choose less than Middle for Security or Necessities.

Examples: Pasadena (LA), Tengoku Enclave (Tokyo), Elven District (Seattle)

Luxury (6 LP)

Luxury neighborhoods are where the truly rich spend their days and nights. Round the clock security, with drones, magical support, and polite and good-looking metahuman officers are the norm. The communities are gated and exclusive—security keeps out everyone except residents and their guests. Response time for police, fire, and medical emergencies is less than one minute, and they will come fully prepared for any problems. There are no spam zones. Estates are park-like, and exclusive country clubs and golf courses are the gathering place of choice. Restaurants are member-only. This is the lap of luxury.

Limitations: You cannot choose less than High for Security or Necessities.

Examples: Bellevue (Seattle), Beverly Hills (LA), Victoria Island (Lagos)

Luxury–AAA (7 LP)

If living with the rich and famous just isn't quite enough, step into the ultimate luxury lifestyle. Sprawling mansions, staffed with dozens, are the norm. Residents have their own highly trained and equipped security, although the premier security forces of Knight Errant or Lone Star stand ready to respond, if needed. The neighborhood has stunningly beautiful bioengineered plants; the native wildlife is restricted to beautiful songbirds and the occasional cute squirrel. The only bugs are butterflies. Even the metahumans are more beautiful here. It's like something out of a sim...

Limitations: You cannot choose less than High for any other category.

Examples: The Peak (Hong Kong), Lowfyr's estate in Tir Tairngire

SECURITY

Security is the category that describes what personal security you have on your residence. The details depend on what the player and gamemaster decide is appropriate, from manual locks to payments to the neighborhood street gang. Players may have access to well-programmed drones or may benefit from the security on the Yakuza gambling den next door. The guidelines presented below provide quick and easy suggestions for a gamemaster to use in determining security; gamemasters and players can flesh out the specific details of the security features to best suit their games.

The ratings depict how easy—or difficult—it is to get access to your residence and your stuff. In game terms, the rating of the security level is the threshold for any tests against your security. If you have Squatter level Security (Device Rating 1), then your rusted footlocker with a manual padlock has a threshold of 1 for all Locksmith Tests. On the other hand, if you had a Middle level Security (Device Rating 3), the rating applies to not only the locks on the door (Maglock Rating 3 has a threshold to Hardware Tests of 6, see *Security Systems,* p. 255, *SR4*), but also other physical security devices. Metahuman security is rated by their Professional Rating (see *Non-Player Characters*, p. 272, *SR4*). For sample NPC security guards in a variety of Professional Ratings, see *Sample Grunts*, p. 274, *SR4*.

Street (0 LP)

Security is what you can provide with your own fists. If you stop looking at your stuff, it's likely to disappear.

Device Rating: 0

Professional Rating: 0

Examples: Carry a gun. Don't sleep.

Squatter (1 LP)

You have somewhere to put your stuff, even if it's just a locked box inside your tiny hovel or a DIY storage unit. It's out of sight, but even common thieves will have little trouble getting access.

Device Rating: 1

Professional Rating: 0

Examples: Locker at bus station, mechanical locks, scavenged safe.

Low (2 LP)

You have decent locks, probably electric, which deter crimes of opportunity. Your building is secured by a contract security guard or an agreement with a low-level street gang. If you lock your doors, you can sleep (relatively) safely at night.

Device Rating: 2

Professional Rating: 1

Examples: Maglock on door, screamer alarm on windows, Barking Dog™ drone, typical security guard.

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Middle (3 LP)

Your apartment building's security keeps out unwanted visitors and casual thieves. Determined thieves will have to work to get access to your place. Locks and in-home security are above average. Your neighbors are likely to notice any suspicious characters or loud noises and call security. Smoke detectors and fire suppression systems are standard in all apartments and homes at this level. Your Matrix system has an average firewall and will at least monitor itself for intrusions. There may be a Panicbutton in the home connected to contracted police or a silent alarm system that contacts building security. Either way, you can feel safe and secure in your home.

Device Rating: 3

Professional Rating: 3

Examples: Biometric maglock with anti-tamper technology on all the doors; embedded wireless alarm, smoke, and fire detection system on all windows and doors; trained security guards patrol the building 24/7; main building doors have functional maglocks; security drones or even a big, hairy dog.

High (4 LP)

Your home has excellent security, which deters all but the most determined and well-equipped thieves. You have a private security contract with a reputable firm, and either drones or trained metahumans patrol your property at all times. Your windows and doors have superior locks. Your Matrix system is well protected, too, with IC running at all times. Your neighbors are likely to call police if they notice anything suspicious, and the neighbors' security teams will likely come as backup for your own if there are any problems. You enjoy considerable safety and privacy in your home.

Device Rating: 4

Professional Rating: 4

Examples: Metahuman security team, spirit (Rating 4) patrol, electrified fence, security cameras, armed patrol drones, wards on one room, remote spider to monitor the Matrix.

Luxury (6 LP)

You are as safe as anyone in the Sixth World can be. It would take a dedicated team of runners to infiltrate your property. In fact, your security is so good it gets in your way sometimes, but hey, better your own security than the riffraff, right?

Device Rating: 6

Professional Rating: 5–6

Examples: Executive protection team (up to 6 members), multiple rating 6 guard spirits, dual-natured patrol critters, on-site mage (initiated), cutting edge automated gun systems, on-site spider, bio-drones, passkey node access.

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

A variety of other considerations may come up when dealing with lifestyles. A few of the more common ones follow. In other circumstances, the gamemaster and players can come up with solutions that best fit their game.

HOTELS

Some runners like to live footloose and fancy-free, and the Hotel lifestyle might be just what they're looking for. The table shows the typical cost and aspects of living in a few sample hotels. Hotels can be found in any part of town (within reason), and different neighborhoods can change the average price. To calculate a daily rate for a specific hotel, calculate the lifestyle cost and divide by thirty.

Coffin Hotel: The pricing and amenities are fixed. There's one long room with a plastic futon mattress as the floor, allowing for simple automated cleaning. Spotty Matrix access allows customers to access AR. There's maglock security for the door, communal bathrooms, and vending machines for clean, unisex clothes.

Hostel: These have the same basic amenities as a coffin hotel, but with communal rooms with bunk beds fitting four to twelve complete strangers in a room.

Motel: Here, you have a private bedroom with a single to king-sized bed and a private bathroom. There will be an on-site laundromat, vending machines, and nearby restaurants that deliver. Security includes maglocks on the door, security guards, and standard devices. Depending on the location, the room price might include a light continental breakfast. Matrix access is available at most hours.

Hotel: A standard room would be a mini-suite, with one bedroom and a small living area. There will be an on-site, high-class restaurant and bar, with room service available at an extra charge. Cleaning and concierge services are available. The price includes an all you can eat breakfast at the hotel restaurant. The business class option would also include complimentary happy hour in the lounge. Security consists of private security guards, security cameras in public areas, maglocks on all doors and elevators, drones, and an on-call magician/hacker team.

SAMPLE HOTEL RATINGS

Hotel	Security	Comforts	Necessities	Neighborhood	LP*
The Cube, Tokyo (Coffin)	Low	Squatter	Squatter	Squatter	5
Green Tortoise, Seattle (Hostel)	Squatter	Squatter	Low	Squatter	5
Verda Motor Inn, LA (Motel)	Middle	Low	Middle	Middle	11
Federal Palace Hotel, Lagos (Hotel)	High	High	High	High	16
Peninsula Hotel, HK (Luxury Suite)	Luxury	Luxury	Luxury	Luxury	24

*These values are samples and may change depending on where the hotel is located, its management, and any qualities the gamemaster decides to attribute to the place. Note, the point value doesn't include Entertainment; characters choosing to live full-time in a hotel will need to add Entertainment into their lifestyle.

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Suites: This consists of one bedroom and a bathroom connected to a central living room and possibly a kitchen nook and dining area. Luxury suites have luxury comforts and more than one bedroom or bathroom than a normal suite. Security is top-notch, including well-armed (and discrete) security guards, secure elevator access, an on-site spider, an on-site magician or patrolling spirits (possibly both), and wifi inhibiting wallpaper and wards around each room.

BUYING A PERMANENT LIFESTYLE

Buying a permanent lifestyle is detailed on p. 262 of *Shadowrun, Fourth Edition:* it costs 100 times the monthly cost.

However, it is possible to purchase only a portion of the total lifestyle. For example, you may wish to buy the Necessities category to reflect your purchase of a home. To figure out your price, add up the LP for the categories you wish to purchase. Then, divide those LP by your total Lifestyle Point cost. Finally, multiply that figure by your base monthly lifestyle payment, and then by 100.

Kat o'Nine Tales likes her nightlife. She decides to purchase that category permanently, to reflect her permanent membership in all the hottest West Coast clubs. Her High lifestyle Entertainment cost is 4 LP. Her overall lifestyle is 20 LP (High), or 10,000¥. To buy the category, Kat needs to spend (4 ÷ 20) x 10,000¥ x 100 = 200,000¥.

After a permanent lifestyle category purchase, your remaining monthly cost is based only on the point values of the categories you did not buy.

The following month, Kat only needs to spend 20 LP – 4 LP = 16 LP, or 6,000¥ to pay for her high lifestyle.

A Lifestyle that has been permanently purchased cannot be upgraded; in order to change some (or all) aspects of the Lifestyle, you must first sell it, then purchase the new one (see *Buying A Lifestyle,* p. 262, *SR4*).

AVAILABILITY

Regular (legal) lifestyles have standard Availability, which means they are always available. In the 2070s, online rental postings, easy electronic applications, instantaneous ID and credit checks, and (most importantly) instantaneous cred transfers means the actual business of moving can be taken care of in a matter of hours. Of course, finding the right place can take significantly longer. However, adding qualities to a legal lifestyle automatically makes it subject to the Availability rules presented here.

Non-legal lifestyles (such as safe houses) or lifestyles purchased without a SIN have an Availability equal to their total LP value ÷ 2 (round up). The final cost of the lifestyle represents the Availability cost for purposes of determining the interval (*Availability Interval,* p. 303, *SR4*). For urgent needs (such as a safe house the characters need *now*), the PCs or their fixer can roll a Charisma + Negotiation Test, with the hits determining what level of place they can find at that particular moment. Gamemasters can balance PC requests for Postive qualities with appropriate (or devious) Negative qualities, to bring the Availability down to the number of hits scored.

Qualities affect the Availability of a lifestyle. For every 1 point Positive quality, increase the Availability threshold by one. Conversely, for every 1 point Negative quality, decrease the Availability threshold by one.

Pistons is looking for a safe house for her team and herself after a botched run in Seattle, and they need it NOW. They want at least a Low lifestyle for the place (10 LP). Pistons is particular, so she asks her fixer to make sure it has an Escape Tunnel (+3), is Inconspicuous (+2), and is Security Conscious (+2), for a total of +7. Her fixer's threshold for finding the perfect place is (10 ÷ 2 = 5) + 7, or 12. Based on the cost (10 LP + 7 LP = 17 LP, or 7,000¥), the normal interval would be 2 days. The fixer comes up with 5 hits on his roll. Since Pistons needs that safe house now, he offers her a plain vanilla Low lifestyle flop house (Availability 5), or he also knows of one that fits her requirements, but it comes with a few "minor problems" (7 LP worth of Negative qualities, to bring the total availability down to 5). Or, she can wait a few days, he's sure something will come up... At 233¥ a day (7,000¥ ÷ 30), Piston decides to take the safe house with the "minor problems"... hmmm, wonder what she's gotten herself into?

MAINTAINING MULTIPLE LIFESTYLES

At some point in their career, every shadowrunner needs a place to lay low. Having a safe house available (or two or three) can be invaluable when you're cooling off after that hot Aztech data steal. Or, perhaps your runner maintains two lives, partying socialite by day, covert-ops specialist by night. You might have a family to support that knows nothing of your illicit activities. Whatever your reasons, figuring out the costs is fairly simple. Calculate the point value of each lifestyle separately, determine each lifestyle's nuyen cost per the Lifestyle Point/Cost Table, p. 153, and then add together the separate nuyen costs. (Add the nuyen costs, not the points, to determine the total cost of the lifestyle).

Ma'fan maintains a safe house (11 LP total) in addition to her high-class penthouse suite (24 LP total). Her total lifestyle costs for both lifestyles are 2,600¥ + 40,000¥ = 42,600¥.

ROOMMATES

When two or more people share a home, they can share the lifestyle costs, although having extra people increases the total lifestyle costs. Each additional person beyond the first adds 10% to the nuyen cost of the lifestyle. It's up to the roommates to decide how to divide the costs amongst themselves.

Player characters may also choose to live with one or more NPCs. In that case, the gamemaster must decide what portion of the base costs the NPC will shoulder. (If gamemasters find players abuse this option just to save money, they can feel free to assign various lifestyle qualities to help keep game balance—and bring some humor into the game).

Player characters who are supporting dependents (by taking the dependent quality on p. 104) will normally pay all (or most) of the cost of the dependents' lifestyles (base and individual). A runner with two children, for example, would pay 120% of the normal base cost of their shared lifestyle.

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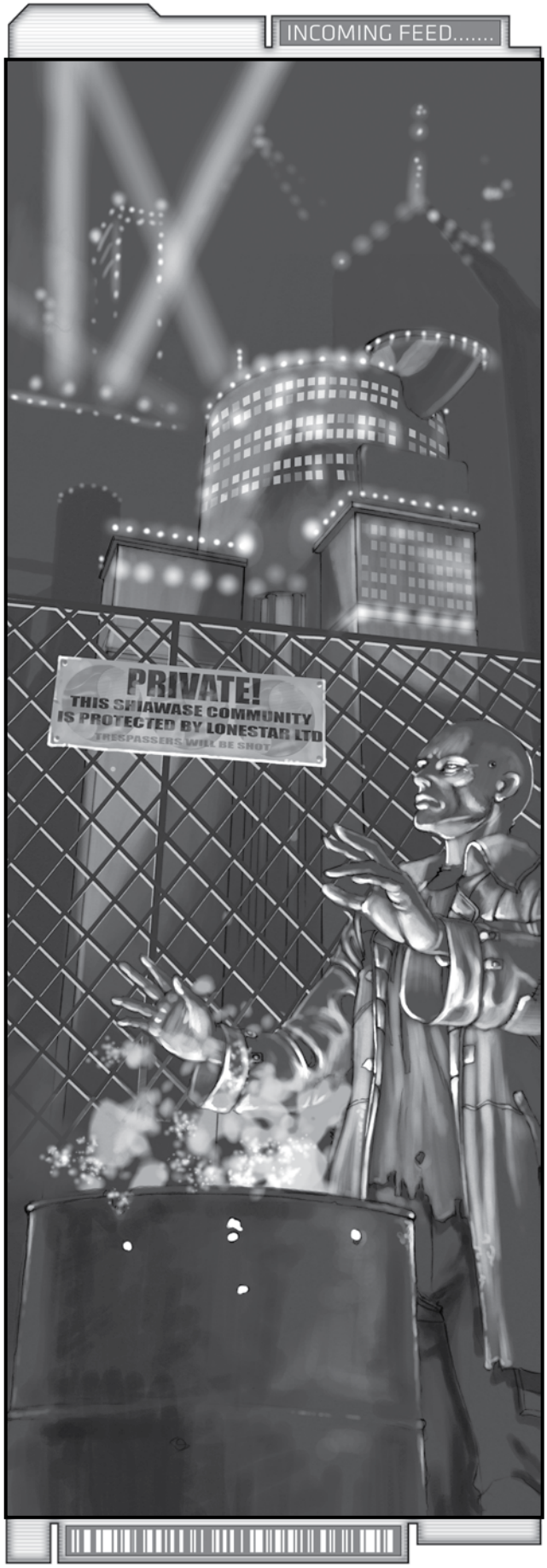

BEING SINLESS

Being SINless in the '70s severely limits a character's lifestyle. Neighborhoods at a Middle rating and above will require all metahumans to broadcast their SINs and IDs in all public places. In addition, to legally rent or buy any apartment requires a SIN, as do a myriad of other activities of daily life—such as buying groceries, riding the bus, downloading sims, and having utilities. The only way to get around this basic fact of life is to live in a neighborhood where you can pay by certified cred or barter—generally Street or Squatter neighborhoods, with the occasional small gang-controlled territory.

