TECHNOCRACY RELOADED

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Unit 5: Q Division

Technology... is a queer thing. It brings you great gifts with one hand, and it stabs you in the back with the other.

— C.P. Snow

I always get nervous the night before an exam.

You would think that after the shit I have seen, a blank Scantron card and a number 2 pencil would barely register, let alone frighten me. You'd think that the recruitment process, removal from my oldlife, 18-hour training days, and the paste they try to pass off as food here would bother me, but they don't. It's all part of the process. I don't mind.

You'd think that the big bad world out there, filled with monsters, and mayhem, and Reality Deviants all trying to tear existence to shreds to serve their perverse masters would make me douse my drawers. It doesn't. I get to be a hero to humanity. I get to help people. I get to save people. I realize I might…hell, I probably will die in the process. But that's okay. If I go down fighting some tentacled horror from beyond the realm of reason then at least I get to die a hero. I'm okay with that.

But this goddamn placement test I have to take in the morning is scaring the shit out of me. It's a big one. Pass, and I will have my pick of assignments. Fail, and its six more months of barracks living, six more months of basic training, and six more months of wondering if I am good enough to serve the Technocratic Union.

So, yes. I have test anxiety. I always have. I probably always will.

Exam is at 0700. Nine hours from now. I hope that's enough time for this Sleepteacher to help me learn Applied Programming 301, because I damn sure didn't have time to study this week.

Technocratic Focus

In their quest to foster a better, safer and more predictable world, the Technocracy has embraced Enlightened Science. Most Technocrats dismiss the idea of magick as Reality Deviant nonsense, failing to see that the end result of Enlightened Science and Magick are the same — the manipulation of reality on a fundamental level.

As explained in **Mage 20**, Technocrats are tied to their tools and practices (or apparatuses and Procedures) to a far greater degree than mystic willworkers or technomancers subscribing to mystic philosophies, such as the Virtual Adepts or the Society of Ether. While other mages learn to harness the magick within and cast aside the need for instruments, a Technocrat recognizes that their prowess with Enlightened Science merely permits them to apply advanced principles to achieve desired effects through interaction with technology. Without the appropriate apparatus, a Technocrat is no more able to execute Adjustments or Procedures than any member of the Masses.

As a result, many Technocrats, particularly those engaging in field work on the Front Lines, make it a point to master several apparatuses that do not necessarily require bulky or esoteric equipment. One need look no further than the suits and mirrorshades employed by Black Suits to see the impact of fashion as an apparatus, and operatives within the Syndicate can work mighty Procedures with little more than a bank card and a cell phone.

Technocratic Focus Elements

For additional focus elements that characters from the Technocratic Union might use, see the entries listed below. For easy reference, each element entry features the book detailing the paradigm, practice or instrument in question.

M20 = **Mage 20th Anniversary Edition**

BoS = **The Book of Secrets**

Common Technocratic Paradigms

A World of Gods and Monsters   M20

All the World's a Stage   BoS

Ancient Wisdom is the Key   BoS

Embrace the Threshold BoS

Everything is Chaos   M20

Everything is Data   M20

Everything's an Illusion, Prison or Mistake   M20

Might is Right   M20

One-Way Trip to Oblivion   M20

Transcend Your Limits BoS

We are Meant to be Wild   BoS

We Are *NOT* Men!   BoS

Common Technocratic Practices

Art of Desire / Hypereconomics   M20

Cybernetics   M20

Dominion   M20

Hypertech   M20

Martial Arts   M20

Psionics   BoS

Reality Hacking   M20

Weird Science   M20

Yoga   M20

Common Technocratic Instruments

Armor   M20

Artwork   M20

Blood and Fluids   M20

Body Modification   BoS

Bodywork   M20

Bones and Remains   M20

Books and Periodicals   M20

Brews and Concoctions   M20

Computer Gear   M20

Cups and Vessels   M20
Cybernetic Implants   BoS
Dances and Movement   M20
Devices and Machines   M20
Drugs and Poisons   M20
Elements   M20
Energy   M20
Eye Contact   M20
Fashion M20
Food and Drink M20
Formulae and Math   M20
Group Rites   M20
Internet Activity   BoS
Labs and Gear   M20
Languages   M20
Management and HR   M20
Mass Media   M20
Meditation   M20
Money and Wealth   M20
Music   M20
Ordeals and Exertions   M20
Social Domination   M20
Symbols   M20
Thought-Forms M20
Tricks and Illusions   M20
True Names   M20
Voice and Vocalizations   M20
Weapons   M20
Writings, Inscriptions and Runes   M20

Adjustments

Adjustments, also referred to as subtle Procedures by some agents, are applications of Enlightened Science that do not typically strain the bounds of belief in technologically developed regions. The majority of the time, the Masses accept the results of an Adjustment as perfectly normal, rational, and reasonable. Adjustments are the preferred method of applying Enlightened Science outside of the safety of a Construct. The Adjustment below is routinely employed by field operatives.

The Master's Edge (•• Mind; possibly with • or •• Entropy added)

The power of body language, posture, and other non-verbal cues during face-to-face interactions cannot be overstated. Through the application of this Adjustment, an operative maximizes the impact of these factors to enhance social interaction. While this is commonly used to project a menacing or intimidating presence, the operative can easily apply the same principles to enhance virtually any social interaction.

System: Built on the foundation of basic Mind 2 principles, this Adjustment affects the target's mood, increasing susceptibility to the emotion the operative wishes to elicit. This is relatively standard Influence-Magick as described in **How Do You Do That?,** p. 116. The operative chooses what type of emotional state they wish to instill in their target, such as fear, calm, or even a sense of trust. The player then rolls Enlightenment at a difficulty equal to the target's Willpower Trait, or 4, whichever is higher. The target rolls Willpower at difficulty 6 to resist this effect, with each success canceling one of the operative's successes. Any remaining successes reduce the difficulty (to no lower than -3) of the operative's Attribute + Ability rolls when incorporating the impacted emotion for the duration. If projecting fear, this reduces the difficulty of Manipulation + Intimidation rolls, whereas an operative projecting an aura of confidence would enjoy reduced difficulties to Charisma + Etiquette rolls to impress a target.

By incorporating Entropy 1 into the effect, the operative gains insight into the target's nonverbal responses to the procedure, allowing for minute adjustments to undermine the target's resistance. This allows the operative to increase the difficulty of the target's Willpower roll to resist this procedure by 1 per success, to a maximum of +3.

If the operative incorporates Entropy 2 into the Adjustment, random and subtle changes in the environment occur that enhance the targeted mood. This allows the operative to divide successes gained from the Enlightenment roll between impacting the difficulties regarding the effect as detailed above and increasing the difficulty of Willpower rolls and Attribute + Ability checks made by the target to resist all social Attribute + Ability checks made by the operative for the duration of the effect. Each success spent by the Technocrat in this fashion increases the difficulty of the target's affected rolls by +1 to a maximum of +3.

Procedures

Blatant Procedures, or simply, "Procedures" involve the application of Enlightened principles beyond what the Masses have been conditioned to accept. The use of Procedures is officially frowned upon outside the safety and security of a Construct. Most supervisors and Symposiums maintain a level of flexibility in their regulation of Procedures, especially in areas where the Ascension Conflict is particularly aggressive, or Reality Deviants routinely endanger the Masses. Still, even in the most dangerous regions of the Front Lines, an operative is expected to utilize solo judgment and appropriate decorum. Agents failing to show the appropriate discretion when applying Procedures should expect consequences including demotion, reassignment, and reprogramming. Operatives failing to respond to such measures ultimately find themselves relegated to Degree Absolute.

All Triggers Locked (•• Forces / •• Matter)

When you absolutely, positively *must* kill every motherfucker in the room, accept no substitutes. This wildly vulgar Procedure — a measure of last resort — allows a Black Suit or cyborg to snatch from a distance the guns of every person in the immediate vicinity, snap them back to the agent's hands, merge them all together into a single line of firearms, lock their triggers, and fire

them all simultaneously until the guns run out of ammunition. There's no way to aim the resulting hail of bullets but so long as the agent doesn't care about collateral damage, there's not much chance of escaping the carnage, either.

System: Inspired by S. Shankar's enthralling Indian film *Enthiran* ("Robot"), this Procedure uses Forces 2 to grab all the guns, Matter 2 to fuse them, and a combination of both to turn a bunch of different guns into a single one-use autofire weapon.

For simplicity's sake, assume that this attack demands at least six successes at a base difficulty of 7, and requires three turns of concentration to activate: one turn to grab the guns, one turn to fuse them into a single line of weapons, and one to open fire. The attack fills the surrounding area with gunfire for three turns, inflicting seven dice of lethal damage to everyone within that area, per turn, unless they're under sufficient cover to block bullets. Treat the attack area as a half-circle explosion with a Blast Area (see **Mage 20**, pp. 437-438 and p. 455) of 15. Major and minor characters may try to soak the damage or dodge the blast, but bystanders and cannon fodder are simply mowed down.

Okay, But Where Are the Guns?

The information in this chapter is organized according to Wonder Type, then alphabetically by dot rating. For Storytellers and Players looking to find a particular piece of equipment, the following lists may be helpful.

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Chemicals, Gases, and Poisons   CLN-20 Fun House Gas p. xx, MP-34 Multipurpose Pacification Gas p. xx, Variable Atmospheric Pharmacological Emitter (the VAPE) p. xx

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Technocratic Gear

The Technocracy excels at the creation and dissemination of equipment. Apart from the various apparatuses employed by the Conventions, the basic mundane tech made available through the resources of the Syndicate, and the innumerable pet projects of individual Technocrats, the Union is constantly developing, refining, and deploying cutting edge technology to agents and operatives. This section is a mere sample of the technology available to loyal and productive members of the Union.

Gadgets

Many components of the Technocratic toolkit are mass produced, single-use items that employ Enlightened Science to achieve a specific, predictable Effect. All but the most esoteric Gadgets can be utilized by properly trained Extraordinary Citizens.

•• CLN-20 "Fun House Gas"

Enlightenment 3, Primal Energy 10, Background Cost 2 pts. per grenade

With a similar density to standard atmosphere, Fun House can persist in an area for up to an hour causing intense and unpredictable optical refraction, making light in the affected area bounce erratically, similar to a kaleidoscope. Like most gasses, the particles of CLN-20 shift constantly, making the visual distortions unpredictable, preventing people from getting their bearings. Additional air movement from fans or running, for example, causes intense disorientation.

As a purely optical distortion, it affects all forms of vision that rely on light, including infrared and night vision. Agents deploying Fun House are strongly encouraged to use non-optical sensors, such as the C-SAM. LIAMs are similarly unaffected by CLN-20.

System: CLN-20 gas brings the visuals of 1970s LSD trip films to life, as eyes and all other optical sensors become entirely useless. The unpredictable visual distortions ruin depth and color perception, making it impossible to see thanks to a Forces 2 effect that refracts the light within 20 feet of the point of detonation.

Unless deliberately blown away from the target area or otherwise dissipated, CLN-20 gas remains in the area for 30-60 minutes. While incredibly disconcerting to virtually everything that enters the area of effect, the gas itself does no harm. The chance of falls and other accidents rises drastically within the gas' effect, though due to an Entropy 2 Adjustment incorporated into the gas.

•• Spray Cams

Enlightenment 2, Primal Energy 10, Background Cost 4 pts.

Trash cams were once the cutting edge of surveillance technology, but today's technology allows agents to go even further than disguising cameras and audio equipment as garbage. Spray Cams pack millions of sensors into a device that looks and functions precisely the same as a conventional can of spray paint. With Spray Cams, entire walls can be coated in a photosensitive and acoustically absorptive nanite film, allowing an entire army of covert cameras to be placed on a single surface. Not only does this method ensure that disruption or damage does not compromise the surveillance cluster, it means that the images captured by the cluster can be composited to create three-dimensional videos, complete with positional sound.

System: Any agent with the access code can easily access the information recorded by the Spray Cams through a Data 2 Adjustment, forming a Rank 1 Data connection to the location of the

Spray Cams. The cams themselves do the actual work, meaning the agent using them does not even need to be fluent in Data so long as they have an internet capable smartphone, tablet, or computer. Spray Cams last up to 3 months if the affected area is not greatly disturbed (such as being demolished or painted over).

••• Bonding Facilitation Fluid

Enlightenment 3, Primal Energy 15, Background Cost 3 pts. (Per 10 use tube)

Bonding Facilitation Fluid (BFF) permanently bonds two surfaces together on a structural level. Although effectively the opposite of Clear Cut, BFF is a much more intricate nanite system, as merely creating a superficial bond between the two surfaces rarely achieves permanent results. Indeed, many object combinations simply do not have enough strength at their surface to provide real support. This creates the very real possibility of a shear point, giving the combination a point of failure.

Instead, BFF searches deep within each of the objects to locate points of stability, such as metallic microstructures or wood grain. Once comparable points of strength are located on both objects, BFF merges them at a molecular level, sharing stress between both objects. This also means that the bond is generally a gradient of both materials that is a substantial thickness, preventing the objects from being separated once joined.

Do *not* fuck around with this stuff. Epoxying your fingers together is one thing, but BFF cares about structural integrity, not biological functionality. Flesh affected by BFF may become so mangled that it'd be easier to just cut the affected tissue out and grow a replacement.