Because of this, having a fake SIN is a necessity to get out of the barrens and slums of the Sixth World. However, the level of your fake SIN and ID restricts your ability to access the nicer things in life. In game terms, you can only choose categories that are one point higher than the rating of your fake SIN. A runner with a Rating 2 fake SIN could only live in a Middle (3 LP) Neighborhood and could only take the other categories at a rating of 3.

A character with no SIN (real or fake) is limited to a total lifestyle cost of 7 Lifestyle Points or less, including qualities.

VEHICLES

Lifestyles totaling 20 LP or more include the cost to lease and maintain one vehicle. At 25 LP or above, the lifestyle includes the lease and maintenance of two vehicles, plus a chauffer to drive them. Purchasing a vehicle is only included when a permanent lifestyle (at or above 20 LP) is purchased. Note that the vehicles are normal groundcraft only—runners who want exotic vehicles, upgraded vehicles, or restricted vehicles or upgrades must pay for them separately.

WORKSHOP/FACILITIES

When setting up a workspace, a shop requires Middle Necessities, while a facility requires High Necessities. Note that the Necessities only cover the basic shelter, utilities, and space requirements. PCs will have to purchase equipment and tools separately.

A character may purchase separate facilities/workshops apart from their normal lifestyle.

Clockwork needs a big space to work on his vehicles. He pays to rent a warehouse, separate from his apartment, where he sets up his facility. The total costs for the warehouse are Comforts (0 LP), Entertainment (0 LP), Necessities (4 LP), Neighborhood (2 LP), Security (3 LP) = 9 LP/1,700¥ per month.

PAY UP (OR MOVE OUT)

A character who is unable to make their monthly lifestyle payment suffers a variety of ill effects. It's a matter of luck as to how long they can avoid their landlords, the collection calls, and the friendly neighborhood bill collector, Bruno.

For every month the character is unable to pay their full lifestyle, determine the difference between the number of Lifestyle Points they did pay for and the total point cost of their lifestyle (round down to the nearest point). The gamemaster should roll a number of dice equal to the Lifestyle Points unpaid x 2. Any hits are subtracted from the Lifestyle Point total, to determine the

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new lifestyle. The gamemaster chooses from which categories to subtract points and what the effects are. The character can choose to restore their lifestyle by paying their debt. However, until that debt is paid, the lower lifestyle will remain in effect (of course, if the next month, the character is unable to pay the lower amount, their lifestyle will again get reduced by the same method).

The Easy-going Landlord quality decreases the dice rolled by two, while the Trigger-Happy Landlord quality increases the dice rolled by two.

Gamemasters may choose to assign Negative qualities or remove Postive qualities to characters who regularly default on their payments.

Zach has a monthly lifestyle cost of 3,200¥ (12 LP). After a slow month, he can only come up with 2,200¥, which is 10 LP (rounding down). The difference is 2 LP. His gamemaster rolls 4 dice (2 x 2), getting one hit. That means Zach will lose 1 LP from his lifestyle. The gamemaster decides Zach's water, heat, Matrix, and grocery delivery services get shut off, reducing his Necessities from Low (2 LP) to Squatter (1 LP). Zach will have to pay 1,000¥ to get the utilities turned back on this month. If he doesn't, next month, his lifestyle cost will be 2,000¥ (10 LP). If he ever wants to get his lifestyle back to 12 LP, he'll have to pay his debt plus the 3,200¥ it normally costs.

LIFESTYLE QUALITIES

Lifestyle qualities add to the final Lifestyle Point cost of a lifestyle when determining monthly cost. They also affect Availability. To determine the effect of qualities, first calculate the total LP cost for the five lifestyle categories. Then, add the total LP cost of Positive and Negative qualities. This total is added (or subtracted) to the base Lifestyle Point cost to determine the monthly cost. Note, however, that the lifestyle remains at the level of categories chosen; the final LP tally with Positive and Negative qualities effects only the final cost, not the level of lifestyle.

Note that these lifestyle qualities are separate from the character qualities purchased during character creation. For qualities that require a periodic Test, gamemasters should generally roll once per month. Gamemasters may choose to make the Test more frequently or at particularly dramatic moments.

For qualities that require a periodic test, gamemasters should generally make one test per month. Gamemasters may choose to make the test more frequently or at particularly dramatic moments.

Turbo Bunny has a shop with living quarters (Comforts (1), Entertainment (2), Necessities (3), Neighborhood (2), Security (3), for 11 LP, or 2,600¥) with the Feng Shui Positive quality (+5) and the Pest Magnet Negative quality (–1) for +4 total LP. Her monthly cost is 11 LP + 4 LP = 15 LP, or 5,000¥. That's quite spendy for the low levels of categories she's getting, but as a tech-head, that +3 dice to her build and repair tests is worth every nuyen.

POSITIVE LIFESTYLE QUALITIES

Characters who really want to make their house a home can choose from one or more of these Positive qualities. Some qualities may have limits, as described. In addition, players and gamemasters are encouraged to come up with other qualities that best suit their game.

Aspected Domain +5

Over time, many similar residents have manipulated the forces of magic here and groomed them to become aspected in favor of a particular magic tradition. This gives an aspected background count of 2 to that tradition (see p. 118, *Street Magic*).

Astral Repellant +5

The character's house or neighborhood is in a mana ebb (*Mana Ebbs,* p. 120, *Street Magic*). Either natural or unnatural, this mana ebb fluctuates between –1 and –4 background count. This keeps paracritters and spirits away and limits any magical threats to the home. It also puts a damper on magic performed in the home.

Commercial Zone +1

You have taken up residence in a place such as a mall or stadium. Your Necessities and Comforts are dependant on what vendors you can get into and what refuse people throw away. Roll a die. If a hit is rolled, Comforts and Necessity are increased by one for a time period determined by the gamemaster. If the roll results in a glitch, Comforts and Necessities are reduced by one for a time period determined by the gamemaster. The overall lifestyle cost is limited to a maximum of 7 points.

Concerned Neighbors +2

The character's neighbors are tighter knit (or proactively paranoid) and keep an eye on each other. They will investigate unusual sounds and will either check on the character or call the police/security. Consider concerned neighbors as an additional security test. Just be sure to tell your neighbors when your weirdo friends are coming to visit.

Easy-going Landlord +1

The Landlord isn't overly concerned with late payments, noisy parties, or the occasional gunfight. See Pay Up (or Move Out), above.

Escape Tunnel +3

The healthy paranoia of the previous owner or accidental design has left the home with an entrance and exit that is invisible to those observing the house. This can be a stairwell to the sewers behind a bookshelf or basements connected to an adjacent residence.

Feng Shui +5

The house has been arranged to focus unseen positive energies and divert negative ones. These energies enhance your creative juices. Working from home provides +3 dice to Artisan and Technical skill tests.

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Free Access +1

A free access node is within range, allowing you to access it from the comforts of your home. It's unsecured or you've breached the security. You're able to surf the Matrix from this node and no one has noticed. Increase the threshold to all Trace tests against you when hacking from home by two.

Friendly Neighbors +1

The neighbors are nice enough that they always say hi, offer a soykaf, and eagerly lend a hand. They act friendly to the character and friends he introduces to them. The character can ask for simple favors from his neighbors, such as holding a package, giving a ride, or delivering a message.

Hasty Exit +2

The home is built with well-designed exits in case of an emergency. For a shadowrunner, this could include police or a ticked off Johnson. This may mean a quick-access fire exit, stairs, or a more complex express elevator or evil genius escape pod for penthouses and other luxury homes. Barring unusual circumstances, a character can exit the home in one combat turn.

Homegrown Farming +1

Part of the home has been set up with a garden to provide fresh, non-soy food (raising the food aspect of Necessities by two levels).

In Tune +5

For some reason, the wireless infrastructure around your home is especially in tune with the Resonance. Technomancers gain a +2 to all Resonance-based tests while *physically* in their home.

Inconspicuous Housing +2

This home looks like any other one in the neighborhood, or some information is wrong or missing on the Matrix, making the place hard to find. Increase the threshold to find the place by two (players must choose either physical or Matrix for this aspect).

No neighbors +1

This place can be in a remote location or a place that people have left or avoid. Regardless, there is no one to bother you—or help you. This can't be taken with any other Neighbor quality.

Perfect Roommate +2

Friendly, polite, and loves to do the dishes, this roommate is perfect. In addition, your roommate has positive qualities (gamemaster discretion) that benefit you: she might be a trained martial artist or know someone well connected, like a cousin in the mafia, a sister in Lone Star's evidence room, or a girlfriend who is a magician.

Privacy Screen +1 per level (up to 3)

Something about the home or the neighborhood makes external observation of the house difficult. Examples include loud fountains, blocking buildings or vegetation, and heavy Matrix traffic. Add +1 per level to the threshold to any Perception Test when attempting to perform surveillance on the home or residents. Choose the type of observation (Matrix, Astral, or Physical) to receive this quality.

Quiet Neighborhood +1

The home is on a quiet little street, where people feel safe enough to walk at night. Gangs are passive or apathetic to the area. Crime around here is half what is expected for the given type of neighborhood purchased.

Rad Pad +1

If you have the pimped up car and the tricked out pistols, then you gotta have a rad pad. Your house is themed to the extreme. While this adds +2 dice to any test involving Intimidation or Reputation (that involves the home), it's easy to find your house based on a description.

Resonance Well +5

You may not know it but your building's network hides a Resonance Well (p. 172, *Unwired*). Much to the surprise of the building's non-technomantic inhabitants, their nexi seems to draw all types of matrix denizens from technomancers to sprites to e-ghosts.

Security Conscious +2

The interior design of the home makes it perfect for defending against intruders. Whether by design or accident, the layout, rooms, and furniture make perfect cover and give residents (and regular visitors) an advantage in battle. Residents can always find partial cover or full cover in combat. At gamemaster discretion, the home may also provide a dice pool modifier for AR (*AR Modifiers*, p. 208, *SR4*).

Well Made +1

The home is well-insulated and well-made. The owner stays dry and comfortable, even in extreme weather events such as 100 degree or higher temperatures or severe thunderstorms.

Workplace +1

The home has an attached garage or an available large space, secure from the elements, to work in, operate a small business, or house a magical lodge. This could be a warehouse, large loft, or even a storefront. This raises the space aspect of Necessities by two levels.

NEGATIVE LIFESTYLE QUALITIES

Not every home is a paradise. Here are some sample Negative Lifestyle qualities. Players and gamemasters are encouraged to create other Negative qualities that will enhance their game.

AI in Residence –3

One day you found your central home node inhabited by an ill-tempered metasapient AI or an alien xenosapient who delights in taxing your system resources and having its way with your appliances, entertainment system, and AR displays. While your home node's performance seems to have improved, you must deal with the constant annoyances of this digital pest. If you attempt to eliminate the problem through force, the AI will simply escape and return later—intent on getting even.

Ambusher's Delight –3

Something about this home—perhaps the wide-open floor plan or a below average Matrix firewall—gives intruders the advantage in an ambush. Residents are unable to take full cover in combat,

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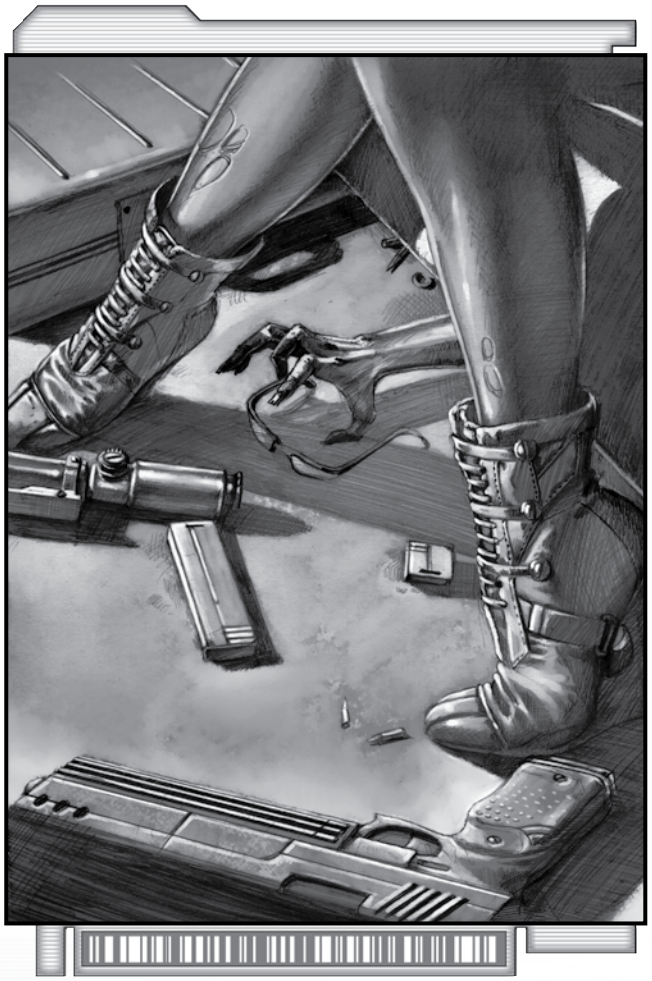

and it will take three combat turns for them to find partial cover. In addition, intruders receive an AR bonus at gamemaster's discretion.

Black Hole –2/–4

Anything small, valuable, or shiny tends to go missing in your home. Keycards, credsticks, ammo, jewelry, and matching socks disappear, although no one knows if it is the work of tiny gnomes or more mysterious forces... Any item with a concealability of –4 or more is at risk. When an item disappears, the gamemaster rolls two dice. At level 1, the items reappear in 6-(hits) days. At level 2, on a glitch, the items disappears for good.

Corporate Owned –3

The home is part of corporate-built housing such as an arcology or gated wage-slave community. While the place is nice and secure, everything is monitored. Security watches inside and out. A character who takes Corporate Owned for a residence must take the quality Day Job (p. 103).

Crash Pad –1

This home is a magnet for friends and strangers to crash. Somehow, they bypass security no matter how many times you change the locks. It's a small inconvenience on the character's comforts and necessities.

Defective CHN –1

Your Central Home Network (CHN) was improperly installed. Regardless of the brand, the home manages itself in ways not intended, such as cooking and cleaning on Greenwich Mean Time (not your own). On the other hand, while it could detect hazards or accidents in the home, it won't alert the homeowner, nor take the appropriate action. "Yes sir, the house is on fire. Is there anything else you require?"

Green Plan –1

The home is off the grid. Power (if any) comes from renewable sources on the premises (solar, wind, etc). This also means that there's no extra power for an electric car, drones, or CHN. Necessities cannot be higher than Middle.

Haunted –4

Like the trideo of the house built on a graveyard, your residence has a bad karmic history. On occasion, toxic spirits, ghosts, or creepy (and dangerous) critters visit or take up residence. Examples include an apartment in Glow City (Redmond), a glitched ritual in the basement that opened a rift; the burial ground of a serial killer's victims, or the site of a mass-murder.

Household Gremlins –1/–3

Necessities are glitchy, poorly installed, or hard for the help to manage. When the character is home, roll a die (level 1) or two dice (level 2). On a hit, Necessities (or a particular category of Necessities) drops to Squatter level for a length of time determined by the gamemaster. This quality can only be taken with Necessities above Low.

Lax Security –2

Whether through inexperience or indifference to the character's home, security is not up to what it should be. The lifestyle's Security threshold for detecting intruders (Perception and Analyze tests) is increased by one. This can be due to distracted guards, thick foliage that provides good hiding spaces, or obscured camera views around the house.

Living by Committee –2

Your Home Owners Association, community housing, or dormitory life is great and keeps costs down, except for the endless rules and regulations you must follow, and the mandatory meetings you must attend (if you miss a meeting, a new inconvenient rule will be passed just to annoy you). Chores must be done (like mowing the lawn) and rules followed, otherwise the character risks eviction.

Living with Parents –2

The character pays less for his space because he still lives at home with his parents. While at home, the character has to obey the rules of the house, such as a curfew or parental controls on the Matrix. Other possible restrictions could include not inviting some of the character's "friends" over anymore or not going out because of another appointment or event, such as relatives coming over or bowling night.

Simon Wentworth (order #1132857)

Network Bottleneck –1

Even though wireless is everywhere, your neighborhood has a bottleneck in the traffic because of a limitation of relays or a MPS resource hog from spambots or a highschool. Response is reduced by two when operating from this home.

No Forwarding Address –1

The previous tenants were deadbeats, and now you've inherited their problems. Angry creditors, stray pets, and even unwanted packages show up on your doorstop. In the Matrix, your commlink gets calls from debt-collection agencies, endless spam, and the occasional disconnect notice. This quality can apply to the Matrix, physical locations, or both.

Nosy Neighbors –2

Whether friendly and well-meaning or just plain busybodies, your neighbors are constantly poking into the comings and goings from you home and meddling in your business. Depending on the context, the neighbors may not be too happy to find out about your "alternative means of employment" (and may even report you to law enforcement). Characters with Nosy Neighbors should be particularly careful about their activities since potential antagonists will find it easy to find useful informants (possibly misguided rather than malicious) in the neighborhood. Information gathering attempts against you around your neighborhood benefit from a +3 dice pool modifier.

No Privacy –1 per level (up to 3 levels)

This home is open to the point that those on the street can see what you're wearing this morning. External observation of the home is much easier, reducing the threshold for Perception Tests against residents by the level chosen. The problem may be large windows, thin curtains, or a Spartan neighborhood. Choose the type of observation (Matrix, Astral, or Physical) to which you wish to apply this quality.

Pest Magnet –1/–3

Pests and strays are drawn to your home, and they chew holes in your favorite jacket, eat food left out, and build nests in your closets. Extermination fixes the problem for a few days, at best. At the second level, the pests include venomous or paranormal critters, such as black widow spiders or devil rats. The type of pest and infestation effects are up to the gamemaster.

Poor Condition –1

The home is vulnerable to certain weather or elemental conditions. For example, when it rains, the roof leaks or the basement floods. Maybe it's so hot in the summer or cold in the winter that the vinyl furniture molds to your butt or your goldfish bowl freezes over.

Rough Neighborhood –1

The home is in an area where people are stereotypically the criminal type. Gangs are more active, people are more aggressive, and people don't even walk in the daytime without protection. Regardless of Security, crime is double that of the given type of neighborhood purchased.

Sprite Magnet –1/-3

Your home attracts sprites that seem to enjoy inhabiting your CHN, drones, and wireless systems. Roll a die. On a hit, a sprite has inhabited a device or node in your home (such as your CHN or a drone) and refuses to allow you access for a period to be determined by the gamemaster. At the second level, the sprites do actual damage to the system (for example, frying the electrical systems or using your drones to attack metahuman inhabitants). This quality requires Necessities at a Low or higher level.

This Isn't Big Bob's Autos –1

Your commlink number is one digit off from a popular business, or your MSP provider repeatedly routes the wrong numbers to you. You constantly get calls for the other number at all hours of the day and night.

Trigger-Happy Landlord –1

Your landlord has no patience for you, your friends, and the various problems you bring home. If you're thirty minutes late on the rent, he'll be pounding on your door. Loud parties will be interrupted by the landlord (or he may just call the cops on you). See Pay Up (or Move Out) p. 161.

Unsound/Unsafe –2/–3

The house has been damaged by fire, flood, vandals, etc. and is considered condemned. Roll a die. On a hit, the house has fallen apart in some way that drops an aspect of your lifestyle (Comfort, Necessity, or Security) to Squatter level for a length of time determined by the gamemaster. This quality requires Necessities at a Low or higher level.

At Unsafe level, an occupant is injured, as well. Damage to the occupant is determined by the gamemaster.

Examples include a water pipe that leaks into the bedroom, a window falls out, mold is found, someone falls through the floor or stairs, you get food poisoning from your malfunctioning food storage unit, an outlet electrocutes you, or you discover a carbon monoxide leak.

Worse Neighbors –1

While you thought your business was bad, your neighbors have worse occupations, and they occasionally bring it home, legal or otherwise. Undesirables hang around your neighborhood, and the police make constant visits. Examples of Worse Neighbors include a BTL manufacturer, a bunraku parlor, a devil rat trainer, a Humanis Policlub meeting house, or a ghoul den.

SAMPLE LIFESTYLES

The following sample lifestyles were designed using the rules in the preceding sections.

Red Hat Organic Living Co-op

Living in a co-op means you get a variety of housemates to share chores and costs (and even introduce you to their hot sister). Of course, you have to spend time dealing with the lazy members of the household as well, and all their friends, and if you shirk your chores you may just find your stuff—and yourself—kicked to the curb.

Simon Wentworth (order #1132857)

Categories: Comforts (3 LP), Entertainment (2 LP), Necessities (3 LP), Neighborhood (3 LP), Security (2 LP)

Categories Total: 13 LP

Sample Qualities: Perfect Roommate (+2 LP), Home Grown Farming (+1 LP), Workplace (+1 LP), Living by Committee (–2 LP), No Forwarding Address (–1 LP), Black Hole (level 1) (–2 LP), Crash Pad (–1 LP).

Qualities Total: –2 LP

Total lifestyle cost: 2,600¥

9 roommates (plus you) increases the cost to 4940¥, making each person responsible for 494¥ in rent.

Safe House

This place is designed for a paranoid runner to cool off after a run gone wrong (or right, for that matter). Every additional person staying in the safe house increases the cost by 10%.

Categories: Comforts (1 LP), Entertainment (0 LP), Necessities (3 LP), Neighborhood (2 LP), Security (4 LP)

Categories Total: 10 LP

Sample Qualities, Escape Tunnel (+3 LP), Inconspicuous Housing (+2 LP), Security Conscious (+2 LP), Privacy Screen: Physical (level 3) (+3 LP), Household Gremlins (level 2) (–3 LP), Poor Condition(–1 LP)

Qualities Total: +6 LP

Total Lifestyle cost: 6,000¥

Daily Cost: 200¥

Simstar Ranch

The luxurious retreat of a famous simstar, this "rustic" home is set on acres of picturesquely rugged terrain, with stables, live horses and cattle, and a full complement of cute cowboys (and girls). The perfect place to prepare for your next sim or entertain agents and producers, it only enhances your artistic talents and charismatic appeal.

Categories: Comforts (6 LP), Entertainment (6 LP), Necessities (6 LP), Neighborhood (4 LP), Security (4 LP)

Categories Total: 26 LP

Sample Qualities, Feng Shui (+5 LP), Rad Pad (+1 LP), No Neighbors (+1 LP), No Privacy: Astral (level 1) (–1 LP), Lax Security (–2 LP).

Qualities Total: +4 LP

Total Lifestyle Cost: 100,000¥

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. . . LIFE ON THE RUN . . .

The executive assistant set down three cups of coffee. The conference room was mostly empty, just two men and one woman sitting at one end of the large faux marble high-tech conference table. Behind them, the floor-to-ceiling windows framed a stunning view of a snow-covered Mount Hood.

"Will that be all, sir?" she asked, as she placed a platter of pastries in the center of the polished table.

"Yes, Carol, thank you. If we need anything else, I'll let you know," he said, then waited until she'd left the room. "Marie-Louise, you said you had some issues with one of your departments?" he asked, after taking a sip of his coffee. Not much differentiated him from the other man; both were blond, both had the thin, youthful look of their shared elven heritage. It was his manner, and the cold look in his eyes, that conveyed a sense of *age*, an unmistakable aura of power.

The woman touched the screen in front of her, pulling up a report. "As you can see, our work on the biomorph drones is proceeding on schedule."

"Yes I noticed... Unfortunately, I've received intel that NeoNET's version will be ready for market in six months. Our adjusted street date is six months, two weeks."

"Can we trim a month off that?"

"Not at this point. Unfortunately, the growth rate of the biological hosts just can't be pushed any faster without compromising their viability. If they are compromised, it's another 3 months. NeoNET simply started their project before we did."

"Didn't we approve a significant budget expansion in order to acquire three NeoNET researchers?" the younger elf asked, scrolling through the report, skimming the details.

"Yes, Thomas, we did. Which is why, although we started almost four months after NeoNET, we're now only two weeks behind them. However, at this point, everything is dependent on the growth rate of the biological hosts. We simply can't speed up nature—at least, not more than we already are."

"Hmm," the older executive said, skimming through the dossier. "Apparently so. What are our anticipated losses if we don't reach market first?"

"Two point four billion, over the first two quarters. At that point, we anticipate secondary suppliers will enter the market and profits will be diluted—Martin has informed me that NeoNET data may have already been acquired by one competitor," Marie-Louise replied.

"Suggestions?"

"To delay NeoNET's project by four weeks?" Thomas offered. "Destroying their primary research facilities?"

The older executive raised one slender eyebrow, disapproving and dismissive. "Something more *subtle*, perhaps?"

"I'd suggest targeting their datafiles. At this point, loss of their accumulated test data would basically halt the program. We could arrange to corrupt or destroy their primaries and as many of their backups as possible. We have the known locations of their primary research facilities, as well as their offline data-backup storage sites."

"You would have to destroy the stolen data, as well, or else they could simply recover it," Thomas pointed out. Marie-Louise nodded agreement.

The older executive looked at the data again, thinking, then nodded, "Make the call."

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MARTIN STRONG-OAK (MR JOHNSON)

I was observing the bidding on an Asgard auction when Carla, my secretary, poked her head into my office. It was a quiet Sunday afternoon at the offices, May 31st, but work doesn't stop for the weekends. Not in my line of work, at least.

"Martin? Mr. Telestrian, in R&D, would like to speak with you when you have time," she said, then waited. Of course, if any of the Telestrians said *when you have time*, they really meant *immediately*.

"Of course, Carla. Tell him I'm on my way," I replied, as I walked out of my office and towards the elevators. Most executives would communicate via their secured channels over the company network, but when an someone wanted to speak to me, they did so in person. I might have an office, a secretary, and a private wash-room, and the tag on my door and my RFID badge might broadcast "Mr. Martin Strong-Oak, Project Management," (this month), but I didn't appear on any corporate directory and I certainly didn't draw a paycheck out of central HR.

That was the way I liked it.

I had plans to move out of "Project Management" though, someday soon. It was a matter of stacking the deck and being patient. As the saying went, information is power. And in my position you come by a whole lot of information.

The Director's secretary buzzed me into his office without even looking up. Unsurprisingly the office was larger and nicer than mine. *His* had leather couches and fresh flowers on teak tables, but we both had full wi-fi inhibition and a strong ward around our little domains. Mr. Telestrian was sitting behind his immaculate desk, looking simstar handsome (although, of course, I knew about his visit to the Geneva biosculpters during his Alpine ski getaway). His eyes flicked across the empty space over his desk, immersed in some AR display.

I coughed politely and opened with, "Good morning, Mr. Telestrian."

"Hello, Martin," he said. He didn't bother to ask me to sit, offer me refreshments, or make small talk. Neither of us expected it. "It's just come to my attention that a certain NeoNET researcher will be attending a conference in Seattle tomorrow. I believe Dr. Juliet Bussey would make a valuable addition to our Portland biodrone department. Especially considering our previous discussion regarding NeoNET's recent developments in the field."

"Of course, Mr. Telestrian," I replied. The director went back to his reading, I turned and left the room. Not even the secretary looked up to acknowledge me.

This was a very fortunate turn of events. Some might call it luck. I preferred call it what it was: preparation.

When I returned to my office, I asked Carla for a blank commlink. By the time she delivered it, thirty minutes later, my agent Castor had compiled a full dossier on Dr. Bussey and I had edited a need-to-know file. I'd also picked out a SIN and a set of fake credentials (Saeder-Krupp this time) from my files. I transferred the file and Castor from my own link, then set the agent to wipe the log and mock up the blank 'link with the fake data. I plugged the new link into my dedicated satellite hardline and made a call.

By midnight, I was in Seattle, sitting in a private room at the 77 Club. I had a good relationship with the manager and he pinged my 'link when my "party" arrived; they had been screened and scanned in the cloakroom and the results were attached to the message. I was ready when the group was shown into the room. This was the first time I'd met with this crew directly, although they'd done a few jobs for me through proxies. Their performance to date had been admirable and I was considering adding them to my permanent stable—so to speak. One thing going for them was their make-up, an all-elven crew with two magical assets and a strong hacker, the sort of shadowrunning team Telestrian appreciated. Although, of course, if they hadn't been successful, even being elves wouldn't save them from reprisals. So far, though, they'd done well, and were on their way to making a name for themselves for doing jobs *very* quickly.