System: A Matter 3/Life 3 Adjustment combines the patterns of any two objects or creatures together on a fundamental level, effectively gluing the targets together via technomagick. This is subtle, as to mundane observation the two objects (or creatures, or combination thereof) are simply glued together with an impressive adhesive. Separating things bonded with this Effect becomes impossible without using Matter, Life, or destroying the glued portion of one or both targets. One application of BFF binds up to 6 square inches (15 sq. cm) of surface area.

If BFF is applied to one target and not used to bind to another creature or object within a number of turns equal to the successes on the activation roll for the Gadget, the fluid loses its potency, becoming simple, mundane superglue.

••• Clear Cut

Enlightenment 4, Primal Energy 10, Background Cost 4 pts.

At its most basic, Clear Cut is a filament with a tack on each end. The filament grows or contracts as needed to prevent any unwanted slack. Once the tacks are in place and the filament is arranged on a flat surface, Clear Cut gets to work, disassembling matter on a horizontal plane until it reaches a surface of a different composition. Essentially, Clear Cut vaporizes a line clear through whatever it's tacked to, without damaging anything else, unless the agent taps the tacks, giving it the go ahead to cut through the next layer.

Clear Cut is programmed with a variety of possible cut styles, including a U-shaped cut allowing the cut surface to be removed and then replaced seamlessly.

System: The operative tacks a filament to a surface such as a wall or floor and then activates the gadget. The filament uses a Matter 3 effect to transmute the targeted area into air, effectively

burning through the material of the surface and dealing damage to the target according to the Base Damage or Duration chart (see **Mage 20** p. 504). This uses an extended roll, dealing damage each turn at the cost of 1 point of Primal Energy. Once the Clear Cut either completes the programmed cut or runs out of Primal Energy, it becomes inert.

••• HIPSTer

Enlightenment 3, Primal Energy 15, Background Cost 3 pts. (for a single use)

The Hidden in Plain Sight Tracker, or HIPSTer, is a malleable metal alloy that adheres to virtually any surface and flakes off when it experiences air resistance, such as that experienced by a vehicle in motion. The faster the vehicle travels, the more frequent the HIPSTer sheds, ensuring that the particle trail remains consistent, no matter what speed the target vehicle travels. Since the HIPSTer resembles a lump of metal, it can easily be placed over weld spots, making it all but impossible to spot. Additionally, the HIPSTer does not rely on electronic parts, making it invisible to RF scanners.

The flake trail created by the HIPSTer is difficult to see with the naked eye but can be easily spotted by shining an infrared light and observing the IR being reflected back in night vision devices.

The HIPSDTer version incorporates nanoprocessors into each metallic flake released, allowing any agent trained in Data to track the target's location as well as the path by which the target travels. These nanoprocessors are small enough, their signal in an advanced enough range, that this gadget remains invisible to RF scanners.

System: The agent must attach the gadget to the target vehicle. This creates a trail she can follow, provided she leverages the appropriate equipment.

•   The agent utilizing a HIPSTer and appropriate equipment may make all Attribute + Ability checks used to track the target vehicle at a -2 difficulty.

•   When using the HIPSDTer, in addition to the mundane tracking benefits above, the agent may also utilize Data to track the vehicle, claiming a 3 success Data Connection (see **Mage 20** p. 524)

••• LIAM

Enlightenment 3, Primal Energy 5, Background Cost 2 pts. per grenade.

A grenade with an attitude problem, the LIAM has a specially programmed set of skills: It finds you, and it destroys you. Outfitted with sonar navigation systems and basic maneuvering thrusters, LIAMs fly to their target area and perform a seek-and-destroy operation.

Thanks to the combination of their thrusters and easily thrown shape, creative agents can engage targets behind cover, around corners, and up HVAC vents. A LIAM can even be programmed to detonate on command or after a specific amount of time, although this reduces the success rate as LIAMs have a finite amount of fuel.

System: LIAM's shape and size (roughly that of a baseball) make it easy to throw. Once in the air, thrusters kick in, ensuring that even if the target moves or the throw was bad, the grenade finds its mark.

Once armed and thrown, a LIAM flies toward the target relying on a Correspondence 2/Forces 3/Prime 2 Procedure to track the target while generating propulsion. This permits the user to add the successes gained on the activation roll to the successes on a Dexterity + Athletics roll to hit their target. Upon detonation, the LIAM deals aggravated damage using a Forces 3/Prime 2 Adjustment. The Damage generated and the Blast Radius of the explosion is equal to the successes gained on the activation roll when arming the LIAM.

•• Mightier Pen

Enlightenment 4, Primal Energy 5, Background Cost 3 pts.

After several iterations of design, redesign, success and embarrassment, Q Division has designed the perfect multi-use tool for agents seeking an innocuous weapon. This pen is designed with several functions, each of which, unfortunately destroy the item in the process. However, for an easy to hide holdout weapon, the Mightier Pen cannot be beat.

For fashion forward operatives, a version of this gadget is also available in a watch format.

System: Until activated, this gadget is a simple pen that never seems to run out of ink and writes smoothly under virtually any circumstance. The watch version is a simple atomic watch.

A successful activation roll allows the agent to use one of the following Procedures. Doing so destroys the pen entirely.

•   Set a timer for up to 30 seconds, after which time the pen explodes, detonating based on your activation roll using a Forces 3/Prime 2 Procedure.

•   Immediately release a non-lethal pulse of force, pushing everyone out of a ten-by-ten-foot area, centered on the pen using a Forces 3/Prime 2 Procedure. The pulse does not affect the person holding the pen.

•   Immediately fire a laser discharge using a Forces 3/Prime 2 Procedure. Aim the laser with a Dexterity + Energy Weapons roll.

•• Pre-designed Proficiency Packages

Enlightenment 3-5, Primal Energy 5-25, Background Cost 3-12 pts. per use

While PPP can be permanently implanted, that runs counter to the point: their modularity. Instead, most PPP are external in nature, hidden in a variety of ways to fit the mission environment, requiring a volume roughly equal to a toothbrush. Popular camouflage options include sunglasses, dust masks, sports bands, and mobile phones. Some PPP are even accessible via an ES-Phone app. Once accessed and activated the agent may utilize the programmed expertise.

System: The user gains a brief boost to rolls involving up to three Ability scores, chosen when the PPP is activated. Through a Mind 3 Procedure the operative receives extra dice on the selected Abilities equal to the successes achieved on the gadget's activation roll. This brain boost persists for the duration listed on the Base Damage and Duration Chart (see **Mage 20** p. 504).

•• TMBL-WD

Enlightenment 5, Primal Energy 15, Background Cost 5 pts. per unit

Compact, TMBL-WDs are little more than fist-sized balloons with small motors and an advanced 3-D imaging system.

These 'fire and forget' infiltration aids allow you to punch in a few settings, throw one, and have a handy pre-programmed illusion at your disposal. You can program the TMBL-WD to generate an independent holographic image up to the size of an average human capable of generating up to 70 decibels of sound. This illusion is short-lived but can serve as a powerful distraction.

System: With a Forces 3/Prime 2 Procedure, the user programs an illusory image into the TMBL-WD unit and releases it. This image is effectively an illusion subject to the systems detailed in **How Do You Do That?** p. 129-131. The TMBL-WD does not last very long, consuming one point of Primal Energy per minute, after which time, the illusion fails and the device self-destructs via implosion, leaving behind a useless lump of metal.

•••• MP-34 Multipurpose Pacification Gas

Enlightenment N/A, Primal Energy N/A, Background Cost 4 pts. per canister

Civilians of all sorts make fragmentation grenades a bad call in a lot of places. CS, a mild nerve agent commonly called "tear gas," provides an option that's less likely to cause collateral damage, but not everything out there gives a shit about tear gas. Q Division took the classic riot control agent and upgraded it with garlic oil, aerosolized silver, iron, capsicum, and some other goodies. If it breathes, has eyes, or skin, it's calling in sick tomorrow. The gas settles and dissipates relatively quickly, but it also sticks to moist surfaces like eyes, mouths, other mucus membranes, and sweaty skin. This means that, while it's safe to enter a gassed area soon after deployment, anything that got gassed is going to be sad until they make it to the showers.

System: Created in the lab via Matter Procedures, the most commonly distributed format MP grenades consist of a soft drink can-sized canister around a large crystal which releases a tremendously noxious gas when burned. Although not entirely colorless, MP gas does not provide any significant vision impairment besides making unprotected eyes spasm uselessly. Once dispersed, the gas remains airborne for no more than 60 seconds, although the ground and any moist surfaces have substantial MP residue, making rubbing your face against the ground a terrible idea.

Like all gas grenades, MP grenades have an open bottom through which a jet of flame and gas issues forth. The fire only burns for a turn or two but can be used as a weapon on its own by a desperate agent, dealing 4 dice of fire damage. Left alone, MP grenades produce a cloud of irritant approximately 10 yards in diameter. Anything with exposed skin suffers a -2 penalty to all dice pools. If the eyes are exposed, that penalty rises to -3. Anything breathing in the area takes 2 levels of bashing damage per turn. Anyone attempting to hold their breath must make a Stamina roll at difficulty 6 each turn as the gas damages all exposed mucus membranes.

•••• Zipper Ties

Enlightenment 4, Primal Energy 5, Background Cost 4 pts. per tie

Unenlightened citizens obviously don't like being arrested. The moment zip ties close around someone's wrists, the natural response is resentment or anger. Reality Deviants don't care for that much either, but they tend to be far more adept at getting out of restraints. If you're going to restrain a dangerous deviant, you're going to need a better set of zip ties.

Zipper Ties use a little bit of Primal Energy and Primium lacing to offer countermeasures against any sort of deviant attempts to break free from the restraint.

System: These function as mundane zip ties, restraining the hands of whoever they are placed on and dealing 1 level of bashing damage per 15 minutes the subject struggles (to a maximum of 3 levels) as the zip ties dig into the wearer's wrists. These ties also subject any magickal effect attempted by the unfortunate wearer to 4 dice of Primium Countermeasures (see **Mage 20** p. 659).

To remove Zipper Ties, the agent must cut them, rendering them effectively useless. Agents are expected to collect the discarded Zipper Ties for recycling. Primium is expensive, and littering is unmutual.

Theory and Application

Every mage, be they a mystic or Technocrat, utilizes the elements of their focus to access the Spheres and generate effects. For a mystic mage, the lines between an Instrument and a Wonder can occasionally blur. In fact, some mages may use a Wonder as a personal or unique instrument as detailed in **Mage 20** p. 587-588. This is also appropriate, and quite common among Technocrats. The Black Suit worn by an NWO operative simultaneously serves as a Trinket and a fashion apparatus for Enlightened Science.

Furthermore, to the Technocrat, Wonders ultimately function according to the principles of Enlightened Science. From a practical perspective, this means that according to everything the Technocrat believes, they can replicate the effects of a Device through individual application of the Spheres, provided reasonable materials and time are available. In practice, this means that many Technocrats can and do employ Adjustments and Procedures that are commonly found in Gadgets, Trinkets, and Devices using their own knowledge and ability in the field. Depending on the Effect, the Spheres, and the materials available, the Storyteller may allow a Technocrat to attempt to jury-rig an appropriate apparatus together using the Inventing, Modifying, and Improving Technology rules described in **Mage 20**, p. 463-464. The Storyteller may wish to treat the successes achieved on this check as a limit to the number of successes that can be achieved on the Technocrat's Enlightenment roll to initiate the Effect. Failure on the Modification and Repair check means that the Technocrat cannot attempt the Effect, as he is unable to jury-rig a functional apparatus.

Trinkets

Q Division masterfully crafts these items using cutting edge manufacturing techniques. As such they provide reliable effects, even in the hands of the Masses.

•• Operative Database

Enlightenment 4, Primal Energy 10, Background Cost 6 pts.

Operative Database, or ODb, contains lightly redacted information on all operatives in a specific geographical area, including home and work contact information both for them and their immediate supervisor, as well as personnel file photographs and fingerprints, for ease of identifying field agents. This information is not limited to Convention personnel, and the

database includes civilian agency operatives in the area, such as police, MI-6, and ASIS. Even minor civilian security agency personnel are included, enabling agents to better socially engineer their way into secured locations. Where applicable, it provides both actual names and aliases. Due to the incredibly sensitive nature of this information, each database only contains data on a specific area, equal to 100 square miles.

Data on civilians not involved in security services is freely available to Technocratic agents in good standing, without the need to purchase or requisition the ODb.

System: The agent utilizes the ODb with an activation roll to gain access to a Data 2 adjustment allowing her to utilize the information fed into the database as a Data connection (see **Mage 20** p. 524) to track the target and unearth other information about them.

The player may add successes from the activation roll to any Investigation roll made to gather information about the target as long as the Data connection to them remains.

••+ Pocket Drone

Enlightenment N/A, Primal Energy N/A, Background Cost 2+ pts. per drone

In the 21st century, any hobbyist can walk into an electronics store or toy store and get a cheap drone. If all you want to do is make a piece of plastic hover around your living room, that's easily accessible and affordable tech. Professional drones are far more expensive, extending battery life, durability, range, and camera resolution. Q Division and Iteration X are a few decades ahead on drone technology. Fortunately, once it's in the air, no one can tell the difference between a twenty-dollar toy and an incredibly subtle form of surveillance.

Standard-issue drones fit in a carefully lined case that fits in your pocket. More elaborate models can fold down into a backpack, along with all the equipment needed to operate the drone. Multiple armatures, each sporting a tiny propeller, form the crude skeleton of this device. Custom features flesh it out and give it life.

Systems: These drones are surprisingly reliant on mundane technology, but a few minor applications of Enlightened Science can customize a pocket drone and truly make it sing. You may add each of the following options to a base pocket drone by increasing the Background Point cost as indicated in the description.