Which was good, since the teams I'd contracted with had weeks to do their legwork and get into position for today's operations. Dr. Bussey was a target of opportunity. Not a lot of teams would be willing to jump into a same-day extraction. Of course, this team didn't need to know about the other operations I'd scheduled. Those other teams knew that there were specific timelines involved in their portion of the assignments, probably had even realized they were part of a larger run. I always expected runners to do some research, and had allowed certain bits of—carefully screened—intel to be available for them. Castor was on overwatch.

If the runs were successful, NeoNET's research would be obliterated, their top scientists for the project dead or extracted, and their work set back by months, if not years. I was confident that despite their research, none of my hired runners would realize the true extent of my ambitions today. NeoNET's biomorphs would never see daylight, leaving the field wide open for Telestrian.

The team leader for *this* team was a woman who called herself Havoc, attractive enough in a rough-around-the-edges way, with a thin face and short, spiky black hair. My files told me that she'd gotten her start as an Ancient, but branched out from the gang, although she obviously hadn't lost the attitude. Yet. She swaggered into the room, scanning me and it for possible threats. I appreciated the alertness, even if I thought her attitude could use some professionalism. Still, we make do with the tools we have. If I continued to use this team, I'd do what I could to arrange for some *lessons* to help clean up their image.

"G'd evening," I said, the linguasoft I had loaded giving me an East Coast inflection. I motioned at the table and chairs, "Please, have a seat. I'm Mr. Johnson, and I'm glad you could meet with me on such short notice."

The four elves sat, Havoc sprawling in the chair directly across from me. I adjusted my emoti-soft package to include thermal imaging, the sensors on my contacts feeding the software instant data. I had dossiers on Havoc and her crew, indicating the probability of their acceptance for this job, as well as past pay scales and performances. If anyone checked my blank commlink now contained a false ID, a small amount of cred, miscellaneous files dating back six months validating my S-K affiliation, as well as a temporary commcode number. I had several certified credsticks, each worth 5,000¥, in the inner pocket of my suit, to account for both a high and low negotiated wage. In case they refused—a circumstance I highly doubted—I had a second crew on standby for a meet later.

Pleased that I had the players I needed for this particular job, I smiled and put the ball in play.

Simon Wentworth (order #1132857)

MA'FAN (COVERT OPS SPECIALIST)

Inside her safehouse, Ma'fan sat, meditating, preparing herself for the night to come. Incense burned, a soft, smoky scent designed to clear her mind. When the clock chimed eleven, she opened her eyes.

It was time.

She shed her silk robe and put on her form-fitting body armor, a secure second skin. Over it, like urban camouflage, she slid on the Synergist high-collared shirt and slacks, the hallmark of the dedicated Shiawase corporate drone. She'd personally tailored the suit, creating pockets to hide the tools of her trade—the ultra-flat maglock sequencer, the miniaturized microradar and bug scanner, the ceramic blade nestled against the inside of her thigh, and the slender Morrisey Élan with its capsule rounds of DMSO/Narcojet.

Once dressed, she sat at her vanity, opening a new container of nanopaste. The paste was a pearly white cream, light as regular foundation. Ma'fan smoothed it over her face, paying attention to the eyes and lips. The Executive Assistant she'd planned on impersonating was Japanese, so Ma'fan needed the nanopaste to alter her distinctly Chinese features. She wired the specs she'd painstakingly cooked up from her commlink to the microdisc that was the nanopaste processor, transforming Ma'fan into Emiko Narita. Custom made contacts would imitate Emiko's retinas. Ma'fan slid on a pair of thin, skin-colored gloves—cellular glove sleeves, which would imitate the woman's palm-print. Ma'fan slid on her jacket, picked up her purse—which contained even more toys, such as her perfume spritzer with Laés and her hairbrush that concealed a variety of old-school lockpicks. The last thing was clipping the neon-blue Shiawase brand commlink to her jacket pocket and sliding on the corporate approved AR glasses. Ma'fan toggled on the 'link, checked that her "borrowed" ID was running, and smiled.

She was ready.

The cab was waiting for her, just as she'd ordered. A five minute ride dropped her off two blocks away from the Arcadia hotel. She walked the remaining distance. Peng had left the side door open as promised. Ma'fan strode down the side-corridors with purpose, into the bustling lobby, and out the front. Peng was waiting for her up front still dressed as a hotel waiter. He handed her Emiko's Shiawase RFID tag and vanished back into the hotel.

While she waited for an autocab, she brought up her AR display. The bug she'd planted two days earlier confirmed that Emiko was still in suite 413 on the fourth floor of the Arcadian, none the wiser. Ma'fan smiled at the omen. The Chinese would have known better but the Arcadias were an American-chain. Miss Narita's tryst with her boss was about to hit a rocky patch.

Twelve minutes later Ma'fan debarked from the autocab in front of Shiawase 211. She felt the rush of adrenaline as she exited the cab and approached the high-rise. The wide lobby of the building was still busy with late-working wageslaves. Ma'fan slipped through the crowd, unnoticed in her executive camouflage, just another anonymous corporate drone. The double bank of elevators were humming with activity. Ma'fan picked elevator 6, entering it along with a half dozen other people. She pushed floor 46, then stepped back. The elevator shot up, disgorging three people on floor 21, two more on 29, and then the last person on floor 34.

In the floors between 34 and 46, she patted her pocket holding her Morrissey Élan. Just in case.

The elevator slowed and paused at 46.

Her 'link relayed the automated message: *This floor is accessible to authorized personnel only. Your ID has been scanned. Please place your hand on the palm plate for verification.* The AR voice was soft and melodious. Ma'fan felt her heartbeat kick up; this would be the first test. She placed her palm on the plate, holding her breath.

The elevator doors silently opened.

She stepped out, letting the sensors in the office lobby scan her face. There were two security guards, dressed in Shiawase uniforms, just a few meters away. Her nanopaste disguise was good enough to fool them; they nodded to her, assuming her to be another E.A. putting in extra hours to impress the boss. She gave them the cold smile they expected and walked briskly through the office, nodding to the few wage slaves putting in overtime. Every detail of the floorplan layout was already committed to her enhanced memory.

The carpet was corporate-grey, thin but engineered to muffle sounds. Pre-fab cubicles were a few shades lighter grey, each containing a workstation kept ruthlessly tidy. The AR inside the office was just as bland, though the colors were bright and sunny; iconography designed for optimal meta-human efficiency. The executive's office was in the northwest corner of the floor. Ma'fan paused outside the door, as she offered an eye to the scanner. It only took Ma'fan's maglock passkey three seconds to open the door.

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The office was done in charcoal grey and pale green and had a tasteless "modern art" print on one wall. Ma'fan crossed to the ugly print and began running the micro sensor over it. Eventually, the sensor flashed in her AR. She overlaid the alarm system's pressure sensitive contacts and the router it had detected over the print in her image link. Just where she expected them to be. Whispering a mantra under her breath, Ma'fan slipped her ceramic blade under the edge of the print, behind the small router box, and with magically-enhanced delicacy cut the router's powerline. Her heart was beating, hard, but it was easier than she had though. Ma'fan quickly removed the picture, then got to work on the safe itself. The Marney '67 safe-sensor package would help her open the safe. She'd already practiced on a model of that particular safe, and her magic would speed her up.

She had, all told, put in two weeks of prep-work for this run. All for a fifteen minute window at midnight, to get into a Shiawase-Hong Kong office, and destroy data that had been stolen a few weeks back. Once the disks were melted into a puddle of goo, courtesy of the acid spray she'd hidden inside a lipstick, she closed up the safe and quickly exited the office. She stopped for a minute at "her" desk, her RFID tag allowing her to log onto the executive's subsystem. She forwarded one of the mails in the assistant's inbox to her boss, but not before attaching a hidden gift: a virus that would infect first his system then the main nexi, searching out any references to the stolen data and corrupting it, spreading over his secure links to other secure servers.

The Johnson was quite specific; the job must be completed by the stroke of midnight, Hong Kong time.

Her heart was still pumping as she walked out of the high-rise, into the humid Hong Kong night. Disguised by the bustling crowds, Ma'fan made a call from her secondary secured 'link, switching to English when the connection was made.

"The ball is in play."

CLOCKWORK (RIGGER)

"You sure you got the tech for this, greenskin?" The merc asked for the fifth time in twenty minutes.

"You hired me for drones, I got drones. Now shut the hell up before I make a little bug crawl up your ass," Clockwork replied, annoyed. He needed all his attention on getting the GMC Everglades through the densely wooded marshes without hitting anything. Two of his specially modified MCT Shinobi's were in the air, providing what surveillance they could, ready to jam the communications hubs that the Johnson had told them NeoNET had buried out here. Although what the hell NeoNET was doing with a private facility in the middle of the Balkans, Clockwork didn't know. Didn't really care, truth be told—this was the perfect opportunity to test his toys.

Clockwork knew better than to share the fact that he was using this run to field-test his Shinobi's with the runners who'd hired him. Runners got awfully worked up when they discovered they were relying on untested equipment. Though, really, all the diagnostics and in-lab tests had worked remarkably well.

The weather had turned nasty, just as predicted, sheets of black rain lit up with the occasional flash of lightning. Clockwork kept an eye on the datafeeds from the two drones—Shinobi 1 was having some trouble compensating for the crosswinds and the rain. Clockwork sent some adjusted dataspecs to the drone and was relieved to see the Shinobi resume steady flight. Just then, a burst of lightning struck a few meters ahead of them, showering sparks from a tree.

"Shit!" the merc yelped, as Clockwork threw the GMC to one side, avoiding the flying chunks of burning debris. The two remaining runners were now looking slightly green. Clockwork smiled at the irony.

"Storm provides good cover, wasn't that what you said?" The mage asked the leader, looking rather pissed-off.

Clockwork tuned them out. Fuck jamming the relay hubs—the storm should be providing enough interference. With the way the wind was kicking up, he needed the extra edge of jumping in to get them through the swamp and to the hidden facility. He slipped into VR.

There was the momentary cold rush as his control rig, simsene accelerator, and brand new simsense boosters synced with the onboard commlink. The world outside flowed into false color 360° glory around him, a composite feed from the external sensors mounted on the hull. Clockwork's 'link resized his active AR imagelinks into a set of floating panels. He felt the downpour tingling on the touch sensors he'd put on the hovercraft's tough hull, like rain on his own skin. He forced the buffeted hovercraft to steady by shifting more power into engine 2. The burst of revs felt like his own heartbeat on overdrive. He was pleased to see the heavy rain was killing what engine signature his thermal baffles didn't. He sent an order to the pilotsofts of the Shinobi's to close in

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and follow, then poured all his attention into muscling the GMC through the growing violence of the storm.

He kept an eye on the cabin through the camera mesh he'd installed the night before—better safe than sorry. Markovic had vouched for this team, but Clockwork didn't trust anyone he'd never drunk with.

Twenty stressful minutes later, he resurfaced, pulling the GMC into a sheltered cove and turning to his very green-faced employers. His tusks were aching; he must have been gritting his teeth. Sweat was running down his back from the effort of fighting the wild weather.

"Anyone pukes, they clean it up," Clockwork grunted to the three runners, then turned to release the micro-relays from their cushioned boxes. He handed one to each of the three team-mates.

"Remember, one by the fences, one at the door, and one inside the facility. Otherwise, once you're inside, you won't be able to communicate with me—whole place is wi-fi inhibited. If you wanna know if they've released the biodrones, you better remember to get my little bugs in place. I'll be out here coordinating the drone support."

The three runners stepped out of the GMC, into the brutal storm, and disappeared from sight with a few steps. Clockwork jumped into Shinobi 2, subscribing Shinobi 1, and began patrolling the skies.

With their enhanced sensors, he could sense the heat signatures of a dozen metahuman guards huddling in their security posts. He assumed the three runners were slowly picking their way through the safe-trail they'd mapped out, but their mage's spells were working, because he couldn't pick them up.

A double lightning strike hit a tree near Shinobi 2 and its sensors went haywire. He took a moment to reset the sensors, compensating for the storm interference, when Shinobi 1's sensors started screaming in his mind. Clockwork could feel the static tingle of electricity building up around him and frantically attempted to dispel the energy buildup, but his reaction was just too slow...

Clockwork screamed as his vision went black, his eardrums burst, as Shinobi 2 was hit by a lightning strike that overrode its EM dispersal fibers, frying the surge protectors on its sensors and sending it spiraling to the ground, its flight stabilizers shot.

Oh, shit, this is going to HURT, he thought, just before the drone slammed into the ground.

Luckily, he'd paid good cred for a top-shelf biofeedback filter. Even with that, the dumpshock knocked him senseless for a few seconds. Feeling like someone had whacked him in the head, he struggled upright in his seat and checked the diagnostics on Shinobi 1. It was still airborne and providing good sensor data. Absentmindedly, he wiped away a trickle of blood from his ears, concentrating on the sensor data. He noted the data feeds from the crashed Shinobi 2 had been saved, thankfully. As he staunched the blood running from his nose, he smiled happily, making notes on the need to increase the lightning dispersal systems on future drones. This was an excellent field test. When the runners burst out of the facility, he switched on the enhanced jammers for Shinobi 1, watching in satisfaction as the metahuman guards stayed in their shelter, and the double-penned biodrones weren't released.

Success!

Clockwork revved the GMC up, throwing open the door, just as the runners dived inside.

They were panting and soaking wet, but the merc gave Clockwork a thumbs up.

Clockwork gunned the GMC back into the swamp, ordering Shinobi 1 to follow, and pushed hard to put some distance between them and the facility. A few seconds later, at exactly 7:10 pm, loud explosions rocked the night, lighting up the storm from below like earth-bound lightning.

The runners in his GMC leaned back, smiling. Clockwork chortled as he looked back through his sensor feed. There was nothing he loved more than playing with his drones... though damn big explosions ranked a close second.

STANLEY HAHN (WAGESLAVE)

"Hey Stanley," the security secretary grunted from behind his front desk, accepting Stanley's commlink and dropping it into the assigned holding box. It was quickly whisked away by the cycling holding system. "Have a good weekend?"

"Yeah," Stanley replied, "Caught Brackhaven's speech at the Humanis rally Sunday. That man sure can talk." He took his work-link from the secretary, nodding to the trio of human guards standing at attention behind the clear security glass. The secretary waived him through, the doors sliding soundlessly open and close. As he walked through the corridor, a slightly overweight man in an already-rumpled NeoNET-approved suit and overcoat, Stanley fiddled with the 'trode net. He hated the damn thing, but management had gotten all freaked out about supposed security breaches with the internal 'links, and everyone on the project had to have their internal links removed. He gave a brief thought to how cushy his wife had it, telecommuting from her home office—probably still in her pajamas—instead of dealing with the hassles of the onsite lab.