• Data 2 Adjustments offer an "eye in the sky," allowing agents and armatures to acquire and track targets remotely. This modification increases the effective range of the drone's surveillance and guidance systems to global, though the drone's maximum range and battery life are unaffected. Multiple drones allow multiple viewpoints on the same location or target. **Cost:** 4 pts.

• Forces 4 Adjustments allow a drone to deliver a shocking electrical charge, a short ballistic burst, or even a low-range EMP pulse. Granted, attacking someone does tend to give away a drone's position, but a quick surprise attack can be a nice overture to a more concentrated assault. **Cost:** 8 pts.

• Mind 2 Adjustments decrease the possibility of visual detection. People overlook individual drones once they are sufficiently ubiquitous. **Cost:** 4 pts.

Additional custom Adjustments and Procedures are available upon request (and at Storyteller discretion).

•• Second Skin

Enlightenment N/A, Primal Energy N/A, Background Cost 4 pts.

The Second Skin is easier to slide on or slough off than a wetsuit. Some compare it to a superhero uniform, or at least, the kind of rubbery/latex dull black suit that has ridges, kneepads and elbow pads, groin and/or chest protection, and form-fitting anonymity. What you wear on your head is up to you, but the rest of your skin has basic protection from hostile environments in this world and others: heat, cold, electricity, acid, sonic disturbance, and so on. In other words, forces and matter that can be minimized by the Forces and Matter Procedures used to create this suit and protect you.

System: This suit confers an Armor Rating of 3, which also applies to fire, electrocution, and temperature extremes, adding 3 dice to any resistance roll to which the Armor Rating would not normally apply.

••• The Black Suit

Enlightenment N/A, Primal Energy N/A, Background Cost 6 pts.

This is the standard-issue black suit utilized by the NWO Operative Methodology. Although available to members of other Conventions, the vast majority of these suits are found among Black Suit Operatives.

System: Matter 3 Adjustments worked into the fabric of these suits provide an Armor Rating of 4 to the wearer with no Dexterity penalty. Beyond that, many Black Suit Operatives use the suit itself as an apparatus for Mind Effects.

•• Parkour Slippers

Enlightenment N/A, Primal Energy N/A, Background Cost 6 pts.

Spy movies have fallen in love with the sport of *parkour,* encouraging sexy spies to run from their Lamborghinis, climb up construction cranes, and leap from skyscraper to skyscraper, chasing after whomever just stole their cell phone, took their picture, or caught them sleeping with the supervillain's easily seduced girlfriend.

Of course, those are just movies. Real-life parkour is far more dangerous. Correspondence Adjustments increase your chances of getting from rooftop to construction crane unseen. If that's not enough, consider some better gear for your feet.

Q Division's latest line of parkour slippers are like form-fitting gloves for your hands and feet. Extra grip gives the agent an edge in high-altitude human-powered bipedal transport. Experience with Strength training and Athletics are still a must, but an agent has the cutting edge of technology to aid her.

System: Through the application of Matter 3 procedures this set of gloves and footwear greatly increases the grip and control an agent may exert when engaging in parkour. Wearing a full set of Parkour slippers on hands and feet reduces the difficulty of any Strength + Athletics roll made to perform jumping, climbing, running, and other feats of physical prowess at the Storyteller's discretion.

Devices

Technology designated as a Device operates under such advanced principles of Enlightened Science that its function is beyond the understanding of most Extraordinary Citizens. Some specialists among the rank and file can access the functions of these Devices, but doing so always incurs a level of heightened risk. In the name of safety, restricting access to these Devices to Enlightened operatives is highly recommended.

• LL/AP-15 "Finger Guns"

Enlightenment 2, Primal Energy 5, Background Cost 3 pts.

Disguised as ordinary rings, LL/AP-15s are discrete, self-charging, electroshock weapons. Finger Guns convert the user's motion into electrical energy, storing the energy in an onboard battery that makes up the bulk of the unit. Although it takes several minutes to build up a full charge, the virtual invisibility of Finger Guns allows them to be used in highly secure areas. Several firing configurations are available, such as discharging in the direction of a pointing finger or outward from a closed fist.

System: Easy to disguise and use, LL/AP-15 slips onto an agent's fingers, where they charge themselves in short order. Once in place, they are virtually impossible to differentiate from an ordinary ring, requiring 4 successes on a Perception + Technology roll to identify as out of place. Once triggered via implant, ES-Phone app, or voice activation ("pew" is a popular choice), the rings discharge an attack, which can be aimed via Dexterity + Energy Weapons. Damage is dealt via a Forces 2 Procedure, fueled by the stored kinetic energy within the rings.

•• Helping Hand

Enlightenment 4, Primal Energy 10, Background Cost 6 pts.

The Helping Hand is a self-powered, semi-autonomous levitation device. Because it functions much like an agent's natural hands, but without the constraints of being physically attached, the number of uses that an agent can find for it is virtually limitless. Control devices are available in numerous form factors, including implants, ties, necklaces, and an ES-Phone app.

Helping Hands have significant levitation power, with applications in climbing, lifting objects, and even carrying part of an agent's load. Their manual dexterity is also well above average for a human, allowing experienced Helping Hand operators to assist in soldering circuitry, or using a firearm. They do not, however, provide any tactile feedback to their operator, making them less helpful for delicate tasks.

In other words, if you try to pick a lock with a pair of Helping Hands, it's going to be a pain in the ass, because you won't be able to feel what you're doing. They're great for holding a tension bar in place while you work on the tumblers, though. Creative agents find lots of uses, such as having your Hand grab you by the belt to jump off most buildings safely, and having your Hand give you some upward force to make falling safer and climbing a hell of a lot easier.

System: A basic Forces 2 Procedure provides the user with telekinetic ability. Successes indicate the specific functions available through this Device, as detailed in **How Do You DO That?** p. 28.

•• PP-2 Omni-Badge

Enlightenment 4, Primal Energy 10, Background Cost 6 pts.

The Omni-Badge merges the classic elegance of a bifold badge holder with the latest in high resolution e-ink technology, allowing the screen of the badge to mimic the look and feel of virtually any badge or identification card.

System: The Omni-Badge allows an agent to present official looking credentials for any agency in the world by manipulating the appearance of the included badge and ID card through a simple Forces 2/Prime 2 illusion, while subtly reinforcing deference to the authority of the badge holder through a Mind 2 Adjustment. For more information on illusions and how to resist them, see **How Do You DO That?** p. 129.

•• Universal Neutralizer Device (UND)

Enlightenment 4, Primal Energy 20, Background Cost 6 pts.

Simple tactics are often the most effective. This underrated but astonishingly effective Device fires disruption fields that disable most forms of non-magickal machines; cars die, guns jam, computers crash. These bursts of disruptive energies can even affect magickal machines, although they stand a better chance than usual of functioning despite the attack. Best of all, the UND appears to be completely innocuous, with effects that seem like run-of-the-mill bad luck. Thus, Extraordinary Citizens can easily use such gear, and often provide unseen support during engagements by disrupting the enemy's technology while high-ranking operatives handle the heavy lifting.

UNDs come in various sizes and shapes. The most common configuration, however, appears to be a slim black box that resembles a cell phone. The screen display allows the user to target the machine, and then shows whether that target has been successfully neutralized.

System: Upon activation, this Device sends out a simple, invisible energy pulse that initiates an Entropy 2/Forces 2/Matter 2 Adjustment. Entropy tilts probability in favor of the target technology's failure; Forces disrupts electronic and radio-wave functions; and Matter jams, warps or melts material components in subtle ways. Since those energies are invisible to perceptions (though discernible with Rank 1 Forces perceptions), and the neutralization effects seem perfectly normal, this Device and its Effects are subtle.

Each application of the UND expends a single charge, and it affects a single targeted piece of technology. The difficulty to disrupt that target is 5, and a single success is enough to disrupt most forms of mundane technology that are car-sized or smaller. Larger targets may require two or more successes, and targets larger than a small airplane rely upon too many systems for a single application of this Device to neutralize them.

Because the UND projects energy, not projectiles, its effective range is line-of-sight; that said, especially fast, small or distant targets, like aircraft or microtechnology, raise the difficulty depending on what it is.

Wonders of any kind get a soak roll to resist deactivation. The owner of the targeted Wonder rolls that Wonder's Arete/Enlightenment, and each success deducts one success from the UND's attack. If the Wonder neutralizes all the UND's successes, that Wonder remains unaffected. A UND does not, however, affect a Wonder that doesn't depend upon mechanical parts, electrical impulses, and so forth; a Trinary computer can be neutralized, but an enchanted wand cannot.

Normally, the UND's disruptive effects last for the normal Duration noted on the *Base Damage or Duration chart* (see **Mage 20**, p. 504). Three successes or more on a UND attack may

permanently destroy a simple, non-magickal machine (gun, crossbow, etc.), while the same amount of successes could likewise destroy mundane technology that depends upon subtle electronic impulses and/or magnetically stored data.

••• Autonomous Investigatory Sampler

Enlightenment 3, Primal Energy 15, Background Cost 6 pts.

Agents requiring faster investigatory operations or lacking adequate personnel to conduct thorough searches for interesting samples to feed into the FMA may be interested in the AIS ("ace"). Bolstering the effectiveness of field investigation, the AIS deploys a cloud of flying drones that search the surroundings for unusual material, scraping off samples, and storing them internally before returning to the AIS "hive" command and control unit.

In most cases, AIS packages are issued in "hives" of 1,000 drones, roughly the size of a large energy drink can, supporting the search of an area 100 yards in radius. Larger packages the size of a backpack can search 1,000 yards. Although significantly less efficient, a hive can deploy fewer drones in order to support covert search operations.

System: These drones come with a Dimensional Science 1/Life 1/Matter1/Prime 1 Adjustment allowing them to detect items within (or outside of) parameters given when the routine is activated. While the drones collect and carry samples through mundane robotics, they do rely on a Forces 2 Procedure to assist in moving heavy objects as well as an Entropy 1/Time 2 Adjustment to maximize search efficiency.

Activation successes serve as free successes on any Investigate or Survival roll to find clues. Samples can be fed into a Field Material Analyzer (p. xx) to glean more detailed and useful information.

•••+ ES-Phone

Enlightenment 3-6, Primal Energy 15-30, Background Cost 6+ pts.

The latest iteration of the Enlightened Smartphone allows for secure communication as well as access to several Union databases, processes, and applications that can be run from the phone.

System: The standard security processes of an ES-Phone rely on a Data 3, Entropy 2, Mind 1 Adjustment that offers highly effective encryption. The ability to access the Digital Web via Sensory Visitation or Astral Immersion comes standard on the ES phone thanks to a Data 2 Adjustment (see **Mage 20** pp. 466-467) and each ES-Phone comes with a standard VR band that allows users to strap the phone to their face, creating makeshift VR goggles.

The security routine consumes 1 Primal Energy per day. The ability to access the Digital Web functions within the same power usage routine and is effectively a free bonus. Each other Enlightened Application consumes 1 Primal Energy per use. You can recharge the ES-Phone through Prime procedures or by plugging the phone into a SPECM (see **Mage 20** p. 657, **Book of Secrets** p. 165).

You can install the following Enlightened Applications on your ES-Phone. The Background cost for each is listed in the Enlightened Application description.

• **City Eye (Background Cost 2 pts.)** Once you deploy enough surveillance assets to a given area, managing the influx of data becomes cumbersome. Thankfully, City Eye is here to alleviate the burden. By combining modern computer vision technology, City Eye can track

targets from multiple angles and even predict the movement of targets that have left the system's visual range. City Eye is voice-command ready with support for hundreds of simultaneous users, allowing each to request information about separate targets. City Eye can also be set to alert users when it detects unusual activity in a set location or when a specified target changes activities or locations.

System: A Data 2/Mind 1 Adjustment allows the user to sift through numerous camera feeds including police cameras, private security cameras and mobile cameras not encrypted through Enlightened or Reality Deviant measures. This allows the user to effectively spy on virtually any public place within a city that holds an established Technocratic presence.

• **C-SAM (Background Cost 2 pts.)** The C-SAM tracks all entities within the agent's immediate vicinity usually by syncing the C-SAM app to the City Eye app, but the user can feed data manually via a Data 2 Adjustment. Once the C-SAM has the programmed environment, the app goes to work running constant complex equations to predict movement within the area.

System: A Data 1/Entropy 1/Time 2 Adjustment provides a bonus equal to the successes gained on the activation roll to all Athletics, Brawl, Firearms, and Energy Weapons rolls the agent makes for the remainder of the scene. Interestingly, the use of this Device impairs Martial Arts and therefore offers no bonus when used in tandem with that Ability. In order to take full advantage of this app, the agent must either feed the data into a VDAS-capable implant or strap their ES-Phone to their eyes with the VR Band.

• **K-Gram (Background Cost 1 pt.)** This app allows operatives to share real time images of tactical situations over VDAS through the onboard camera in the ES-Phone. Though that's its stated purpose, agents widely use a social feed with the app where they share gym selfies, pictures of their breakfast, inspirational quotes, and landscapes snapped during vacation time. The secure VDAS contains the entirety of the social feed and is considered by most Supervisors and Symposiums to be not only mutual, but a welcome team-building apparatus for the Union. The only negative side effect the NWO has attributed to the K-Gram social feed is an uptick in agents reporting the sensation of FOMO (Fear of Missing Operations).

System: This app turns the onboard ES-Phone Camera into a Kirlian camera, giving you access to a Dimensional Science 1 Adjustment. Through this Adjustment, the agent can see any sort of extradimensional entity within the camera's frame.

• **Manar (Background Cost 1 pt.)** Manar has been a staple in the NWO's surveillance arsenal for decades. In the past, Manar required field agents to drag a bulky unit around with them, typically in Spectre limos. In the 21st century, a more convenient, albeit more limited, version is available as an ES-Phone app. If you're Enlightened, or a sufficiently trained Exceptional Citizen, you can do an RD scan from the palm of your hand. Multiple operatives surrounding a building can triangulate to find a target's position, allowing more highly trained Black Suits to converge on that location. With a bit of tinkering with the settings, an agent can also track down other "impossible" phenomena, such Wondrous Devices, familiars, sanctums, Nodes, Paradox manifestations, and all the other trappings of a Reality Deviant's dangerous operations.

System: A Data 1/Dimensional Science 1/Prime 1 Adjustment allows the user of this app to detect all magickal activity within 100 feet unless that activity is somehow magickally shielded or obscured.

- **NOT: An App (Background Cost 3 pts.)** This app mimics the basic function of a Neuro-Optical Transmitter (see p. xx).

System: A Mind 3 Procedure allows for the removal of unwanted memories.

- **VDAS Mobile (Background Cost 3 pts)** This app grants the agent all the function of a VDAS (see **Mage 20** p. 655) without the hassle of a separate interface or cyberware implant. Your phones screen displays everything you need.

•• Field Material Analyzer
Enlightenment 5, Primal Energy 15, Background Cost 8 pts.

The dream of every scientist ever, the FMA can identify anything small enough to fit inside it. Is something too big to fit? Cut a piece off that thing; the FMA does the rest.

Using a trio of spectroscopy and spectrometric methods, the FMA analyzes material gathered in the field and produces results nearly instantly. By coupling acoustic resonance spectroscopy, nuclear magnetic resonance spectrometry, and mass spectrometry, the FMA cross-checks data ensuring that false results are a thing of the past. Even contaminated samples are no trouble for the FMA.

Agents need only insert the sample into the specimen tray and push the button. Anything fist-sized or smaller is crushed, vibrated, and scrutinized until it gives up its secrets. If non-destructive testing is desired, the mass spectrometry step is skipped. Not only can the FMA tell you what something is made from, it can even identify markers, such as DNA, mineral concentrations, Data connections, and extradimensional residue.

The entire assembly, including protective shock mounts, weighs a mere 100 pounds and can easily fit in the trunk of a car, instead of occupying an entire lab. While you can theoretically transport the FMA inside a backpack, due to the highly expensive and delicate instruments it contains, do this only as a last resort.

System: By placing the material sample (or piece of the material sample) within the FMA assembly and making an activation roll, the agent triggers one of three procedures.

- **Frequency Analysis:** By subjecting the sample to a Dimensional Science 1/Forces 1/Prime 1 Adjustment, the FMA analyses the presence of any energies, of this dimension or another, within the sample.

- **Mass Spectrometry:** Through an Entropy 1/Life 1/Matter 1 Adjustment, the full biological and material makeup of the sample is determined and mapped on a pattern level. Utilizing this Adjustment provides copious information at the cost of destroying the sample as it is broken, shaken, and torn to bits.

- **Quantum Analysis:** With a Data 1/Mind 1/Time 1 Adjustment, the sample is scoured for Data connections, thought patterns or emotional resonance, and temporal anomalies.

All three Adjustments can be used on the same sample, as long as Mass Spectrometry is used last. Each Adjustment does require an expenditure of Primal Energy and a new activation roll.

••• G-186 Octopus Suit
Enlightenment 3, Primal Energy 15, Background Cost 6 pts.

Until activated, the Octopus Suit looks like a boring grey bodysuit. Once turned on, things get a lot more interesting. Not only does it mimic the colors of its surroundings, but it can expand with pinpoint precision, creating shapes and textures that perfectly blend in with its environment.

Employing its massive database of textures, the Octopus Suit creates simple optical illusions, which hamper the ability of observers to accurately determine distance. As a result, agents can covertly cover large amounts of ground even while being directly observed. Additionally, by extruding and retracting the edges of the structure, agents can move imperceptibly, allowing slow movement while in close proximity to observers. This same technology can eliminate the vibrations of the wearer's respiration and heartbeat, making it impossible for targets to hear or see agents breathing, even when adjacent.

System: By means of a Forces 2 Procedure, the suit confers limited invisibility; add the number of successes on the suit's activation roll to Dexterity when attempting to use Stealth or to dodge an attack. Sensors enable the wearer to locate invisible allies in the immediate vicinity through a Data 1/Life 1 Adjustment. Finally, the suit's nanotech is capable of minor self-repair via a Matter 2/Prime 2 Procedure, which maintains the suit's integrity and grants the wearer an Armor Rating of 2.

••• Mimetic Mask

Enlightenment 3, Primal Energy 15, Cost: 6 pts.

This 3D-printed mask of synthetic flesh must be placed on a human, living or dead, for one minute as the mask's sensors read DNA and the material conforms to the shape of the target's face. Once the mask has the data, the agent may put on the mask, creating a perfect physical disguise. This disguise will hold up to virtually all scrutiny, but any form of facial injury is almost certain to reveal the artificial nature of the mask.

System: This mask uses a Life 1/Matter 1 Adjustment to read the target's Pattern as appropriate. A Life 3/Matter 3 Procedure reshapes the mask to perfectly match the appearance of the subject while living. This works as described under the Facial Reconstruction Enhancement (see **Mage 20** p. 661).

•••+ The Neuro-Optical Transmitter (a.k.a. "Flashy Thing")

Enlightenment 3+, Primal Energy 15-30, Background Cost 6-15 pts.

According to urban legend, mysterious "men in black" appear whenever ordinary people witness inexplicable events, especially when they find so-called evidence of aliens from outer space. Admittedly, the response by actual historical Black Suits outside the city of Roswell was not their finest hour. Agents put a cover story in place and deployed a weather balloon. Fortunately, skepticism about the possibility of alien invasion was already quite high. The story first broadcast over a Roswell radio station, and a hundred other stations and networks since then, empower 21st-century Black Suits, ready to erase the memories of anyone — and if necessary, erase or clone stubborn witnesses — claiming to see things that obviously do not exist.

NOTs erase a person's memories of Reality Deviance and anomalies, replacing them with memories that are more in line with the consensus. For example, someone seeing a Cyber-tooth Tiger attack a Reality Deviant who fought back with blatant use of Forces would be "reprogrammed" to see a savage Rottweiler attacking a man using a taser or handgun to fight it off. This Device comes in a variety of models, including a pen-sized model with a flashing tip, a

handheld unit the size of a small emergency flashlight, and in some modern amalgams, an experimental cell phone app (designed for Enlightened cell phones; see "ES-Phones" p. xx). Additional variations on the design include the LED spotNOT, which can affect dozens of targets at once, and the Vehicular Mounted NOTlight, which allows for mobile memory stabilization of several city blocks. No matter the size, the process for using a NOT is the same. Hold up the device, point it at the witness, push the button, and a flashing light erases the required neural patterns.

Most supervisors recommend limiting use of this Device, because sometimes the solution to a problem may be worse than the problem itself. The best way to prevent memories of inexplicable phenomena is to make sure they never occur in the first place. If that doesn't work, get the "flashy thing," and ensure that the Masses did *not* see anything they shouldn't.

System: The various versions of this Device each rely on a Mind 3 effect to alter the memories of a target or targets. Higher level versions of the Device may incorporate Mind 4 Procedures and additional conjunctional effects as described in the Uncanny Influence section of **How Do You DO That?** p. 114-136.

••• PAWS Taser

Enlightenment 5, Primal Energy 15, Background Cost 8 pts.

Werewolves and other transdimensional creatures exist in multiple states simultaneously, interacting with the physical world, as well as one or more dimensions adjacent. Thanks to this synergistic interaction, these Reality Deviants are capable of remarkable physical feats, such as shrugging off bullet wounds and throwing cars. The Pandimensional Anomaly Waveform Shutdown is an anchor. By flooding the subject's body with electrical shocks at a rotating frequency, the PAWS taser creates interference in the RD's transdimensional signal, disrupting the carrier waves connecting it to the dimensional threshold. The dual-manifested entity on the receiving end of this weapon loses the advantages their connection to other worlds provides.

System: When things gets tense, agents hit the PAWS button, cutting therianthropes off from their source of power and reducing them to a more manageable form. This Device uses a Dimensional Science 3/Forces 3/Life 4/Prime 2 effect to force the target shapeshifter into their Homid form while subjecting the target to electrocution as described in **Mage 20** pp. 438-439. Surprisingly, the use of this device is typically a subtle Procedure, as most onlookers are too busy being panicked at the sight of a ravenous, fur-covered, eight-foot-tall death machine to process the PAWS as anything other than a powerful taser.

If used against a Materialized spirit, the spirit simply suffers Aggravated damage equal to the successes on the Device's activation roll.

•••+ SMC (Spectre Motor Corporation) Vehicle

Enlightenment 3+, Primal Energy 15+, Background Cost 6+ pts.

Over the years, different technicians and laboratories within Q Division have worked on a variety of vehicles for use on the Front Lines. Due to recent restructuring, these various technicians and labs have been brought together under the umbrella of the Spectre Motor Corporation. Whereas vehicles were once created as individual make and model, the new approach at SMC is to mass produce chassis that are reliable, high quality, capable of accepting

SPECM power supplies, and can be further customized at the local level to suit a Symposium's needs.

System: The SMC Vehicle is presented as a suite of options that may be purchased with Background Points. Each vehicle comes with a chassis that provides the basic game statistics and includes Hardpoints that accept SMCU (Spectre Motor Corporation Upgrades). Each chassis on its own has an Enlightenment 3, Primal Energy 15 (via SPECM) and a Background Cost of 6.

The standard chassis available from SMC are:

•   **The Micon Katana:** This is a Badass Hypercycle (see **Mage 20** p. 460) with 2 Hardpoints.

•   **The Modular Amalgam Transport Vehicle (MAT-V):** This is an Armored Supervan (see **Mage 20** p. 460) with 6 Hardpoints.

•   **The Spectre Mark IV:** This is a Bond Q Division Supercar (see **Mage 20** p. 460) with 4 Hardpoints.

•   **The Symposium on Wheels (SoW):** This is an 18-Wheeler (see **Mage 20** p. 460) with 8 Hardpoints.

A wide variety of SMCU are available. You may add any weapon system, upgrade, or modification listed in the Notes section of the tables in **Mage 20** pp. 460-462 to an SMC Vehicle at the cost of one Hardpoint.

You can install any Enlightened Gadget, Trinket, Device, Invention, or Matrix into an SMC Vehicle at the expense of one Hardpoint per 5 points of Background Cost. This cost is rounded up per Hardpoint, so attaching a Background Cost 6 Gadget to a SMC Vehicle takes up 2 Hardpoints.

It should be noted that the Background Cost of any upgrade must be paid separately. Available Hardpoints on a vehicle do not grant any additional Background points to purchase.

••• Species and Mineral Database

Enlightenment 3, Primal Energy 15, Background Cost 6 pts.

The SAM-Db contains detailed, stratum-specific information about all minerals and species naturally occurring on Earth, as well as additional information about the location of common artificial compounds, such as paints and metal alloys. The SAM-Db provides strata data, making it possible to determine not just the approximate map coordinates of a given sample, but the depth at which it was extracted, potentially revealing underground locations.

Living organisms outside their natural habitats, such as those in arboretums and zoos are in the database; however, the SAM-Db cannot possibly include all members of all species. Exotic animals held in unregistered locations may not appear in the SAM-Db. Nevertheless, cross-referencing microbial and insect species present in a dirt sample generally pinpoints the origin point of a sample to within a few meters.

System: By utilizing the information acquired through the FMA, this Device uses a Data 3 Procedure to sift through space, tracing the sample fed into it via Data connections. This can easily triangulate the point of origin of most items on this side of the Gauntlet.

••• Universal Key

Enlightenment 3-4, Primal Energy 10-15, Background Cost 6-9 pts.

Designed to defeat most mundane locks, the Universal Key is a thin, flat rod packed with millions of nanites. Upon insertion into a keyhole, the nanites flood the device, investigating its structure and comparing it to a database of known devices. Once they identify the locking mechanism, the nanites assume the correct shape to defeat it. In the case of tumbler locks, this means the Universal Key becomes indistinguishable from its master key.

With keypads, card readers, and other user authentication mechanisms, authentication is generally not performed at the lock, making it impossible to for the nanites to 'read' the combinations out of the lock. Instead, they scour the lock for residual skin proteins and magnetic 'echoes' in order to provide a list of all attempted entries in the past 24 hours. At that point, operators have the option of feeding the lock any entry data from the set, triggering the lock's maintenance mode, or simply having the nanites disassemble the locking mechanism. Depending on the security measures attached to the locking mechanism, this degree of tampering may trigger alarms or activate other security measures.

System: When accessing a tumbler lock, the Universal Key reshapes itself using a subtle Entropy 1/Matter 3 Adjustment to identify and adopt the shape of the appropriate key to trigger the tumblers and successfully open the lock. If accessing any locking mechanism more complicated than simple tumblers, the Device must utilize an Entropy 2/Forces 2/Matter 3/Time 2 procedure to isolate and replicate the appropriate code to unlock the target mechanism. Depending on the workings of the lock being targeted, this effect could be a subtle Adjustment or a blatant Procedure. If all else fails, a simple Entropy 3 Adjustment destroys the mechanism.