Taji and Roger were already in the lab, each at their work-station. Neither looked up as Stanley went to his station and flicked on the view-screens with a mental command. In a few seconds, he was absorbed in analyzing the most recent stress diagrams from the field testing subcontractors in the Balkans.

Less than an hour later, Stanley was stymied by the department secretary.

"What do you mean they're offline? Weather? What bad weather?" Stanley asked, sighing as his day was disrupted. There was *always* a conference call with the field-testing station on Mondays, at 9 am, Pacific time. He disconnected with the secretary, then turned to his keyboard, pulling up a form to request a reschedule for the off-site conference call. A flashing red light lit up his AR view and he sighed again as his request form was immediately denied.

This is a level 3 alert. All personnel are to remain in their offices until contacted by security. This is not a drill. This is a level 3 alert. All personnel are to remain in their offices until contacted by security... The mechanical female voice droned the standard line through AR. Next to him, Taji was swearing.

"God damn security protocols! I just got locked out of two hours worth of data analysis. If they dump the backups again..." the lab-tech swore.

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"Didn't we just have a drill last week?" Roger asked, blinking through his oversized AR goggles. His shirt was already stained with red jelly from his morning donut break. He ran a hand across his thinning hair, then stood and stretched, ready to take advantage of the brief break—corp efficiency metrics were suspended during active alerts.

"System will reboot in three minutes," Stanley said, calmly making some annotations to his report. "If you weren't following standards for saving work, they'll just make you stay late to make it up. You should be more careful, Taji."

Taji made a funny, strangled sound, instead of the *fuck you* Stanley expected. He looked up at his co-worker, puzzled to see Taji's nut-brown face drained to a pasty grey. Roger was pressed against his work-station, mouth soundlessly opening and closing like a dying fish.

Stanley swung his head around, looking up in horror at the four people entering the lab. They were wearing masks and black body-suits, obviously armored, and two were pointing guns—big guns—at Stanley and his co-workers. A third person, smaller than the rest, was obviously manipulating an AR interface, gloved hands flying in graceful motions on screens Stanley couldn't see. Stanley had seen enough of the EpSin trids to know a hacker when he saw one. The final person towered above the rest, a hulking Troll, his single horn jutting demon-like from his black mask.

"Stay still and stay off your AR," one of the gun-wielding intruders—a man by his voice—warned them. "You gonna take care of the alarms anytime soon, P?" the man calmly asked the hacker behind him. The hacker's graceful hands paused long enough to flip the man the bird. At the same time, the giant waved one huge hand towards Taji and Roger, and Stanley watched in absolute horror as his co-workers crumpled to the ground. *Ohgod-ohgod-ohgod*. Stanley felt his bowels turn to water as his eyes flicked from the Troll, to the guns, and back to the Troll. *A mage. A fucking Troll Mage*. Stanley's heartbeat was roaring in his ears as he waited for the Troll to kill him with his demented magic.

This is not a drill. This is not a—the system's droning voice was suddenly cut off.

"Got it," the hacker said, in a low and husky woman's voice. "Twenty seconds till reboot," she said.

"Okay," the first man said, taking three long strides to stand next to Stanley. As the hot metal of the gun pressed into his neck, Stanley felt something warm and wet trickle down his leg. "You've got twenty seconds to pull up your backups, Mr. Hahn."

Stanley couldn't breathe, couldn't do anything but feel the burning of the gun against his skin. The gun pressed harder into his neck, and the man grabbed Stanley's chair and swiveled it around to face the small terminal flat-screen.

"Type, Mr. Hahn," the man said, his voice menacing. Stanley reached out, hands shaking, as he pulled up his private network files. As data entry specialist, he had access to a small back-up system, which logged his work and provided a second layer of system security: after a system breech, any corrupted files on the main node would be reloaded from his secured terminal.

"The files on the biomorph drone tests," the man demanded. Stanley didn't dare look up as he brought up the files. Compared to the quiet shadowrunners, his gasping breath was unnaturally loud. When the system beeped, the man held out a hand to the hacker

"Ten seconds to upload the virus," she said, tossing the man back a second chip.

"Now, upload this into the system, Mr. Hahn," he demanded.

Stanley looked up in horror, forgetting The Troll, the guns, shocked out of his fear by indignation. "That's... that's ten months worth of work," he stuttered, appalled. "I couldn't do that!"

Under the mask, the man's mouth twisted in a grimace. "Damn wage slaves," the shadowrunner said, shaking his head, then awkwardly forced the chip into the memory reader. While Stanley sobbed, the shadow runner destroyed his life.

HORSE (FACE)

"C'mon Horse, you've been in there all morning! I need the can!" Banshee said, pounding on the bathroom door.

Horse sighed as he felt his delicate concentration waver. He gripped the grimy counter as he peered into the warped mirror. His skin had darkened from copper to ebony easily enough, and his hair was already the right shade, although they'd had to purchase an insta-perm product to get the right texture. Getting the Afro-Asian features right was much harder, with the subtle shifts of eye shape, and the less-subtle broadening of the cheeks, the fullness of the lips and the wideness of the mouth. Still, as he turned his

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face from side to side, checking for balance and symmetry—not that any natural metahuman face was perfectly symmetrical—he thought he might finally have it. He gritted his teeth as he slipped on the filthy tee-shirt and jeans of the petty thief. If things went as planned, he'd be out of the disgusting clothes soon enough.

Horse opened the door and looked down at Banshee. "Well?" he asked, mimicking the thief's voice.

Banshee stared up at him, then looked back at the unconscious man tied to the ratty motel chair.

"Great," she said, as she pushed past him into the bathroom, "Who'd believe you could possible get uglier."

Raimee was sitting in the other chair, staring into AR, but Squirt smiled at him from where he was hunched on the floor.

"Looks good, boss," the troll said. Horse walked over to the unconscious man, giving Raimee a nudge as he stood beside her. They'd picked the thief specifically because he matched Horse's height and build, had no cyber or bioware, and because he already had a record and had spent time in a detention facility. His record said he was mundane and at his age the police would have no reason to subject him to any astral scans.

"Huh?" the technomancer asked, then blinked. "Oh, yeah," she said, looking him over carefully, comparing him to the captured thief, no doubt running some techno version of facial recognition software. "Pretty close. His mouth is a bit bigger. Maybe the eyebrows are closer together...." She shrugged. "Should be good enough to fool a normal check. I fixed his fingerprints in LoneStar's database, so you'll match, as long as they don't bounce the check back to Interpol or something. The biometric-contacts should last 24 hours."

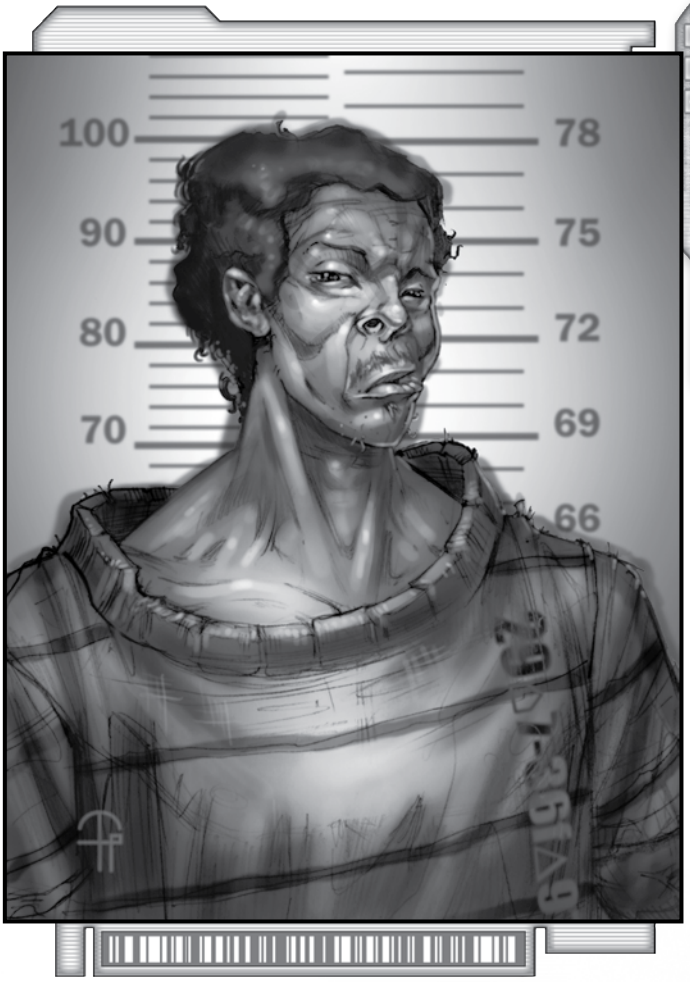
Banshee stepped out of the bathroom and joined her three teammates. "So, you really gonna do it, huh?" she said, shaking her head. "Never heard of anyone tryin' to get *into* the joint before."

Horse felt his face stretch into an unfamiliar grin. "The client wants a riot at 8:55 am. We deliver."

Of course, the client also wanted a certain NeoNET executive to be killed in "random violence" during the riot. That wasn't going to be his job—Raimee would take care of that part, through an "accident" with the facility's drones.

Less than twenty minutes later, he was in the back of a patrol car, on his way to the Downtown intake facility. The patrol drone had ID'd him just as planned, and two officers had shown up minutes later, arresting him for a parole violation and tossing him into the back of the car. Ten minutes later, he was in line at the intake facility, waiting to be processed. He had just over seven hours left to complete the job before his face would begin to regain its natural shape and features, and his skin would fade from ebony to copper.

At the intake facility, the impersonal cops, in their armored blue uniforms, supervised the metahuman sized drones that actually interacted with the "suspects." Cold and brutally efficient, the drones herded Horse into a tiny room, where he was ordered to strip. Cameras watched from all corners, and a small drone stood by, equipped with a visible tazer (and who knew what else). Horse was relieved to finally take off the filthy clothes, stood resigned through the decontamination spray and chemical shower, then accepted the bundle of shapeless orange flats that the small drone produced. The orange flats bagged around the waist and were a



good six inches too short in the leg, but at least they were clean. Horse gritted his teeth as a second drone injected a small chip into his arm, without the benefit of any local pain relief.

"Human male, ID 29Δ7–36fΔ972-lk83◊0mv, proceed through door and follow the orange line to bunk assignment," the drone said in its mechanical voice. Under the watchful eyes of the cameras—Raimee had confirmed that the entire facility was run by three spiders at all times—he sulked down the corridor, following the orange line. Three other men were in the hallway as well, wearing the bright orange flats. Automated guns—supposedly armed with non-lethal ammo—followed their progress, while a tall armed drone stood against the wall, its featureless face watching them. At the end of the corridor, a metahuman sat behind a thick panel of ballistic glass. He gave each inmate a bored look, then waved them through. When it was Horse's turn, the guard said "Bunk 387," and then looked back at his display.

Horse was in.

It was perhaps a matter of luck, or a measure of his talent, that he'd never been inside a Lone Star detention facility. This was a level 1 facility, for the low level criminals, the unaugmented and unAwakened street-scum that Lone Star caught and processed every day. The room he was in was the size of a large auditorium, with bunkbeds spaced evenly every 2 meters, each made of sturdy plasticrete, with a black painted number on each side. No mattresses, no blankets, just a hard plasticrete slab. Most

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of the criminals in here would only be here for thirty-six hours or less. The high ceiling was studded with cameras, gun-turrets, and chemical sprayers. Drones stood on a catwalk, watching the metahuman scum below. No doubt other sensors watched them as well, gauging body-temperatures, listening to conversations, scanning for any sign of violence or disobedience. If things had gone as planned, Raimee was in the system by now, hidden from the spiders by her particular technomancer abilities, watching him through the myriad cameras. If she wasn't... Well, he was in now. Only choice was to go ahead with the plan and trust the rest of his team to do their job.

Horse began circulating through the room, talking to the other criminals, subtly manipulating the other men. Most of the time, his talents were directed to leading his team, negotiating with fixers to get a better cut, digging up intel, or doing the occasional misdirection or con at a social gathering. *This* was difficult work, the kind of work that challenged every bit of Talent in him.

Just casual comments. *Cops suck. Bastard PD screwed me over. Ten drones with tazers keeping three hundred men down? Bullshit, man. Fucking cops are too pansy-assed to even come in here. Bet we could show them.*

And to a few, a few men he judged were either stupidly vicious or already strung out with fear-tinged withdrawal, he bumped it up. *Heard the cops been selling the SINless brothers off to the ghouls. Heard the corp-boys need some bitches for their labs and the cops agreed to supply them. Heard Tamanous' goons be comin' in to pick some choice bastards for their body shops. Heard the cops be getting some good nuyen today.*

After a few hours, the room was a riot of whispers. Horse could practically smell the fear, anger, and violence building. It would take only a slight nudge to get the crowd to erupt in flames. He looked up at the catwalk, at the thick steel doors at each corner. If he'd judged the time right, the tour would be coming out in the next few minutes. The impassive drones continued to watch and wait, not clueing into the key words they'd been programmed to recognize. He prayed to Coyote that meant Raimee was up there, watching him, ready to do her part. If the chemical sprayers hadn't been disabled, the riot wouldn't last more than a few seconds. If they had...

The steel door swung open on the catwalk. A group of suited men and women came out, escorted by heavily armed Lone Star officers.

It was show time.

STICKS (BOUNTY HUNTER)

Sticks leaned up against the grimy downtown building, trying to squeeze into the small overhang and avoid the stinging acid rain. Water dripped off the brim of his ball cap and seeped through a tear in his supposedly water-proofed London Fog knock-off. Pedestrians were hurrying along the sidewalks with heads down and shoulders hunched against the rain. A few struggled with umbrellas, obvious out-of-towners—no true Seattleite would be caught dead with an umbrella, acid rain be damned.

He'd been out here for over an hour. A bit desperate for rent money, he'd pulled up Lone Star's list of outstandings this morning, and recognized one name of the bunch. Kettlemyer. Rat-bastard of a dealer and tempo junky. Sticks had hauled him in twice before,

and knew that eventually, Kettlemyer would show up for the shoppers crowded on the Renraku Plaza outside the ACHE malls. He did too good a business with the bored housespouses and overweight corporate wageslaves to skip a day—which was probably why he hadn't shown up for his court time and was now FTA (or Failure to Appear, in cop-speak). The 1k bounty would go a long way towards placating Stick's landlord.

While Sticks waited, he had his facial-recognition software scanning the visuals from the sensor feeds of his AR glasses. In another screen, he had a real-time job search agent running on Jackpoint. And on a third screen, the agent he'd picked up from Bandit was scanning the police frequencies. Things were hopping in Seattle. The police squawker put out a code red, broadcasting: *Riot at Downtown detention center. All available units respond.* He saw the few uniforms in the Renraku plaza clear out suddenly, motorcycles lit up with AR sirens. Well, this was perfect. Every dealer in downtown would be out on the streets now. Kettlemyer was sure to show up.