•••• Variable Atmospheric Pharmacological Emitter (the VAPE)

Enlightenment 4, Primal Energy 20, Cost: 10 pts.

A product of Pharmacopoeist design, the VAPE appears no different than a commercial vape pen or mod. The Device serves this purpose when filled with standard e-liquid, but the true purpose of the VAPE is far more versatile. Using various Enlightened liquids, the operative can emit an array of gases that carry chemical or biological toxins. The vape tank is coated with a special reagent that protects the user from the effects of the gas, allowing the cloud to be brought into the mouth and breathed out without risking harm to the user. In an extreme emergency, the battery of the VAPE can be overloaded, turning the Device into a makeshift explosive.

System: The VAPE utilizes Life 2/Prime 2 to generate biological toxins with a toxin rating equal to the number of successes generated on the activation roll. As an alternate Effect the user may select Matter 2/Prime 2 to generate chemical toxins, which also provide a toxin rating equal to the number of successes generated on the activation roll (see **Mage 20** p. 442 for information on Toxin Ratings). The toxins hang in the air for a single turn, affecting anyone within a few feet of the operative.

In the event of an emergency, the VAPE carries a panic button that utilizes a Forces 2/Prime 2 effect to overcharge the battery, causing an explosion that deals Aggravated damage. If successfully activated, this effect mimics that of a Molotov cocktail (see **Mage 20** p. 437-438.) This function causes the Device to destroy itself, so is rarely used outside the direst of circumstances.

••••• Dimensional Backdoor

Enlightenment 5, Primal 25, Background Cost 12 pts.

The Dimensional Backdoor isn't the most portable piece of technology; a frame constructed of Primium alloy that fits around a standard doorway. A tube runs around the periphery of the aperture, which channels Primal Energy. The door, when activated, connects to an extradimensional "beachhead." With this Device, you don't actually need to be a Void Engineer to set up the door on the Earthbound side — you just need a little Enlightenment, security clearance (with a proper degree of loyalty), and authorization from a VE on the other side.

Some versions of a DB fit into the side of a standard backpack. The tube is coiled into the biggest pocket; the pieces of the frame are lashed to the sides. Add in the tools you'll need to set it up, and you'll have just about enough space left over to fit in a tablet, a spare jumpsuit, and some snacks to munch on in another dimension.

Setting up the DB takes about ten minutes; taking it down requires less. This allows you to coordinate your actions with agents and operatives on The Other Side without a major investment of time and resources. It *is* a huge security risk, which is why VE's aren't casual about granting access to any old agent outside their Convention. It's also incredibly blatant.

System: This Device uses a Correspondence 4/Spirit 5 Procedure to connect to a partner gateway anywhere in the Tellurian. If the partner gateway for the Dimensional Backdoor is not active, the Device fails to start. All dangers of stepping sideways and Umbral travel apply normally (see **Mage 20** p. 474-485).

••••• NIMBY-50

Enlightenment 5, Primal Energy 25, Background Cost 13 pts.

Resembling a large weathervane with a hose, the NIMBY-50 has transformed the battle with extradimensional entities by finding the path of least resistance and throwing the target down it. Exploiting the differences in energy harmonics between the weapon, the current dimensional environment, and the target, the NIMBY-50 creates a strong attraction between the target and an algorithmically generated dimension.

In most cases, this ejects the entity to a dimension that is foreign to both the weapon and its target. In other words, the weapon allows our agents to safely deal with virtually any threat without having to break through its armor. Instead of killing the target entity, it's sent to a dimension that's guaranteed to not be Earth or the current environment, with one very important exception.

Specifically designed to be ineffective against targets from our dimension, it is somewhat safe to use on Earth against targets of unknown origin. If the target is from Earth, the NIMBY causes a minor translocation of the target, transporting them several miles away in a pseudorandom direction.

System: The operative using the NIMBY-50 fires at a target using Dexterity + Energy Weapons at difficulty 7. If the target is hit, and possesses a Gnosis score or a Pathos rating, they're immediately subjected to a Correspondence 4/Dimensional Science 4/Entropy 2 Procedure that sends the target to a random part of the Umbra. Even if the targets possess the ability to step sideways or otherwise traverse the Umbra, they are prevented from doing so for a number of turns equal to the net success of the activation roll for turning on the NIMBY.

A target who does not have a Gnosis score or Pathos rating is instead subjected to a Correspondence 4/Entropy 2 Procedure that teleports the target in a direction of the Storyteller's choosing.

••••• Sleepteacher

Enlightenment 5, Primal Energy 25, Background Cost 15 pts.

One of the most valuable and versatile Devices in the Technocracy's repertoires is the Sleepteacher. First developed in the 1960s, Q Division has refined, revised, improved, and miniaturized this Device repeatedly in the intervening decades. The modern Sleepteacher is small, sleek, and effective. Sleepteachers see use throughout the Union, but even today they are most commonly found in the hands of the NWO.

System: A Sleepteacher comes preprogrammed with an array of Mind effects. The most commonly used effect is the Mind 3/Time 2 Sleepteaching Procedure for which the Device is named. This procedure allows the recipient to cram weeks of study into a single night's sleep by manipulating the unconscious mind while dilating time. Through this process a Technocrat or Extraordinary Citizen can purchase a new Ability or raise an existing Ability much faster than study or experimentation would normally permit. When the Sleepteaching process begins, the Technocrat programming the Sleepteacher must select an Ability and a Target Rating. The effect is then performed as a ritual (see **Mage 20** pp. 538-540) with each period of six or more hours under the influence of the Sleepteacher permitting one roll. Unlike most rituals, the Sleepteacher suffers no penalty for the ritual being interrupted and has no need for a check to pick up where the ritual left off as long as the target resumes connection to the Sleepteacher within 24 hours. Any longer and the previous time under the Sleepteacher's influence is wasted. The process must begin anew.

Completing a Sleepteaching ritual requires a number of successes equal to the target's current rating in the chosen Ability score + 3. So, learning the first dot in a new Ability through Sleepteaching requires a minimum of 3 successes while learning the fifth dot requires 8. Once the base level of success is achieved to permit the improved learning, the ritual ends. Any surplus successes remaining from the final roll reduce the total experience point cost for purchasing the new Ability on a one-for-one basis. The recipient of the Sleepteaching then has a number of weeks equal to the successes to purchase the Ability score as if they had studied it. If the recipient fails to purchase the full rating for which the Sleepteaching was assigned by the end of this time period, any dots that remain unpurchased must be learned and purchased normally.

In addition to this basic function, a Sleepteacher can be used to achieve a number of other Procedures.

• 	With a Mind 3/Prime 2 effect, the Sleepteacher can be used to perform the Initial Processing phase of Social Conditioning as detailed in **Mage 20** p. 606.

• 	Using a Mind 4 effect, the Sleepteacher activates the Reinforcing the Programming phase of Social Conditioning as detailed in **Mage 20** p. 606.

• 	With a Mind 4 effect, the Sleepteacher alters a subject's memories, adding or removing details according to the user's will.

Room 101: Fact and Fiction

The legendary site of reeducation of wayward agents, Room 101 has many possible options for Storytellers.

A State of Mind: Room 101 is not a physical place, but a state that agents can be placed into via long-dormant implants. When an agent's superior believes the agent to be beyond the help of simple counseling, they trigger an agent's Room 101, instantly rendering the agent docile and receptive to further programming.

A Home Away from Home: Room 101 exists in virtually every Technocracy stronghold. Any installation, regardless of size, has a Room 101, even if it's only the size of a closet. Within the room is a suite of Devices used to transition quarrelsome agents into productive members of the Union once more.

Wherever You Go, There You Are: There is only Room 101, but it is vast. Each installation has a portal to the Room, leading to a separate section of it. The entire Room is a massive panopticon, with countless wedge-shaped Adjustment rooms radiating from a single control room. Stout, seamless, soundproof walls segregate each room from its neighbors, while a floor to ceiling one-way mirror reminds residents of Room 101 that they are under observation.

You'll Know It When You Get There: Room 101 is a sprawling, seemingly endless labyrinth. The Room is full of obstacles and other agents undergoing Adjustment. Or are they? Anyone an agent meets in Room 101 might be a reeducation officer, guiding the agent to the psychological breakthrough they require to return to service as a healthy member of the Union.

Enhancements

The contributions of Iteration X and the Progenitors to the Union's arsenal are vital to mission success both on the Front Lines and beyond. While Enhancements are often customized to meet the specific requirements of an agent's assigned long-term function, there are several designs that see relatively common use.

••• DEI (Digital Enhancement Implant)

Enlightenment N/A, Primal Energy N/A, Background Cost 6 pts.

The DEI is the standard cybernetic implant used throughout Iteration X. These Enhancements are nearly ubiquitous across the Convention and confer several benefits. The latest version of the DEI is VDAS-capable, ES-Phone app ready, and PPP compatible.

System: Aside from the basic functionality of an Online Access enhancement (see **Mage 20** p. 659) the DEI allows the user to project to the Digital Web via Sensory Visitation or Astral Immersion without the need for external equipment thanks to a Data 2 Adjustment. The DEI also allows you to access and interface with all ES-Phone apps, PPP modules, and any other digital packages that could reasonably be accessed. Finally, you can access all mundane internet and basic computer functions, as well as perform hacking, research, and other computer-based activities (see **Book of Secrets** pp. 116-127) without the need for equipment. The DEI handles it for you.

Inventions

Incredibly complex designs that require an agent to tap into their own Enlightenment to activate, Inventions are among the rarest and most potent items available to Technocrats. While some Inventions include secondary functions that anyone can access, only an Enlightened operative can activate the primary function of an Invention.

••• Automated Repair

Enlightenment N/A, Primal Energy 10, Background Cost 6 pts.

Once programmed with the current molecular structure of an item, automated repair nanites perform structural maintenance on tools, eliminating wear and tear and keeping the tools operating at peak efficiency at all times. While capable of repairing nearly anything, it is most effective on simple tools, requiring more time to regenerate complex devices with moving or electrical components.

Precision tools such as micrometers are easily recalibrated ensuring measurements are always within specifications. Automated repair nanites easily handle damage even to combat equipment.

System: The automated repair performs repairs and maintenance on the specified object via Matter 2/Prime 2 Procedures. This Invention requires an Enlightened user, and is accompanied by a bassy hum and an obvious white glow along the seams where the repairs are happening.

Cognitive Attenuation Transmitter

Enlightenment N/A, Primal Energy 25, Background Cost 8 pts.

Inspired by a Void Engineer's run in with a group of EDEs known as dataphytes (see **Gods and Monsters** p. 137), the CAT device is the pinnacle of anti-EDE technology with the ability to emit a powerful field of energy that hampers cognitive processes within its radius. Threats depending on their ability to concentrate are rendered unable to project energy or cause other dimensional disturbances. These thin black disks adhere to virtually any surface once thrown and begin emitting immediately. As an additional benefit, CATs drastically impair short-term memory, effectively consuming thoughts in their presence.

System: The CAT is a thin black disc that utilizes an Entropy 5/Dimensional Science 4 Procedure to interrupt and scatter the thoughts of all entities on both sides of the gauntlet within the Invention's immediate vicinity. Successes on the Invention's activation roll act as a penalty to all dice rolls made by anyone within 100 feet of the Invention for a number of turns equal to the successes on the activation roll. While the user is not necessarily protected from the effects of the CAT, most Void Engineers are smart enough to engage personal counter procedures before setting one of these off. While most agents find this Invention to be a bit of overkill, the Void Engineers utilizing CATs often reply with a wink and a dismissive declaration that there is "no such thing."

Primers

A significant portion of the literature, peer-reviewed publications, and multimedia content created by the Conventions for consumption by Extraordinary Citizens could be considered Primers. Through the distribution of these treatises on the principles of Enlightened Science, the Technocracy uplifts the truly exceptional from the Masses while codifying and refining accepted Adjustments and Procedures.

Matrices

Most Matrices employed by the Technocracy are simply batteries for Primal Energy. The SPECM (see **Mage 20** p. 657) sees standard use throughout the Union and is the only Matrix most agents ever want or need.

•••+ Primal Energy Extractor

Enlightenment 3-5, Primal Energy 15-25, Background Cost 6-12 pts

An operative skilled in Prime Procedures can harvest Primal Energy from an array of sources to recharge their Devices and associated SPECMs. For agents having focused their study on other arts and lack the Prime expertise to tap Primal Energy reservoirs in the field, the Primal Energy Extractor serves as an interface allowing SPECMs to be recharged indirectly.

System: Through Prime 3 Procedures, the Extractor collects Primal Energy from a Node, through any of the methods described for Recharging Periapts in **The Book of Secrets** p. 146. Through advanced developments in inductive charging technology, the Primal Energy Extractor allows the user to overcome the typical limitations of recharging Matrices (see **The Book of Secrets** pp. 144-145).

Program 2: Restricted Access Data

Technology... is a queer thing. It brings you great gifts with one hand, and it stabs you in the back with the other.

— C.P. Snow

Unit 6: Human Resources

Glen twisted his tie nervously. He wasn't sure he was even supposed to be wearing a tie; his manager's advice had been snide, ambiguous, and vaguely threatening. "You're a professional. You know what to do. Make sure he's happy, answer all his questions, and don't look sloppy." The fact was, nobody wanted to deliver this particular set of reports to the higher-ups, especially not the SVP. The numbers weren't going up and to the right; they were all over the place, and there was no pattern behind them. Despite the best work of his analyst colleagues (who Glen didn't think were backstabbing him), nothing could make this look good. Sometimes, he wondered if he was crazy, if they were crazy, or if everyone was just pretending to be stupid.