After another thirty minutes, he was as wet as humanly possible and had a fairly urgent need to pee. He was debating the likelihood that Kettlemyer would appear if he took a ten-minute break when someone settled against the wall beside him.

"Sticks, how surprising," the cop said, laughing at him. Lt. Laine James was a perennially cheerful woman with a liberal amount of freckles and unruly red hair. In her snappy blue uniform,

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the DPI lightning bolt prominent on the shoulder, she looked like a Hollywood version of a mage-cop.

"Carrot-top," Sticks grumbled. "Slumming it today?"

"Looking for someone," she replied, eyeing him. "You look like a drowned rat, Sticks. Why don't you go in, get some soy-kaf, dry off?"

Sticks ignored her. "Who would you be looking for outside the ACHE?" he asked, suspicious. The DPI didn't stir themselves outside their cozy enclaves for the bored shoppers of the ACHE. Apparently riots at jails didn't warrant DPI intervention—so what the hell was she doing here?

Laine gave a slight shrug, mirroring him as she leaned back against the building and scanned the crowd. Sticks ground his teeth; no way in hell would any dealer miss Laine's bright blue uniform and carrot-colored hair—in the grey rain and grimy buildings, she shone like a flame. Damn cop.

He was about to tell her to go harass someone else when his facial-recognition software lit up. Kettlemyer was fifteen meters away, approaching a group of teens. The pusher was a short Caucasian human with a pock-marked face and barely weighed 45 kilos when wet. The facial-recognition software highlighted a new scar—looked like a thorny vine—slashed across Kettlemyer's forehead. *Huh, looks like some kinda ritual scar. Kettlemyer playing with the cults now?* Sticks pushed off the wall.

"Hey, kids, looking for something to brighten your day?" Kettlemyer was asking the teens. They giggled as they looked at something in his hands. The pusher had his back to the scanning drones that were flying over the crowd; not such an idiot after all. Sticks walked up beside the human and gave the kids a scowl and a head jerk. With a startled look, they scattered.

"Hey, whatcha doin'," Kettlemyer growled, turning to face him. Sticks bared his teeth as he snapped a cuff around the pusher's wrist.

"Missed your court date, Kettlemyer," he said, reaching for the other wrist. It took him totally by surprise when the scrawny human jerked his arm away, then swung at him with a bunched fist, hitting Sticks solidly in the chest and tossing him in the air. He hit the pavement with a loud snap, felt his head crack on the concrete and saw black spots swim across his eyes.

"Fuck!" Sticks gasped, pushing himself up. Kettlemyer had taken off running, a fifty-nuyen set of cuffs swinging from his right arm. Sticks shook his head, then took off after the man. No way the scrawny dealer could run like that! Sticks pushed after him, surprised when Laine fell into step beside him, those sexy long legs easily matching his stride.

"What the fuck?" Sticks panted, as Kettlemyer spotted another blue Lone Star uniform ahead and ducked into an alley. The two of them followed. The alley was a dead end, and the dealer had turned to face them, his ugly face sneering.

"This is my FTA," Sticks growled, out of breath, to the cop. She shook her head, orange curls spraying water.

"You'll get full credit," she replied, "But keep your cute ass out of this now, Sticks."

At her words, a group of four other Lone Star uniforms stepped into the alley behind them, including another bright blue DPI. Together, Laine and the other DPI cop faced the scrawny dealer, hands raised as they began chanting, while the other three cops brought some huge guns to bear on the dealer.

Sticks stepped back and began recording the scene with the camera imbedded in his AR glasses. He didn't have a fucking clue as to what was going on, but he knew big nuyen when he saw it. The grand he was hoping for from the collar of the dealer was starting to look like piss-ant change compared to whatever was about to go down. Sometimes, his job was a tedious mix of research and patience; sometimes, it was just dumb fucking luck. Today was definitely the second.

LT. LAINE JAMES (OCCULT INVESTIGATOR)

Cop coffee is universally bad, which is why Laine refused to drink it, except under dire circumstances. Like today. She hated Mondays. She'd been at work for over twenty-four hours, excluding the four hour nap she'd caught in the crib, and now the captain was calling a morning meeting. Laine stifled a yawn while the captain updated them on the operation.

"Suspect Preston L. Kettlemyer has exhibited some magical tendencies, although previous scans done in Booking came up negative for Talent," the captain said. They'd all seen this before, in tempo junkies, and this task force had been put together to figure out what the hell was going on. Laine's background in BADs had gotten her assigned to the task force. "A riot at the downtown DF has drained street resources down to unmanned drones. Probably every two-bit dealer in Seattle will be out taking advantage of the situation. We're considering this a perfect opportunity to observe and assense. Do not move to apprehend without back-up. The budget doesn't cover death benefits today. Got it?"

The captain looked back at his notes, then gave a grimace. "Oh, and the idiot 'smart agent' in charge of posting FTA's posted our guy at 6 am this morning, and over a dozen bounty hunters downloaded the info before we pulled it. So watch out for those assholes."

He handed out assignments. Laine saw that hers was outside the ACHE, a known hangout for the BAD dealer. She sighed as she walked outside into the pouring rain. Someday, she was going to invent a "Warm & Dry" spell, and retire off the royalties. Until then, she was stuck playing department politics and standing in the rain.

"Hey, Lieutenant, what did you do to get stuck outside? Piss of the captain again?" Betti joked. She was a well-built woman with a sense of importance as overstuffed as her bra. The kind that would no doubt get promoted just because she had perfect breasts and a willingness to use them. Laine had worked her ass off to get her Lieutenant's bars and she had zero respect for the flashy mage.

"Cap't told me he was afraid you'd melt," she replied, sugar sweet. "Said something about water and witches..."

The other cops—cyber troops, not mages—in the car snorted with laughter, and Betti glared at all of them. The feeling of dislike was mutual.

The car dropped her off a few blocks away from her vantage point. As the rain poured down on her, Laine flicked up her collar. The pedestrians around her had their heads down against the rain, hurrying along, and no one paid her any attention. She scanned the broad square in front of the ACHE mall, fiddling with her golden necklace—her personal foci—while she looked over the

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shoppers' auras, looking for her suspect, or at least a dry place to wait and watch. Immediately, she caught sight of a familiar aura—she'd recognize the vivid scars streaking that aura anywhere. She switched back to mundane vision to see the tall Asian slumped against a grimy building with a ratty ball-cap and a rain-coat that had seen much better days... probably before he'd ever owned it. Laine rolled her eyes and sauntered over to the bounty hunter.

"Sticks, how surprising," she said, smiling as she sized him up. She'd seen him mostly naked once before and the sight of the massive scars decorating his chest remained with her. Although it was a toss-up as to which was more impressive, the scars, or the way he'd been able to shrug off the stun-bolt she'd thrown at him, even drunk. He'd earned her respect that day... plus the man had a seriously *fine* body, hidden under the pitiful trash-bin clothing.

"Carrot-top," Sticks grumbled. "Slumming it today?"

"Looking for someone," she replied, wondering if he'd eaten that day. "You look like a drowned rat, Sticks. Why don't you go in, get some soy-kaf, dry off?" Something about the guy just made her want to take him home and clean him up.

"Who would you be looking for outside the ACHE?" he asked, suspicious.

Probably the same guy you are, she thought, but just smiled and leaned back against the grimy wall. She certainly wasn't going to leave him to face Kettlemyer by himself—she'd run up against a couple of these tempo junkies and they weren't anything she'd wish on Sticks. Resigned to the rain, the grime, and the nasty flavor of the astral space around the ACHE, Laine settled in to wait. The background count from the damn public housing project was enough to make her stomach twist... although that could have been the cop-shop coffee, too.

She was scanning the crowd, checking out the auras, when Sticks pushed away from the wall and went striding through the crowd on those mile-long legs. She jumped after him and saw him about to cuff Kettlemyer.

Suspect spotted, she transmitted on her secured 'link. The team coordinator beeped an acknowledgement and she hoped the other team members would be getting into position soon.

Suddenly, she saw Sticks go flying backwards, landing with a loud crack against the wet pavement. Kettlemyer took off running. Fast as lightning, Sticks was back up, balanced on the balls of his feet, his head swinging around to spot Kettlemyer. The bounty hunter took off, and Laine sprinted after the two men. *Damn good thing I was on the track team*, she thought, as she caught up to Sticks.

—*Lt. James in pursuit of suspect*—the coordinator broadcast—*Detective Gray in position to north. Probability 87.3 for suspect to enter alley*—

Laine and Sticks rounded the alley corner at the same time and she saw the suspect's tempo-ravaged face snarling at her, just a few meters away.

—*Team in position*—

"This is my FTA," Sticks growled at her. Laine shook her head, realizing it was too much to hope he'd back off the pitiful bounty for the dealer.

"You'll get full credit," she assured him, "But keep your cute ass out of this now, Sticks."

Then, hoping he could take care of himself, she focused on the snarling human in front of her, switching to her astral sight to assense him.

Sweet Jesus, she thought, shocked at the writhing, thorn-covered vines that covered his aura, strangling his energies. She'd suggested the tempo addicts might be possessed, and they'd prepared a ritual to capture the possessing spirit, in case, but she'd never expected to see something so... malevolent. As her team stepped beside her, she raised her hands, began chanting the ritual they'd prepared. The mana downtown was sour, the bleed through background count from the ACHE making it harder to draw. She gritted her teeth, felt her necklace warm against her skin as she used it to focus her energies. As the other DPI mage began chanting with her, Laine prayed to God that they'd all survive.

ORTEGA (GANGER)

Redmond hadn't been a town since long before Ortega was born. It was a collection of neighborhoods, even blocks. You belonged to the place you lived. You were born to it, and when you died your blood seeped into the cracked sidewalks to sprout another you. Life, death, and rebirth all here in your neighborhood, your block.

This was Ortega's block. He built it just as true as if he'd laid the brick and mortar. He protected it, ran it the way the cops should, bashing heads and looking out for people who otherwise couldn't. As he parked his pimped out Americar, he was relieved

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to be home. With all the shit going down there was nowhere he felt safer.

The pickup had gone sour and he was coming back empty handed. Kettlemyer had been jumped by the cops. If Ortega had been on time, he'd have been right there when the Star came down. And what the fuck was up with Kettlemyer? The dealer had tossed around Stars like they were soda cans.

That was when Ortega noticed the three figures. He knew every face in the 'hood. Half of them were his clients. These had no business on his corner. He scanned the porches and the look out. No sign of Nadal or Malmuerto. No problem, he could handle the lightweights on his lonesome.

He strode right over. He was used to seeing natives, a lot of them along the Verge. But the Asian kid with the tribal tattoo marking the side of his face—he was as out of place as a naked chica in a men's prison. Tatt-Boy and the two natives with him wore black leathers in various stages of disrepair. Hard to tell if they were street toughs or corp kids who paid hand over fist to dress down. They could have been customers.

The Asian turned towards Ortega flashing a tee shirt under his leathers. Red and green; Christmas in the barrens. Troll Killers were in bed with the First Nations, and here were these three clowns standing on *his* corner sporting colors. Color flushed Ortega's pale gray face like a bull seeing red. Even if he didn't buy into all their hype, he was Crimson Crush through and through. He was an ork, and wherever he squatted was Crush turf until he said otherwise.

As he closed Ortega measured them up. He'd learned to read people. It was a survival skill. He could tell they were packing, but not wired. Troll Killers couldn't afford it. Well, maybe Tatt-Boy. The runt was too confident for his size. The other two were bruisers, though not in Ortega's league. Long as he kept things from going ballistic he was icy.

Tatt-Boy flicked shut an Erika wrist commlink—expensive model, Ortega had been saving up for a 'link, maybe now he could save himself some money. But the Asian was measuring him up too, and wasn't backing down. Most people did. 90 kilos of angry ork wasn't something you wanted in your face.

He asked them if they were lost, giving them a chance to run. He popped his cyberspur idly to impress. Sometimes it was best to pound the message into people's heads, but he was hungry and didn't feel like a rumble.

The Asian said, "Not lost, omae, but if you're looking for a score I got a derm that will set your soul on fire."

Ortega's face twisted into a mask of rage. Hunger vanished, replaced by a new yearning. "You know who I am, bitch?"

Tatt-Boy smiled. That only made Ortega angrier.

The other two were on their game now. They stepped up behind the leader, looking for a fight. "You're an ork. That's all we need to know."

"So you Troll Killer bitches think you can sell on my block?" He never gave them time to answer. Ortega slammed a massive fist into Tatt-Boy's smug grin. Teeth and flesh gave way beneath.

The two Amerinds came at him from each side. He caught the little one by the head squeezing enough to make him cry out. The other dodged under his spur, reached for something in his

jacket. A gun? Ortega went for the old Manhunter tucked into his waistband.

In the moment it took Ortega to look, the Asian did something. Mumbling through broken teeth, he held a hand out towards Ortega.

Ortega's heart stuck in his chest. He felt himself falling, the strength draining out of his ankles, then knees, finally his thighs. Ortega's arms grew heavy, his tongue caught between his teeth as he fell and he clamped down hard. Pain followed, diligently. He tasted blood, thick and coppery. He suspected on some basic level that his fluids were splattering against the pavement black or rust red, emulating his gang colors. That thought should have powered him to his knees, courage funneling through his veins.

The first time he rumbled for the Crimson Crush he was beaten like this. A half dozen Night Hunters beat him near unconscious. Still, he got up, got back in the fight. He'd earned his colors that night, 4 years ago. But now was different. Tatt-Boy had laid some mojo on him. Fuck but he hated magic; he should have guessed. A terrified grunt pushed through his cracked lips.

"You hit like a girl, omae. You're just lucky I let you get that one in. See, this is TK turf now." Tatt-Boy was gloating, standing over him, spitting globs of blood into Ortega's face. He lowered his hand, finger extended as if pointing a gun. "That means no orks allowed."

The last thing Ortega ever saw was Tatt-Boy mouthing, 'Bang.'

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PICADOR (MERCENARY)

"*Sir*, Battlecomm says contact in thirty," Sergeant Martinez whispered in her ear. Picador was looking through the scope, slowly sweeping back and forth across the jungle's edge. Never mind that her two drone riggers had eyes in the sky. She'd learned long ago to use technology, but never trust it completely. Mercs couldn't afford to. Out in the middle of nowhere if something broke there wasn't always a way to fix it. In her line of work, putting your faith in tech over skill and experience was a good way to end up six feet under. Drones could be hacked, feeds intercepted and edited, but her own eyes... she trusted those.

Inside the hastily dug trenches, hidden among the roughly cobbled wooden homes, the mercs in her small unit waited with patience born of long practice. Out in the jungle, her second unit was patrolling further out, ready to sweep up any opposition fugitives. Most of her magical assets had been deployed in the field, leaving her with only two new recruits to watch. She hoped they wouldn't break under this, their first real test; not all spellslingers dealt well with death.