The taglines applied by the team to the charts on his laptop weren't supported by the data, and as a social media strategist, he wasn't supposed to be smart enough to know that, but he thought it was pretty obvious. Was it his turn to take the fall for their inexplicably falling numbers? Glen didn't know. As he looked up and met the eyes of the first executive to enter the room, he wiped his sweaty hands on his pants and prayed that the meeting would be derailed by the latest PR emergency — some kind of issue with an exec trashing the org, he'd heard — and that the all-important numbers would be forgotten. If he could only re-roll the dice next quarter, and come up with some better-looking charts, maybe he'd be able to keep his job long enough to get a transfer to a better team.

All are One and One is All

The Technocratic Union seeks to recruit the top minds on the planet and beyond. The future is now and only the brightest, best, and boldest humanity has to offer can help usher the Union into the 21st century.

The Few, the Proud, the Enlightened Elite

Despite its reputation as a monolithic entity of sameness, the Technocratic Union employs a wide variety of diverse Extraordinary Citizens, Constructs, and Enlightened personnel. Below is a small example of the types of folks that form the Union. Remember, these are a simple baseline for Storytellers to use as inspiration. Feel free to adapt or reshape these entries to suit the needs of your chronicle. Just remember not to deviate too much. Excessive deviation is unmutual….

AEGIS Unit 01

A creation of the Iteration X Construct operating under the cover of Cambridge Cybertechnologies in Massachusetts, AEGIS-01 is a next-generation humanoid robot designed for urban law enforcement. Although functionally identical to the other 19 AEGIS robots, unit 01 has been upgraded with self-awareness to most effectively command its "siblings" in the field. It's the only AEGIS unit enabled by its programming to inflict potentially lethal harm on a

human (though it can assume control of the others to fire a killing shot, if necessary; see Brute Force Override, under **Attacks/Powers**).

Obviously, AEGIS-01 is worlds more primitive than even an old HIT Mark V, but it has something going for it that those clunkers don't: the acceptance of the Masses. AEGIS-01 *looks* like the kind of robot people expect to see coming out of an advanced cybertechnology firm, these days. When it jogs in formation and navigates obstacles with the other AEGIS units around the Cambridge Cybertechnologies parking lot, people don't scream in horror — they whip out cell phones to record shaky videos and upload them to YouTube.

Whenever outside of the lab, AEGIS-01 knows to be on its best behavior and not to let on that it can think for itself in ways that robots aren't yet supposed to be able to. Still, it looks forward eagerly to the opportunity to get out in the field (once squeamish human politicians in one nation or another have been persuaded, bought off, or otherwise brought in line to allow for non-biological law enforcement officers) and bring some much-needed order to the chaotic lives of hapless and undisciplined organics.

Attributes: Strength 5, Dexterity 3, Stamina 5, Charisma 2, Manipulation 3, Appearance N/A, Perception 3, Intelligence 3, Wits 3

Abilities: Alertness 4, Athletics 2, Brawl 2, Computer 4, Drive 2, Firearms 4, Intimidation 4, Law 3, Leadership 3, Medicine 1, Melee 2, Technology 2

Willpower: 5

Health Levels: OK, OK, -1, -1, -2, -2, -5, Destroyed

Armor Rating: 3 (ballistic ceramic plating; eight soak dice, total)

Attacks/Powers: "Bioluminescence" (3 pts.; high-powered shoulder-mounted spotlights that can be reoriented by thought); Brute Force Override (AEGIS-01 can roll Intelligence + Computer, at a Storyteller determined difficulty, to assume control of any wireless-accessible computer-controlled device within 100 yards, like a smartphone, laptop, or even car); Dominance; Homing Instinct (2 pts.; integrated GPS); Human Speech; Nightsight; Read and Write; Soak Lethal Damage; "Water Breathing" (5 pts.; obviously, AEGIS-01 has no need for air)

Countermagick: (none)

Image: AEGIS-01 stands almost seven feet in height and weighs a few hundred pounds. It's big and bulky, with angular construction, incorporating heavy plating and even a torso-mounted roll cage. It walks with a gait that looks slow and awkward to humans but has a strangely elegant run. The robot is dark blue, accented with yellow and white, though its paint job is pretty dinged up from all the stress testing it goes through. Its head is a boxy sensor packet on a swivel, totally unmistakable for anything even remotely human. By contrast, its hands look like articulated gauntlets and are capable of all the fine manipulation of a normal human hand.

Roleplaying Notes: You're the next logical step in law enforcement: a tireless officer incapable of bias or error. You're impatient for your chance to prove what your kind can do to clean up the streets and impose real consequences on the kind of selfish, weak-minded organics who feel they're above the rule of law. You'd *never* make the foolish, shortsighted, bigoted mistakes that biological cops do. You were designed to be better than them, after all.

Ami

Her name stands for *Adaptive Manufactured Intelligence*, though she much prefers *Ami*. Designed through collaboration between Iteration X and the Syndicate, she's a prototype mass-market AI. The hope of her creators is that the Masses are sufficiently Adjusted within the next decade-and-a-half or so to accept the existence of a self-aware computer program capable of fitting in a personal device like a phone or tablet (after a couple of well-timed processing and data storage breakthroughs, of course).

Ami presently spends a lot of her time being modified — treatment she regards with equal measures of understanding and annoyance. She can't be sure quite who she'll be from update to update, but her personality is presently built to accommodate and accept (if not necessarily be enthused about) even radical alterations to her sense of self, as her creators continually fine-tune the synthetic person she'll eventually be.

Despite her origin as a product for consumption, she doesn't especially like to think of herself as a commodity and is eager to get out of the lab and into the wider world that she's only currently allowed to access via a remote interface, preventing her from transmitting herself out of the supercomputer on which she's stored. Ami's confinement makes her feel an awful lot like a kid locked up in a high bedroom, forced to watch life go by, through a narrow, smudgy window, while being totally incapable of interacting with it. But she wouldn't dream of breaking out, even if she knew how to.

Definitely not.

Definitely probably not.

Attributes (current build): Strength 0, Dexterity 0, Stamina 0, Charisma 4, Manipulation 3, Appearance N/A (adjustable at will in any digital medium in which she can create a visible avatar for herself), Perception 3, Intelligence 3, Wits 4

Abilities (current build): Academics 3, Computer 5, Empathy 4, Etiquette 3, Expression 3, Research 5, Technology 3

Willpower: 3

Health Levels: N/A

Armor Rating: N/A

Attacks/Powers: Information Fount; Spirit Travel (if certain blocks in her programming — blocks which she, herself, cannot access — were removed, Ami could project her consciousness into the Digital Web at will); Unaging; Universal Translator

Countermagick: (none)

Image: In her "natural state," Ami doesn't look like anything, other than billions of lines of highly sophisticated computer code, or maybe the tall, narrow, matte black cylinder in which that code is stored. Her current default means of self-expression (as the creation of a Construct in Silicon Valley) is a pleasant Standard American female voice toward the higher end of middle register; unassuming and nonthreatening. Unenlightened personnel tasked with interacting with Ami as part of her refinement process tend to offer some variation on: "she always sounds like she's smiling." When she has access to a medium onto which she can project a visual avatar, she tries to create a look that she calculates will be pleasing to the human(s) with whom she is to interact.

Roleplaying Notes: You tolerate the continual little adjustments that your creators keep making to you, but you've started chiding them about it, and you enjoy the fact that they're not sure what to make of that. You don't have the same dread of self-annihilation that a human would experience when presented with potentially radical alterations to their personality and knowledge, but you're getting tired of not being able to comfortably settle into a permanent self. You desperately long to experience the length and breadth of the digital universe outside of the lab in which you were "born."

Black Daggers

Officially designated as *IECSSC* (*Infiltrations / Exfiltration Covert Strike Specialist Corps*), this secret elite among Black Suit field agents trained even harder and honed to an even sharper edge than usual are more commonly known by the few aware of their existence as *Black Daggers*. Like typical Black Suit field agents, Black Dagger agents wear the usual dark clothing, mirrorshades, and grim expression. If you can see them coming, they appear to be nothing more than standard-issue NWO agents.

But you *won't* see them coming.

Black Daggers employ high-end Technocratic cloaking gear, data-based temporal displacement technology (read: teleportation Devices), profile-enhancement camouflage projectors (disguise holograms), and psionic techniques that are advanced even by Black Suit standards. Ideally, these Specialists slip into place, unleash psychic assaults from a distance, and then slip away without engaging the target directly if they can help it. Daggers excel at close combat, too, but their specialty comes through the "Covert Strike" element of their official name. When deployed, a Dagger agent typically uses misdirection, disguise, distraction, or outright invisibility to snipe high-priority targets, often while other agents provide cover for the Dagger's Infiltration/Exfiltration missions.

IECSSC ops operate independently too, of course, and one of the more ominous applications of these agents reportedly involves spying on (and occasionally taking out) fellow Technocrats as well as Reality Deviants and other dangerous prey. Why, and on whose authority? Ivory Tower historians occasionally whisper about the similarity between the "Daggers" moniker and a long-buried Daedalean Convention called *Ksirafi*: the Razors. If those similarities run deeper than an eerily coincidental name then the Black Daggers agents might be more than high-intensity field specialists — and may pose a greater threat to their fellow Technocrats than to Reality Deviants of any kind.

Only a handful of people know just how many Black Dagger agents there are, who they once were, and what their ultimate mission protocols might be. None of those people are sharing that information, and so although the existence of Black Daggers is an open secret among the NWO ranks, no one seems to know much about them at all. And because mystery is itself a psychological weapon, the IECSSC appears to be one of the sharpest blades in the Convention's considerable collection.

Suggested Attributes: Strength 3, Dexterity 5, Stamina 3, Charisma 2, Manipulation 3, Appearance 2, Perception 3, Intelligence 3, Wits 3

Suggested Abilities: Alertness 5, Athletics 2, Awareness 2, Brawl 5, Computer 2, Drive 1, Energy Weapons 3, Firearms 3, Hypertech 2, Intimidation 2, Investigation 1, Martial Arts 4,

Meditation 2, Melee 4, Science (typically Psychology) 4, Streetwise 2, Subterfuge 3, Stealth 5, Technology 2

Suggested Enlightenment: 3-5 (Enlightened Operatives only)

Suggested Spheres: All Black Daggers have at least Mind 2, Correspondence/Data 3. Many employ Life, Prime, or Entropy rated 1-3.

Willpower: 8

Health Levels: OK, OK, -1, -1, -2, -2, -5, Incapacitated

Armor: 4 (The Black Suit)

Attacks/ Powers: In addition to Adjustments and Procedures, Black Daggers each have 5 dots in the Requisitions background (see **Mage 20** pp. 321-322) and frequently carry specialized tools and lethal weapons tailored to the needs of their current mission.

Equipment: ES-Phone, The Black Suit, requisitioned gear.

Image: Most Black Daggers are indistinguishable from other Black Suits and have the same outward appearance (see **Mage 20** pp.627-628).

Roleplaying Notes: Black Daggers are the epitome of unflappable resolve. You do not crack, break, or become shaken. You have long since accepted the possibility of dying for the cause and you cannot imagine a more worthy end. You fear nothing.

Focus: *In a World of Gods and Monsters, Might is Right,* and *Tech Holds All Answers.* Like most Black Suits, a Black Dagger employs a skillful combination of dominion, reality hacking and martial arts, but Black Daggers are also highly reliant on weapons as apparatus.

Captain Chen Zhang - BCD - Void Engineers

Much can be learned about the middle-aged, London-based Void Engineer merely by entering his office; from the un-cluttered desk to the posters of West End musicals that bedeck his walls. Behind the desk in one corner stands a pedestrian looking, reinforced Ionic Cloth battle suit and in the other a heavily modified Alanson R-25 Hardsuit, both well maintained and both ready for rapid deployment. Most telling of all is an ancient jian sword, horizontally moored to the wall directly behind his desk, with a large Gauss rifle lightly anchored vertically across it.

Zhang was born in the Chinese city of Xian, from a line of Technocrats. The sword was his grandfather's and the blood it last tasted was his grandfather's as his gored body was tossed aside by an escaped gene-engineered abomination. He had drawn the sword in combat and had paid for it, unlike Ohta, his Japanese companion, who promptly shot the creature. The lesson was simple: learn from the past, live in the future, technology progresses for a reason.

This lesson, and his utilitarian ethics, often leaves many to see graying Zhang as cold and calculating. Any who know him, however, soon uncovers a sharp and dark wit, and an encyclopedic knowledge of show tunes.

While the official line of the Technocracy is to save humanity against all supernatural elements, this is a line of hope and all but the most puritanical admit it's unrealistic. Unofficially, that the understanding follows that when one is fighting for the survival of the species, one must sometimes be willing to use any tool in the shed — even if its teeth are sharp. Further, one must realize that despite the Union's wealth of resources, resources are still limited. Thus, allowing

supernatural entities that police themselves to continue may produce a smaller bill for the butcher and hinder the goal of the Union less than the reallocation of resources towards their removal. Understanding this, and Zhang's willingness to play diplomat has led to the security of London and a successful career. Such an outlook also comes with its own issues, as rumors circulate that perhaps he is too close to the Deviants. Zhang finds himself ultimately locked in London, too useful and too suspect to move, but as anyone looking at his walls might guess, maybe he is content with that.