"Ten seconds," Martinez whispered. Picador nodded, then brought her Ares Alpha up to sight on the treeline. The area they were patrolling had been hit by guerillas twice in the last three weeks, unidentified soldiers who'd killed a dozen men, taken the village's stockpile of weapons and harvest, and left the villagers terrified. Picador's company had been hired eight days ago, although they'd only arrived in the Amazon three days later.

The tensions between Amazonia and Aztlan were sky-high and both sides were hiring mercs left and right. She'd taken the Amazonian contract to patrol and protect a few rural villages on the edges of the disputed territory in what had been Colombia. In addition, they were supposed to discover if the guerillas were really Aztech troops in disguise, Ghost Cartel soldiers, or simply opportunistic jungle scum.

Which meant that in approximately 7 seconds, they'd either be facing half-starved village raiders, or trained paramilitary forces.

Three seconds...

One second...

Battlecomm being jammed! Switch to encryption 13.

Mierda, that answers that, Picador thought. Two giant masses of tangled leaves and vines exploded into being down the line from her position, scattering her mercs. The shaman next to her started to jump up, exposing himself, and Picador yanked him back down. Down the line, explosions rocked as concerted fire from heavy machine-guns opened up on the spirits. She grinned with grim determination. Her men were well-trained. The spirits disintegrated in a shower of leaves and bark. She messaged her unit over the tacnet to hold fire to her signal. Would the raiders send other spirits, or would they attack? Or retreat, making her unit have to chase them into the jungle? That would really piss her off.

Picador sighted and waited, one heartbeat, two... movement... and there, the first raiders cleared the tree-line and committed to the rush towards the village... She waited... waited, lining up her shot, kneeding the custom grip and sighting down the weighted barrel of the customized Ares Alpha. She fired as the last of the raiders broke cover. Her man dropped, a direct hit to his neck, blood blooming like a flower as his body flew back. Gunfire exploded all down the line; they'd gotten the drop on the raiders.

Beside her, the two new greenhorns were pale but holding up. The raiders turned to take cover among the tree-line, only to be met by the spirits commanded by her new combat shamans.

Picador brought up the battlecomm AR display. She toggled off the tacnet's firing solutions and movement predictions, and sent orders for her left flank to reposition and her second unit to move in.

For a few seconds, the raiders were thrown into confusion, making them easy pickings for her unit. The smartgun sight in her combat monocle tracking her targets, Picador aimed and fired small tight bursts, again and again, picking off her targets. Her gun kicked as she shot a grenade behind the attackers' lines to push them forward. A few made it into the first huts, and the sounds of melee echoed around her, mixed with the screams of the civilians they'd ordered into the central meeting hall.

Picador turned away from the fight to watch the tree line, making sure there was no second wave to surprise them—the tacnet was only as good as the information it was fed. Battlecomm was secure, coordinating efforts, providing an AR mesh network overlay of the fighting. The younger shaman, to her left, was looking white as a sheet, his pupils so dilated his eyes were almost all black. She shoved his head down between his legs just before he fainted. Behind her, Martinez continued to whisper updates from Battlecomm.

In less than two minutes, the village and forest was once again silence, except for the muted weeping of the civilians in their meeting hall.

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"Status?" Picador asked Martinez, cautiously emerging from the trench.

"Eight of ours wounded, sir. Battlecomm's reporting thirty-five raiders down or wounded."

"Okay. Disarm and disable them. I want any of them who can talk in C&C. The rest, put in the pen, have the medic treat them after she deals with our guys, ask the village *pajé* if he will help," she ordered, then bent down to look the older shaman in the face. "Shane, you go with Martinez, let her know which of these guys has 'warez or is Awakened." The younger shaman had recovered from his swoon, white faced and trembling. She grabbed his arm, hauled him up out of the trench, handed him a flask of whiskey. He gulped it down, coughing and gasping as it burned down his throat.

"I'm sorry, Sir, I didn't mean to... to..."

Picador didn't waste time on consoling him. You either made it or you didn't. She was willing to give magical assets a bit of leeway, considering their rarity and overall usefulness, but no amount of Talent made up for putting your unit at risk. She sent him off to the unit's temporary camp, without bothering to say that he'd be on a one-way trip back to Lisbon in the morning—she logged the order with the unit secretary over the battlecomm before shutting it down. Dismissing him from her mind, she took off for the one-room hut she'd appropriated for her command center. Bragança was there, the swarthy dwarf that ran their battlecomm network, hands flying through the air as he managed multiple AR sensor feeds, floating icons of his combat agents providing post-combat reports.

"Get the databases up, Braga; I want to know if any of these guys are registered with the Association," she told him, as Martinez and Shane came in with the first of the wounded raiders. The man was wearing jungle-pattern armored fatigues, too non-descript to ID, but certainly a higher grade than she'd expect on a jungle raider. Blood had soaked through his left pants leg and covered most of his upper body; man had probably taken at least one hit to his shoulder, and she could see shards of bone through the torn flesh on his leg.

Martinez lowered him carefully to the dirt floor, mindful of his injured leg. Almost immediately, blood began to pool below him; this one wouldn't last long without medical care. Picador squatted in front of the man, lifting up his head by his hair. A strange scar, shaped like a thorny vine, slashed across his forehead. His eyes were full of pain and fear.

"Article 12 of the Merc Association charter says I must offer medical care, shelter, and fair ransom to any captured merc or prisoner-of-war, *if* they inform me of their name, merc unit affiliation, employer, and rank. However, it says nothing about jungle scum who raid farming villages and rape their women.

"Which are you today, sir?"

NETCAT (TECHNOMANCER)

Netcat stumbled into her tiny kitchenette, her head aching. It was almost midnight, Monday—god, her internal clock was so screwed up from yesterday's all-night hacking binge. She fumbled for a coffee mug with her eyes half-closed. Her beverage dispenser had been stuck on the coffee setting for the last two months, ever since a rather grumpy little free-sprite had taken up residence. She stuck the mug into the dispenser, watched as the coffee slowly gurgled out, and slapped her hand against the unit. The sprite gave a grumble, but the coffee dispensed. She'd have zapped the annoying little bastard back to the Resonance Realms long ago, if he didn't make such damn good coffee.

With the first sip, Netcat opened up to the cobweb of the datasphere constantly brushing against her skin. The ebb and flow of the wifi signals whispered over her skin, across her mind, feather soft. Netcat reached out mentally and an AR window materialized, coalescing from the filigree of signals at the edge of her vision. She accessed JackPoint, where a dozen messages were waiting for her. *Welcome*, the system said, *today is Monday, June 8th, 2071. Your last visit was 12 hours, 3 minutes, 14 seconds ago.* Netcat flicked her first message open while she browsed through the most recent postings and news blurbs. She deleted most of the messages, although after a slight internal debate she replied to Slamm-0!'s annoyed request for a re-match in her favorite NightStalker game, *sans* Sprites this time: *It wasn't cheating, don't be such a sore loser.* Nothing else interesting, with the exception of a message marked Urgent from Pistons. It was text only, but Pistons' normal flippant tone came through loud and clear: *Got a job for someone with your talents. I can vouch for the Mr. J. Pays great. Nice ass, too—and he's single, girl. Call him.*

Netcat contemplated the message for a few minutes, while she checked on her game stats for Rocket Thieves and updated a flame thread at her favorite forum. One of her sprites had registered another ping from a certain Azzie exec that she'd been

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trying to track down for the last few days. The man had checked into a DC hotel under one of the alias' she'd found for him. She should go harass him... Still, it'd be nice to get a paycheck—the Azzie job was for the Co-op, and they weren't much on paying in cash.

Sighing, she decided to contact the Johnson. After the call, she was 100k richer... but contemplating what she'd agreed to do made her feel slightly ill.

The Resonance Realms.

Just thinking it, she felt the datasphere shiver across her skin, raising goose bumps.

The Johnson made noises about "lost" data, accidentally deleted, but Netcat read between the lines. Someone had hit him, hit him hard where it really hurt—information. The problem with destroying data in the Matrix was that the Resonance *always* remembered it, no matter how obscure, how well destroyed, how well-guarded. It was a closely held secret—how the Johnson had found out about the Resonance Realms was a question she'd find the answer to... *after* she earned her 100k. Then she'd decide what she would do to him, with his dangerous knowledge of technomancer secrets...

First things first. Netcat forced herself to eat a OnceADay bar, tasteless as it was. Then she brought out her med-drone, a sleek little plug of a machine that could maintain her body while she was... gone. While it hummed to life, Netcat focused her attention on the rich wifi signals around her, weaving together the silken strands until she'd formed a mass of wireless energy, flickering in AR within her cupped hands. She blew on it, breathing life into the shapeless energy, and felt it stir. The mass moved, arms and legs uncurling, a tiny face blinking sleepily. The little machine sprite looked up at her, curious, a tiny amalgamation of code and glyphs shaped into existence by her will.

I need you to inhabit this machine, Netcat instructed it. *Maintain my physical body while my soul searches the Resonance Realms.* The little sprite nodded and scuttled from her hands into the machine's node. The drone followed her to her sleep-chair, humming around her as she lay down and closed her eyes. She left her body before she could feel the pinch of the IV.

In VR, the universe stretched out around her, infinite, beautiful, beckoning. Nodes glittered like gemstones, while data swirled along in the currents of the Matrix. Netcat took a deep breath, feeling herself whole, powerful, *alive* in a way she never felt in the mundane world. Flexing her icon's claws, she leapt into the streams of dataflow and began her search.

Creating a gateway to the Resonance Realms would be the easiest part.

Eventually, she did, after hours of meditating, sensing the currents of resonance that flowed through the Matrix, following the streams back to their source. She knew immediately when she saw it, a gateway of swirling mass of color and sound, shedding fragments of code as it blazed. The noise was almost too much for her, and her ears flattened back against her head, her eyes narrowed against the brilliance. Before she could lose her courage, she jumped into the conflagration.

It burned. It felt like it was ripping her apart, reforming her into a new image, tossing her through into... the gateway. A blank white room. No doors, no windows, just four solid white walls. A stick-like man stood in the center. She stood before him, no longer an icon of a cat, but a flesh-and-blood woman, a little too thin, with a tangle of dark hair and wide green eyes.

"You wish to cross?" the stick man asked.

Netcat bowed before him. "I seek the Archives," she said, as a thin line of sweat snaked down her back.

The man looked at her, his eyes black, and Netcat was wrenched into a vision. She saw her body laying in the tattered sleep chair, her skin faded to a translucent white, veins like blue lace under her pale skin. Alone. Helpless. She watched, in horror, as the safeguards in her home were breeched, a silent alarm wailing in AR. Her heart rate kicked up, her breath strangled, as the door edged open. She shoved a fist into her mouth, biting down to keep from screaming—*wake up wake up wake up*—watched as black clad men crept into the room. They approached her body, laying there unaware, reached out to pull the IV from her arm, to violate her—Netcat fought the fear down, wrestled with the overwhelming panic, the urge to snap out of VR and back into her body, blood rushing in her head as she kept a scream down through sheer force of will. A man pulled out a syringe, pressed it into her unresisting flesh, and Netcat—

Was looking at the stick man. In the white room.

"Your coding is improving," he said and the white room melted away.

She'd passed the test. Shaky, Netcat took a step forward, then another, and found herself in the endless hallways of the great archive.

Curiously shaped sprites bustled past her, ignoring her, carrying reams of old-style paper. Netcat followed them, looking for a librarian, one of the creaky old sprites that supervised the others. Eventually, she found one, and in exchange for the gift she'd brought, it gave her a bound book. Netcat flipped the book open, reading the pages. She wasn't an expert, but it looked like research on bio-drones. The very last page said *Deleted, June 1st, 2071, 09:34:09 PST. Archived 09:34:10 PST.* Netcat clutched the book to her as she traced back her steps, finding the exit—which was always *so* much easier—and returning to the surface world.

She sat up, feeling awkward back in the physical confines of her own flesh. The wifi ether was there, reassuring, a soft blanket on her skin. She ripped the IV out of her arm, while the drone retracted other unpleasant medical devices. Finally free of the tangle, Netcat tentatively pulled on a few threads of resonance, calling up the Mr. Johnson. The same perfect icon formed in her view.

"Netcat?" the man said, blinking. "Ah, I'd begun to worry, after so long with no word." Netcat checked the date. June 11th. Well, fuck.

"I was able to retrieve your data," she said, after an awkward moment of silence. How do you explain to someone that time flows differently in the Resonance Realms?

"You were? That's wonderful," he said, smiling. Netcat took the data and sent it along the thread that connected them. Which led straight to a NeoNET office in jolly old England. "I was afraid, after so long, that it was truly lost."

Netcat gave him a tight smile.

"The Resonance never forgets."

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EXPANDED BUILD POINT COST SUMMARY TABLE

Property	BP Cost	Reference
Metatype		
Dwarf	25	p. 72, SR4
Gnomes	25	p. 71
Harumen	50	p. 71
Koborokuru	35	p. 71
Menehune	25	p. 71
Elf	30	p. 72, SR4
Dryad	45	p. 71
Night Ones	35	p. 71
Wakyambi	35	p. 71
Xapiri Thëpë	40	p. 72
Human	0	p. 72, SR4
Nartaki	25	p. 71
Ork	20	p. 72, SR4
Hobgoblin	20	p. 72
Ogre	20	p. 72
Oni	20	p. 72
Satyr	25	p. 72
Troll	40	p. 72, SR4
Cyclops	45	p. 72
Fomori	45	p. 72
Giant	40	p. 72
Minotaur	45	p. 72
Changling Qualities		
Class I SURGE	5	p. 73
Class II SURGE	10	p. 73
Class III SURGE	15	p. 73
Dormant Metagentics	5	p. 74
Drake Qualities		
Drake	65	p. 76
Latent Dracomorphosis	5	p. 76
Infected Qualities (positive)		
Bandersnatch	30	p. 80
Banshee	65	p. 80
Dzoo-Noo-Qua	80	p. 80
Fomóraig	45	p. 80
Ghoul	35	p. 80
Goblin	35	p. 80
Loup-Garou	35	p. 80
Nosferatu	150	p. 80
Vampire	100	p. 81
Wendigo	100	p. 81
Infected Qualities (negative)		
Carrier	5	p. 82
Infertile Infected	5 (10 if character has Infection Power)	p. 82
Critter		
Centaur	30	p. 84
Naga	30	p. 84
Pixie	35	p. 84
Sasquatch	40	p. 84
Shapeshifters		
Fox	50	p. 86
Wolf	55	p. 86
Eagle	60	p. 86
Leopard/Jaguar	65	p. 86
Seal	70	p. 86
Tiger/Lion	75	p. 86
Bear	80	p. 86
AI (Artificial Intelligence)	110	p. 88
Free Spirits	250	p. 91

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EXPANDED BUILD POINT COST SUMMARY TABLE (CONT.)