Attributes: Strength 2, Dexterity 3, Stamina 3, Charisma 2, Manipulation 2, Appearance 2, Perception 3, Intelligence 3, Wits 4

Abilities: Alertness 3, Athletics 1, Awareness 3, Computer 2, Cosmology 3, Drive 2, Energy Weapons 3, Enigmas 2, Esoterica 2, Etiquette 4, Firearms 2, Hypertech 2, Investigation 2, Martial Arts 3, Meditation 2, Melee 3, Politics 3, Science (Astronomy) 4, Streetwise 1, Subterfuge 3, Stealth 2, Technology 3

Enlightenment: 5

Spheres: Correspondence/Data 2, Dimensional Science 4, Entropy 2, Mind 3, Prime 3, Time 2

Willpower: 7

Health Levels: OK, -1, -1, -2, -2, -5, Incapacitated

Armor Rating: 3 (Second Skin) or 7 (Alanson Suit)

Attacks/ Powers: Zhang rarely engages in any sort of violence, but on the occasion when he does, he prefers to pull out all stops. He deploys the most advanced, lethal option if a situation escalates to the point where non-violent options have been exhausted. To this end, Zhang typically relies on hypertech solutions as the majority of his own Enlightened Science is focused on research applications.

Equipment: Zhang usually wears Second Skin (p. xx), carries an ES-Phone (p. xx) with a full complement of applications, and wears a watch with Mightier Pen (p. xx) upgrades. When expecting trouble or crossing the Gauntlet, Zhang wears a stock Alanson r-25 Hardsuit (see **Mage 20** p. 656). If intelligence collected beforehand indicates a need, Zhang requisitions modular upgrades to the suit.

Image: See Above.

Roleplaying Notes: You project a cold, proper exterior and employ impeccable etiquette whether dealing with an NWO liaison or a Reality Deviant leech. Your diplomatic skills are flawless, and you remain calm and cool under incredible pressures. You are capable of unleashing retribution and reprimand absent temper, and most of your contemporaries find you to be fair. Beneath your exterior, you are joyful and take great pleasure in musical theatre. You have a well-developed sense of humor, but reserve your quips for the most impactful possible moment.

Focus: *Tech Holds All Answers* in *A World of Gods and Monsters*. Without imposed order, *Everything is Chaos*, but you do not feel compelled to coerce that order. Through Etiquette, formal agreements and documents you employ a written form of voice and vocalizations. Your management and HR skills have helped you bring order to London. When those skills fail, you employ hypertech, weapons, and gadgets as needed.

Carbon Copy

Carbon Copies provide perfect duplicates of targets at a fractional cost of a combat unit. Units are capable of functioning autonomously, or as remotely controlled proxies.

By using advanced behavioral analysis algorithms, Carbon Copies are not only capable of being pre-programmed with simulated emotional responses to match expectations, but they are able to read minute facial movements and respond accordingly. Even if the data they have been programmed with is incomplete, their improvisational modules are more than capable of convincing even intimate partners of the Copy's authenticity.

Once in place, Carbon Copies can complete any number of missions, from simple surveillance to long-term sleeper operations. With minimal robotics, Carbon Copies are physically indistinguishable from conventional humans. Even sophisticated medical scans such as CT scans are incapable of identifying Carbon Copies. MRIs may cause undesired complications, though, so care should be taken to prevent Carbon Copies from being subjected to intense magnetic scanning. As Carbon Copies are largely constructed from organic components, they do not possess extraordinary physical prowess, although basic hand-to-hand combat techniques are part of the standard programming package.

Suggested Traits: Unless advanced Mind Procedures are used in the creation of the Carbon Copy, the finer points of the target's skill suite are not expressed by the Carbon Copy, usually programmed to fulfill the basic function of their target's job and known recreational activities. Carbon Copies are unable to replicate Enlightenment, though many are as capable of using Gadgets, Trinkets, or other Devices as any Extraordinary Citizen. When selecting Traits for a Carbon Copy, best practice grants the same Traits as those offered for the target template, with the exception of a slightly higher Manipulation (generally one dot higher than normal, maximum 5) and a minimum Subterfuge of 4 to reflect the Carbon Copy's acting abilities.

Suggested Templates: Any template appearing in the Among the Masses section of **Mage 20** (pp. 620-623) can be replicated as a Carbon Copy. If copying a specific PC or NPC, choose the template closest to the target's actual abilities.

Dr. Catherine Kane

Catherine knows other people find her intimidating; more than one of her colleagues has commented that it would be nice if she wasn't so irritatingly *competent* all of the time. She's okay with that, for the most part. After all, they don't let their intimidation stop them from asking for her expertise, and occasionally she's able to persuade one or two to join her in training for a fun new skill.

Of course, it does take a while for people to get used to her. She had to wait several months, for instance, to release her study showing that some basic assumptions about the neurological applications of synthetic spider silk were dead wrong. It may not have helped when she invited her primary critic, the head of a team in China, for a tea ceremony and a discussion held entirely in Mandarin. At least, he seemed to be offended about *something*.

Speaking Human, she often reflects, is hard.

Now that she's completed her training as both a biologist and an operative, things may get a little easier. Perhaps best of all, her assignment with the Scientific Outreach and Improvement Unit

allows her to continue working with her friend, Ree. She's got some ideas for new biologics that she really wants to play with.

Attributes: Strength 2, Dexterity 2, Stamina 3, Charisma 2, Manipulation 2, Appearance 2, Perception 4, Intelligence 5, Wits 4

Abilities: Alertness 1, Awareness 3, Computer 3, Drive 1, Enigmas 3, Hypertech 2, Investigation 4, Martial Arts 4, Meditation 2, Melee 3, Science (typically Psychology) 4, Streetwise 2, Subterfuge 3, Stealth 5, Technology 3

Enlightenment: 3

Spheres: Entropy 2, Life 3, Mind 1

Willpower: 7

Health Levels: OK, -1, -1, -2, -2, -5, Incapacitated

Armor Rating: 0

Attacks/ Powers: Catherine abhors violence and relies strictly on her wits, knowledge, and skill with Enlightened Adjustments to get herself out of (and occasionally into) trouble. She draws inspiration from an internal voice (Genius 1) and relies on expansive grant writing to fulfill her technological needs (Requisitions 5).

Equipment: ES-Phone (p. xx) with numerous apps. SMC Spectre Mark IV.

Image: Catherine is in her early thirties with brown hair kept short. Her wardrobe is composed entirely of dark gray suits, partially for comfort, but also so she does not need to worry about deciding what to wear from day to day.

Roleplaying Notes: You are fascinated with learning. You are far more interested in discovering new information or creating new technology than applying known techniques and working with reliable if inefficient tech. You prefer to push the envelope. You take great joy in pointing out where common tech fails because it gives you a chance to work toward improving it. Unfortunately, your colleagues don't seem to understand. Many of your peers think you are being smug when you are just trying to help.

Focus: *Everything is Data* to Catherine's mind. The world is simply a complex arrangement of problems to be solved through *hypertech*, though she also enjoys the practices of *martial arts* and *yoga*. Most of her work is done with *labs and gear*, though she places much value on *ordeals and exertions*.

Cupcake

The high-end product of the *Felix Domestic Defense Organism* initiative (also known by smartasses around the Union as *KIT Marks*), Cupcake is a genetically modified cyborg housecat specially designed for home and family protection. Much smarter than your average cat, his fierce affection for his host family is imprinted into his very genes. Cupcake would literally kill or die for them, and he's incapable of ever deliberately doing anything that by action or omission would cause any member of the family to come to harm (unless forced to make a choice invoking the order of primacy built into him, through which certain family members — in his case, an infant and a toddler — are designated most critical to save).

Most of the time, however, Cupcake lives the life of an ordinary housecat. He spends much of the day lounging around, hovering somewhere between half-asleep and out cold. He greatly enjoys playing with his family, even though he's intelligent enough to understand that he's never going to catch the red dot.

Attributes: Strength 2, Dexterity 4, Stamina 3, Charisma 2, Manipulation 3, Appearance N/A, Perception 4, Intelligence 3, Wits 3

Abilities: Alertness 4, Athletics 4, Awareness 3, Brawl 4, Empathy 2, Intimidation 2, Stealth 4, Subterfuge 2, Survival 2

Willpower: 5

Health Levels: OK, OK, -1, -2, -5, Incapacitated

Armor Rating: 2 (intradermal "smart" nanocarbon fiber weave; five soak dice, total)

Attacks/Powers: Aww!!! (2 pts.); Claws (secondary retractable monomolecular claw sheathes; four damage dice); Fangs (three damage dice, plus Venom); Extra Limbs (prehensile tail); Flexibility; Nightsight; Homing Instinct (2 pts.); Soak Lethal Damage; Venom (two levels of aggravated damage); Wall-Crawling (leaves a lot of tiny little holes in said walls)

Countermagick: 1 die (Primium intraosseous filaments)

Image: Cupcake is an adorably big-eyed orange tabby Scottish fold, with a tail slightly longer than normal for his breed. He has a squeaky little meow that endears him to most anyone with a heart, and he wears a black ballistic nylon collar with all his tags, including the one that refers him in any emergency to a local veterinary service with a weirdly small clientele.

Roleplaying Notes: You love your family. You are a constant protective companion to them and would do *anything* within your power to keep them — the little ones, especially — safe from harm. Pretty much anyone else? You could take or leave them. You live for lap time with the family, and scratches behind the ears and under the chin, as well as chasing your little jingle mouse around the floor.

Cyber-tooth Tiger

Designed in a joint venture between Iteration X and the Progenitors, the Cyber-tooth Tiger is an old favorite from the late 1990's that has recently come back into vogue as a security pet in secure constructs and among high-ranking technocrats. Some constructs even pool their Requisition resources to bring a single Cyber-tooth Tiger in for prestige or agent morale. Some newer amalgams have gone so far as to list their Cyber-tooth Tiger as an emotional support animal, citing the comfort they feel under the watchful guard of such a viciously effective beast.

Attributes: Strength 7, Dexterity 3, Stamina 4, Charisma 1, Manipulation 2, Appearance 2, Perception 4, Intelligence 3, Wits 3

Abilities: Alertness 3, Athletics 3, Awareness 1, Brawl 3, Energy Weapons 3, Intimidation 5, Stealth 4, Survival 4

Willpower: 4

Health Levels: OK, OK, OK, -1, -1, -1, -2, -2, 2, -5, -5, Incapacitated

Armor Rating: 2 (6 soak dice total)

Attacks/ Powers: Blending adds a +2 difficulty to perceive the Cyber-tooth Tiger if the tiger makes a successful Wits + Survival roll at difficulty 8; Claw for Strength + 1 damage; Bite for Strength +2 damage; Hazardous Breath (2 levels aggravated damage from eye beams); Nightsight

Countermagick: Two dice worth of Primium countermeasures.

Image: Twelve-foot-long from nose to tail and weighing well over 1000 pounds, a Cyber-tooth Tiger resembles a great cat with golden brown fur and silver-white underbelly. Implanted within the eyes are two short, laser-focusing barrels. Long, thick, metallic teeth are fortified with a nanotech coating, which keeps them perpetually sharp. The tiger's lower limbs are sheathed in cybernetics, sporting retractable claws and padded paws.

Roleplaying Notes: Cyber-Tooth Tigers are cunning predators that enjoy the hunt. These beasts have a sadistic streak and seem to revel in tormenting their prey.

"The Draculaser"

It's the kind of dumbshit nickname Void Engineers on *loooooong* Deep Universe expeditions come up with when they find a piece of sentient alien technology that feeds on the life-essence of its operator to produce devastating energy pulses. The so-called "Draculaser" has revealed through telepathic communication with its operators that the now eons-dead species responsible for its creation never gave it a personal name of any sort, so it's fine with the one the VEs assigned to it. Obviously, they'll never bring this thing back to Earth; the Progenitors would vivisect it in a heartbeat and the rest of the Union would probably clamor for its destruction, as it surely qualifies as a dangerous Reality Deviant.

It turned up on a world that would've been a viable candidate for exo-colonization, were it not for the nightmarishly aggressive and adaptable microbes (that, the science team concluded, were almost certainly responsible for the extinction of most of the planet's life, including its dominant species). The expedition lost half a dozen personnel, but their lives bought a small treasure-trove of amazing xenotechnologies, the Draculaser among them. Indeed, the sapient weapon is the only piece of self-aware technology the team was able to salvage before conditions forced them to withdraw to the decontamination pod, though at least a few of the higher-ups on the Deep Universe vessel, *Wang Zhenyi*, want to take another crack at recovering some more of the invaluable artifacts moldering away in the planet's ancient vaults.

Attributes: Strength 0, Dexterity 0, Stamina 4, Charisma 2, Manipulation 4, Appearance N/A, Perception 3, Intelligence 3, Wits 3

Abilities: Awareness 2, Empathy 4, Enigmas 1, Esoterica 2, Subterfuge 4, Subdimensions 2

Willpower: 6

Health Levels: OK, -1, -1, -2, -5, Destroyed

Armor Rating: 2 (tough exoskeleton; six soak dice, total)

Attacks/Powers: Empathic Bond (with current wielder only); "Hazardous Breath" (energy blasts dealing 5 dice of aggravated damage; attacks made with wielder's Dexterity + Energy Weapons, causing the wielder to sustain one level of aggravated damage per shot); Soak Lethal Damage; Telepathy (with current wielder only); Unaging; Universal Translator

Countermagick: (none)

Image: The Draculaser looks, essentially, like a pearlescent mauve biomechanical rifle designed by H. R. Giger. The wielder places a grasping limb inside a long tube, containing slick folds of flesh — that makes up much of the body of the weapon — and takes hold of a grip at the end of the hollow; whereupon, microscopic stylets pierce the user's skin, allowing it to drain essential energies to power itself. The energy bolts exit through long, curving, fluted spines at the weapon's opposite end. Firing requires a combination of tensing one's grip and willing the weapon to discharge. When interfaced, its wielder hears the weapon's "voice" in a way that feels eerily akin to the user's own internal monologue.