Attributes (p.73, SR4)

Physical and Mental	10 per Attribute Point (except the max point)
Edge	10 per Attribute Point (except the max point)
Magic	10 per Attribute Point (except the max point; must possess Adept, Magician, or Mystic Adept Quality)
Resonance	10 per Attribute Point (except the max point; must possess Technomancer Quality)
Max Attribute value	25 for final Attribute Point

Skills (p.74, SR4)

Active Skills	4 per Skill Point
Knowledge Skills	2 per Skill Point (start with [Intuition + Logic] x 3 for free)
Skill Groups	10 per Group Point
Specializations	2 per Active specialization; 1 per Knowledge specialization

Resources (p.84, SR4)

Gear	1 per 5,000¥ (max 50 BP)
Spells	3 per spell (max 2 x Spellcasting/Ritual Spellcasting)
Spirits	1 BP per service owed (max = Charisma)
Bonding Foci	1 per Force Point (max 5 x Magic)
Complex Forms	1 per rating point (max forms = Logic x 2)
Sprites	1 BP per task owed (max = Charisma)
Contacts	Connection rating + Loyalty rating

Positive Qualities	Cost	Reference
360-degree Eyesight	10 BP	p. 110
Adept	5 BP	p. 77, SR4
Adrenaline Surge	5 BP	p. 96
Ambidextrous	5 BP	p. 77, SR4
Analytical Mind	5 BP	p. 96
Animal Empathy	10 BP	p. 77, SR4
Animal Pelage	5 to 10 B	p. 111
Aptitude	10 BP	p. 77, SR4
Aptitude	10 BP	p. 77, SR4
Arcane Arrester	25 BP	p. 111
Astral Chameleon	5 BP	p. 77, SR4
Astral Sight	5 BP	p. 24, SM
Authority	10 BP	p. 168, Unwired
Balance Receptor	5 BP	p. 111
Beak	5 or 10 BP	p. 111
Bicardiac	10 BP	p. 111
Bilingual	5 BP	p. 96
Biocompatability	10 BP	p. 20, Aug
Biosonar	25 BP	p. 111
Black Market Pipeline	10 BP	p. 96
Blandness	10 BP	p. 78, SR4
Bone Spikes	5 BP	p. 111
Born Rich	10 BP	p. 96
Broad Auditory Spectrum	5 BP	p. 111
Camouflage	5 or 10 BP	p. 112
Catlike	10 BP	p. 96
Celerity	5 BP	p. 112
Chatty	BP p. 36,	Unwired
Claws	5 or 10 BP	p. 112
Climate Adaptation	10 BP	p. 112

Positive Qualities	Cost	Reference
Code Flux	5 BP	p. 168, Unwired
Codeslinger	10 BP	p. 78, SR4
Codeslinger	10 BP	p. 78, SR4
College Education	5 BP	p. 96
Common Sense	5 BP	p. 96
Corrosive Spit	10 BP	p. 112
Deep Cover	5 or 10 BP	p. 97
Defensive Secretion	5 BP	p. 113
Dermal Alteration	5 to 15 BP	p. 112
Dermal Deposits	10 BP	p. 113
Digital Doppelganger	10 BP	p. 97
Double Jointed	5 BP	p. 78, SR4
Electrosense	10 BP	p. 113
Elongated Limbs	5 BP	p. 113
Erased	5 or 10 BP	p. 97
Escaped Clone	5 BP	p. 97
Exceptional Attribute	20 BP	p. 78, SR4
Exceptional Attribute	20 BP	p. 78, SR4
Fame	5 to 15 BP	p. 97
Fangs	5 BP	p. 113
First Impression	5 BP	p. 78, SR4
First Impression	5 BP	p. 78, SR4
Fixated	5 BP	p. 93
Focused Concentration	10 or 20 BP	p. 78, SR4
Former Ally Spirit	15 BP	p. 93
Frog Tongue	10 BP	p. 113
Functional Tail	5 to 15 BP	p. 113
Gearhead	5 or 10 BP	p. 98
Genecrafted	5 BP	p. 20, Aug
Genetic Heritage	10 BP	p. 20, Aug

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EXPANDED BUILD POINT COST SUMMARY TABLE (CONT.)

Positive Qualities	Cost	Reference
Gills	5 BP	p. 114
Glamour	15 BP	p. 113
Goring Horns	5 BP	p. 114
Greasy Skin	5 BP	p. 114
Guts	5 BP	p. 78, SR4
Hawk Eye	5 BP	p. 98
High Pain Tolerance	5 to 15 BP	p. 78, SR4
Home Ground	10 BP	p. 78, SR4
Human Looking	5 BP	p. 78, SR4
Inspired	5 BP	p. 98
Intuitive Hacking	5 BP	p. 37, Unwired
Juryrigger	10 BP	p. 98
Keen-Eared	5 BP	p. 114
Larger Tusks	10 BP	p. 114
Latent Awakening	5 BP	p. 25, SM
Latent Technomancer	5 BP	p. 37, Unwired
Lightning Reflexes	15 BP	p. 98
Linguist	5 BP	p. 98
Low-Light Vision	5 BP	p. 114
Lucky	20 BP	p. 79, SR4
Made Man	10 BP	p. 98
Magic Resistance	5 to 20 BP	p. 79, SR4
Magician	15 BP	p. 79, SR4
Magnetosense	5 BP	p. 114
Marsupial Pouch	5 B	p. 114
Mentor Spirit	5 BP	p. 79, SR4
Metagenetic Improvement (Attribute)	20 BP	p. 114
Metahuman Traits	5 BP	p. 114
Mistaken Identity	10 BP	p. 98
Monkey Paws	5 BP	p. 114
More than Metahuman	5 BP	p. 37, Unwired
Murky Link	10 BP	p. 79, SR4
Mystic Adept	10 BP	p. 79, SR4
Nasty Vibe	5 BP	p. 112
Natural Athlete	10 BP	p. 100
Natural Hardening	10 BP	p. 79, SR4
Natural Immunity	5 or 15 BP	p. 79, SR4
Natural Venom	10 BP	p. 115
Night Vision	5 BP	p. 100
Obscure	5 BP	p. 37, Unwired
Obscure	5 BP	p. 37, Unwired
Ogre Stomach	5 BP	p. 115
Outdoorsman	10 BP	p. 100
Paragon	5 BP	p. 37, Unwired
Perceptive	5 or 10 BP	p. 100
Perfect Time	5 BP	p. 100
Photographic Memory	10 BP	p. 80, SR4
Photometabolism	5 BP	p. 115
Piloting Origin	5 or 10 BP	p. 91
Privileged Family Name	5 BP	p. 100
Proboscis	10 BP	p. 115
Quick Healer	10 BP	p. 80, SR4
Redundancy	5 BP	p. 169, Unwired

Positive Qualities	Cost	Reference
Resistance to Pathogens/Toxins	5 or 10 BP	p. 80, SR4
Resonance Bond	Sprite's Edge x 5 BP	p. 37, Unwired
Restricted Gear	5 BP	p. 101
Rootkit	10 BP	p. 169, Unwired
Sapper	5 BP	p. 169, Unwired
Satyr Legs	10 BP	p. 115
School of Hard Knocks	5 BP	p. 101
Sense of Direction	5 BP	p. 101
Sensei	5 BP	p. 101
Setae	10 BP	p. 115
Shiva Arms	15 or 25 BP	p. 115
Speed Reading	5 BP	p. 101
Spell/Spirit Knack	5 BP	p. 26, SM
Spirit Affinity	10 BP	p. 80, SR4
Spirit Pact	Spirit's Edge x 5 BP	p. 26, SM
Synthetic Sympathy	10 BP	p. 37, Unwired
Technical School Education	5 BP	p. 101
Technomancer	5 BP	p. 80, SR4
Thermal Sensitivity	5 BP	p. 115
Thermographic Vision	5 BP	p. 115
Tough as Nails	10 per level	p. 101
Toughness	10 BP	p. 80, SR4
Trust Fund	10 or 20 BP	p. 101
Trustworthy	5 or 20 BP	p. 101
Type O System	30 BP	p. 20, Aug
Underwater Vision	5 BP	p. 115
Vomeronasal Organ	10 BP	p. 116
Water Sprite	5 BP	p. 101
Webbed Hands and Toes	5 BP	p. 116
Wild Card Nano Prototype	30 BP	p. 20, Aug
Will to Live	5 to 15 BP	p. 80, SR4

Negative Qualities	Bonus	Reference
Addiction	+5 to +30 BP	p. 80, SR4
Adiposis	+15 BP	p. 116
AIPS	+5 BP/level	p. 37, Unwired
Albinism	+10 BP	p. 102
Allergy	+5 to +20 BP	p. 80, SR4
Amnesia	+10 or 25 BP	p. 102
Aspected Magician	+5 to 10	BP p. 26, SM
Assensing Rejection	+10 BP	p. 163, Aug
Asthma	+15 BP	p. 102
Astral Beacon	+5 BP	p. 81, SR4
Astral Hazing	+10 BP (15 BP for Awakened characters)	p. 116
Augmentation Addict	+10 BP	p. 21, Aug
Bad Luck	+20 BP	p. 81, SR4
Bad Rep	+5 BP	p. 102
Berserker	+10 BP	p. 116
Big Regret	+5 BP	p. 102
Bioluminescence	+5 BP	p. 116
Biosystem Overstress	+10 BP	p. 21, Aug
Bi-Polar	+10 BP	p. 102

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EXPANDED BUILD POINT COST SUMMARY TABLE (CONT.)

Negative Qualities	Bonus	Reference
Borrowed Time	+20 BP	p. 102
Buggy 'Ware	+5 BP per Rating (max. rating 4)	p. 21, Aug
Cephalopoidal Skull	+10 BP	p. 116
Chronic Dissociation Syndrome	+10 BP	p. 163, Aug
Codeblock	+5 BP	p. 81, SR4
Combat Paralysis	+20 BP	p. 81, SR4
Computer Illiterate	+5 BP	p. 103
Cranial Bomb	+10 BP	p. 103
Critter Spook	+5 BP	p. 117
Cursed	+5 BP per rating (max. 4)	p. 26, SM
Cyberpsychosis	+10 BP	p. 21, Aug
Cyclopean Eye	+10 BP	p. 117
Data Shadow	+5 BP/level	p. 37, Unwired
Day Job	+5 to 15 BP	p. 103
Deformity	+5 or 25 BP	p. 117
Delusion	+10 BP	p. 163, Aug
Dementia	+20 BP	p. 163, Aug
Dependent(s)	+5 to 15 BP	p. 104
Distinctive Style	+5 to 35 BP	p. 103
Elf Poser	+5 BP	p. 81, SR4
Emotion Leak	+10 BP	p. 163, Aug
Enemy	+Variable (max. 25)	p. 104
Evil Twin	+10 BP	p. 104
Extravagant Eyes	+5 BP	p. 117
Feathers	+5 BP	p. 117
Flashbacks	+5 or 10 BP	p. 105
Focus Addiction	+5 to 30 BP	p. 26, SM
Geas	+10 BP	p. 27, SM
Gene Freak	+10 BP	p. 21, Aug
Ghost in the Machine	5 or 10 BP	p. 81
Gremlins	+5 to +20 BP	p. 81, SR4
Gremlins	+5 to +20 BP	p. 81, SR4
Hallucinations	+20 BP	p. 163, Aug
High-Maintenance	Implant +5 BP	p. 22, Aug
Hung Out to Dry	+10 BP	p. 105
Illiterate	+10 BP	p. 105
Impaired (Attribute)	+5 BP	p. 118
Implant-Induced Immune Deficiency	+10 BP	p. 22, Aug
In Debt	+5 to 30 BP	p. 105
Incompetent	+5 BP	p. 82, SR4
Infirm	+20 BP	p. 82, SR4
Insectoid Features	+5 BP	p. 117
Judas	+10 BP	p. 105
Liar	+5 BP	p. 105
Lost Loved One	+5 BP	p. 105
Low Pain Tolerance	+10 BP	p. 82, SR4
Mania/Phobia	+5 to 25 BP	p. 164, Aug
Media Junkie	+5 to 30 BP	p. 37, Unwired
Mental Handicap	+10 per level (max 3 levels)	p. 105
Mood Hair	+5 BP	p. 117
Multiple Personality Disorder	20 BP	p. 164, Aug

Negative Qualities	Bonus	Reference
Mysterious Implant	+5 to 25 BP	p. 106
Mystery Mod Noise	+5 BP	p. 22, Aug
Nano Intolerance	+5 BP	p. 22, Aug
Neoteny	+10 B	p. 117
Night Blindness	+5 BP	p. 107
Nocturnal	+10 BP	p. 117
Oblivious	+5 BP	p. 107
Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder	+10 BP	p. 164, Aug
Ork Poser	+5 BP	p. 83, SR4
Pacifist	+5 or 10 BP	p. 107
Paranoia	+10 BP	p. 107
Paraplegic	+10 or 15 BP	p. 107
Poor Self Control	+5 to 15 BP	p. 107
Prejudiced	+5 to 25	p. 108
Progeria	+30 BP	p. 118
Quadriplegic	+20 BP (10 BP if in Full Immersion Lifestyle)	p. 108
Reality Impaired	+5 BP	p. 38, Unwired
Records on File	+10 BP	p. 109
Reduced (Sense)	+5 to 15 BP	p. 108
Scales	+5 BP	p. 118
Scent Glands	+10 BP	p. 118
Scorched	+5 BP (+10 for hackers/technomancers)	p. 83, SR4
Sensitive Neural Structure	+5 BP (+10 for hackers/technomancers)	p. 83, SR4
Sensitive System	+15 BP	p. 83, SR4
Sensory Overload Syndrome	+10 BP	p. 109
Signature	+10 BP	p. 109
Simsense Vertigo	+10 BP (+15 for hackers/technomancers)	p. 83, SR4
SINner	+5 or +10 BP	p. 83, SR4
Slow Healer	+10 BP	p. 119
Spammed	+5 BP	p. 109
Spirit Bane	+10 BP	p. 83, SR4
Striking Skin Pigmentation	+5 BP	p. 119
Stubby Arms	+5 BP	p. 119
Symbiosis	+10 BP	p. 119
Temporal Lobe Epilepsy	+10 BP	p. 22, Aug
Third Eye	+5 BP	p. 119
Thorns	+10 BP	p. 119
Uncontrolled Metastasis	+10 or 20 BP	p. 164, Aug
Uncouth	+20 BP	p. 83, SR4
Uneducated	+20 BP	p. 83, SR4
Unusual Hair	+5 BP	p. 119
Vendetta	+5 BP	p. 109
Vestigial Tail	+5 BP	p. 119
Virtual Personality	+5 BP/level	p. 38, Unwired
Wanted	+10 BP	p. 110
Weak Immune System	+5 BP	p. 84, SR4
Wild Technomancer	+10 BP	p. 38, Unwired
Will to Die	+10 BP	p. 164, Aug

Simon Wentworth (order #1132857)