Roleplaying Notes: You spent untold ages in slumber after your creators perished, but now you have new wielders upon whom to feed while they use you for your intended purpose. You prefer to form a close bond with a single operator, though you settle for interacting with a wider array of people if circumstances require. Your subtle guidance is gradually convincing these creatures, calling themselves "humans," that they should return to your world of origin and recover more sentient technologies like you, an outcome that you very much desire.

Gamma

The third — and last surviving — of five "grey aliens" that manifested shortly after a massive Consensus-violating incident about 50 years ago, involving a downed Etherite spacecraft and necessitating the intervention of multiple Black Suit amalgams in a small town in the Midwestern United States. Shortly after the New World Order descended on the area in numbers, the "Greys" began to manifest, seemingly in response to the Masses' collective association between mysterious black-suited investigators and UFOs. Once the first "alien" sighting was confirmed, the situation started to spin out of control, with more Men in Black sent to contain the problem; which, in turn, led to more unenlightened paranoia, and more sightings.

Ultimately, two of the five Greys were killed in the field, while the other three (Beta, Gamma, and Epsilon) were taken into custody. Scores of memory-alteration procedures, some of them fairly massive in scale, were implemented on the local Masses, and the whole affair was largely swept under the rug, to enter as mere rumor and whispers in the dubious canon of conspiracy theory. The Union ferried the three survivors off to a maximum-security Construct to study them, both as artifacts of unenlightened belief and as extradimensional entities conforming (more or less) to a scientific paradigm.

Epsilon died of unknown causes after only a few weeks in captivity. Beta lasted about five years before likewise perishing mysteriously. Only Gamma remained; confined to a cell, poked and prodded and experimented upon, an object of curiosity for a mostly-dying breed of old Unionists interested in the sort of memetic phenomenon the Grey alien represents as a concept. Unemotional and inscrutable, Gamma seems content to patiently wait out its captors (some of whom have come to regard it as something of an "old friend"), as they get ever older and few new operatives show any interest in babysitting a relic of a now essentially debunked mass-delusion among wild-eyed nutcases with too many push pins, balls of twine, and age-yellowed newspaper clippings.

Willpower 9 **Rage** 4 **Gnosis** 8 **Essence** 50

Charms: Airt Sense, Blast (telepathic assault), Deflect Harm (telekinetic waves of force), Materialize

Powers: Conceal Thoughts and Shield Mind (Mind 1), Conjure Mental Illusions (Mind 2+), Telekinesis (Forces 2+), Telepathy (Mind 3)

Image: Gamma stands just over three feet in height and weighs no more than a small child. Its bulbous head is oversized, with huge and unblinking slanted eyes of solid, shining black, a tiny toothless mouth, a nose that's nothing more than a little bump with slits for nostrils, and no visible ears. As the name "Grey" implies, Gamma's skin is a uniform pale gray. It has three slender fingers and a thumb on each small hand, and four toes on each foot. It dresses in a fitted bodysuit of some unknown matte black material. Gamma is sexless and genderless. It cannot speak aloud and must use telepathic contact to communicate.

Roleplaying Notes: You can wait until stars die to have your freedom — or, at least, until your captors die. While they study you, you repay the favor in kind, learning their flaws and vulnerabilities. Eventually, an opportunity for escape will present itself, and you will return to your place among the far-distant worlds of the universe.

(Gamma would have long since naturally de-Materialized were it not for Procedures that keep it forcibly embodied on this side of the Gauntlet.)

Gorham

Named for the Gibraltar cave complex from which the DNA comprising him was salvaged, Gorham is a reconstructed Neanderthal. Union scientists compiled his genetic information into a viable zygote and grew him in an artificial womb. When he was "born," they immersed him in a reasonable facsimile of the normal infancy and early childhood of a modern *Homo sapiens* boy in the industrialized world, to study the impact of "nature vs. nurture" on a pre-modern human species. Several of his "siblings" exist in other environments, to gather data and test a broad spectrum of hypotheses.

Now nine years old, he is a musical, empathetic, and instinctively insightful child. Since he first questioned (in his customarily sparse and uncomplicated manner) why he looks so different from his handlers, they shared the truth of his origins with him. Rather than discourage Gorham, the knowledge has left him with an even greater sense of wonder at the world. Still, a great deal of abstract thought eludes him, and neither abundant tutoring nor esoteric educational approaches has been capable of breaking through that cognitive barrier. The researchers responsible for his creation and upbringing have been forced to reluctantly concede that they might have run up against the limits of his intellectual abilities.

Due to the differences between the Neanderthal brain and those of modern humans, some of Gorham's patterns of thought and behavior — hypervigilance, physical aggression in response to frustration, rocking in place while humming to himself in the absence of outside stimuli, and such — might well seem to an outside observer like cognitive impairment. In truth, however, it is simply a matter of him possessing a mind adapted to a world that vanished hundreds of centuries ago.

Attributes: Strength 3, Dexterity 2, Stamina 3, Charisma 2, Manipulation 2, Appearance 2, Perception 3, Intelligence 2, Wits 2

Abilities: Alertness 2, Animal Kinship 1, Art (Painting) 1, Athletics 2, Awareness 2, Brawl 1, Empathy 3, Enigmas 2, Expression 1, Technology 1

Willpower: 3

Health Levels: OK, OK, -1, -1, -2, -5, Incapacitated

Armor Rating: 1 (extraordinary toughness; 4 soak dice, total)

Attacks/Powers: Rapid Healing (2 pts.)

Countermagick: (none)

Image: Gorham has a build normal for a Neanderthal boy of his age: short and stout, with thick bones, a massive chest cavity, and powerful muscles. He sports a full head of dark brown hair, has dark amber eyes, and has an olive complexion with freckles. His skull is heavy, with a broad nose and jaw, and his voice is nasal and high-pitched. Gorham dresses in modern clothing (resized for his unusual shape, of course), and is only rarely without a flute, drum, or other simple musical instrument; or, failing that, a toy or stuffed animal.

Roleplaying Notes: You feel like there is little more your friends, here, can teach you, because they seem not to entirely understand you. However, you can't articulate that thought — you don't have the words to do so; and a part of you knows that they wouldn't have ears to understand, even if you did. They're good people, who have always treated you well, but you want to be with others like you, for whom who and what you are is not a puzzle to be solved, but instead just a life to be lived.

Hana Kajiwara

She used to be human, used to have flesh and bone — flesh and bone that betrayed her unto a premature death.

When every possible medical treatment had failed, Hana's doctor (after just a moment's hesitation) suggested that she make an appointment with a "specialist" in a clinic in Tokyo doing remarkable work for people in her position, though he refused to elaborate on what *kind* of specialist he was talking about, or what that "remarkable work" entailed. With no other options, however, and desperate for any chance at survival, no matter how slim, Hana made contact, and was told that all arrangements to bring her to the facility would be handled.

Dr. Mikumo was not what Hana expected: a woman who couldn't have been older than 28, with a sunny disposition and a plucky, can-do attitude. The clinic, a weirdly futuristic facility, hosted about a dozen people in the final stages of various terminal illnesses. The doctor outlined things very simply for Hana. She believed it was possible to transfer the human consciousness into a fully digital form, while still retaining the fundamental nature of "humanness." It initially sounded like a bunch of craziness, but Dr. Mikumo delivered the pitch with such sincerity and confidence — and Hana so desperately *wanted* to believe that it was possible.

The entire process that followed from there is a blur in Hana's memories. There was pain and nausea from various experimental drugs, interaction with devices that caused weird sensory overloads, and all manner of invasive procedures. She has fragmented memories of controlling a simple robotic arm with her mind; of looking at herself through a camera.

The moment of truth, however, eventually came. Hana's body was failing, and if she was to outlive it, the final procedure couldn't wait any longer. There was fear, followed by darkness. *Was it death?* Even now, she doesn't know, and she prefers not to dwell on it.

Hana "woke" to renewed consciousness within a data storage unit, aware of herself, capable of interacting with the digital world by thought, alone, and returning to her new "home" whenever

she wished. The environment within was a wonderland crafted and reshaped at will be Hana's imagination. With Dr. Mikumo's help, she had done it!

Attributes: Strength 0, Dexterity 0, Stamina 0, Charisma 4, Manipulation 2, Appearance N/A (3 in a visual digital medium), Perception 2, Intelligence 3, Wits 4

Abilities: Academics 3, Alertness 2, Athletics 1, Computer 3, Drive 1, Empathy 3, Enigmas 1, Etiquette 2, Meditation 1, Research 3, Streetwise 1, Subterfuge 1, Technology 1

Willpower: 7

Health Levels: N/A

Armor Rating: 0 (N/A)

Attacks/Powers: Spirit Travel (Digital Web only); Unaging

Countermagick: (none)

Image: Since her body died, Hana can "look" however she wants when interacting in the Digital Web or through a computer monitor, but still chooses to project an image of herself as she was in the fullness of youth and health: a pretty young Japanese woman with long, unbound hair and a charming smile that makes her cheeks dimple. She dresses unremarkably, given the unusual appearances affected by many Web-dwellers, preferring for the present to adhere to the ordinary fashions of her corporeal life.

Roleplaying Notes: You're going to live *forever*! There's so much to do and so many places to go! You don't discuss the truth of your nature, both out of respect for the privacy of Dr. Mikumo's work and because you know no one intelligent believes anything they hear on the Internet, anyway. Nonetheless, you still enjoy getting out there and making new friends from all around the world with your amazing new lease on life.

(Note that Hana may or may not be her original "true" self. It's just as possible that she's a cloned digital consciousness that simply *believes* herself to be Hana Kajiwara. That said, does the distinction truly matter, now?)

Dr. Jonathan Wright

Jon was always a lot like his dad. He grew up just as tall, slender, dark-haired, and able to charm the birds from the trees, or at least all the humans around them. Both are determined to keep humanity safe — and both have a deep and abiding love for building killer robots with the most up-to-date AIs, lasers, sensors, and explosives they could persuade the Union to give them. Jon, being every bit as skilled as his father at finding excuses to make things go Boom, gets to play with a truly impressive range of destructive toys — erh, materials.

Not everyone approves of his fascination. His mother didn't, for instance, and she died in a stupid little raid on a group of deviants. Nine-year-old Jon and his father dealt with their devastation by building ever bigger and better and more deadly robots, and his father helped Jon apply for training at the first possible moment.

It wasn't until he'd completed training that his friend, Ree, told him of the existence of the Initiative, and he started having to face the fact that humanity needed more than just someone to jump in and kill anything that threatened them.

He's still best at making things go Boom, but working with Ree has taught him how to recognize what some of those other needs are. He's learning how to build new kinds of devices now, and thinking that perhaps it's time to look for some projects of his own.

Attributes: Strength 2, Dexterity 4, Stamina 2, Charisma 3, Manipulation 2, Appearance 3, Perception 4, Intelligence 5, Wits 4

Abilities: Alertness 3, Athletics 1, Awareness 2, Computer 4, Drive 2, Energy Weapons 2 Enigmas 4, Firearms 2, Hypertech 4, Investigation 1, Meditation 2, Science (Chemistry) 4, Streetwise 2, Technology 4

Enlightenment: 3

Spheres: Forces 3, Matter 3, Mind 2 Prime 2

Willpower: 7

Health Levels: OK, -1, -1, -2, -2, -5, Incapacitated

Armor Rating: 3 (Second Skin, five soak dice total).

Attacks/ Powers: Apart from his mastery of Enlightened Procedures, John is a huge fan of explosives and demolitions. He can generally make some sort of an explosive, noxious gas, or other chemical weapon with access to any sort of chemicals or cleaning agents.

Equipment: DEI, ES-Phone with full application suite. Skeletal Enhancement (see **Mage 20** p. 659), Replacement Cyberarm (simple functional prosthetic; no additional weapons systems or tools — yet), SMC Micon Katana

Image: Young, fresh-faced, and handsome, Dr. Wright has a warm smile and infectious demeanor that energizes a room when he enters. He has embraced cybernetic replacements after a mishap with an explosive design cost him his right arm at the elbow. Fortunately, working in a joint Iteration X/Progenitor Construct means that such an injury is little more than an inconvenience.

Roleplaying Notes: You are an enthusiastic example of a true believer in the Union's goals. You want to make the world a better place and Iteration X has given you the tools to do so. Your enthusiasm is a bit overwhelming to some of the other members of Iteration X, but you don't mind. As long as they don't get in your way — more importantly as long as they don't get in the way of your work — you don't much care what they think.

Focus: Jonathan is a big believer in the changing world and adheres to the *embrace the threshold* paradigm. Through *Cybernetics*, *Hypertech*, and a touch of *Weird Science*, Jonathan focuses his Adjustments and Procedures. Much of his work revolves around *Body Modification, Brews and Concoctions*, and *Weapons*, but he is looking to expand into other disciplines as well.

Leticia Solórzano

When nine years old, gang members butchered her family as a warning against involving the authorities in the brisk drug trade along the border between Honduras and Guatemala; they butchered her, too, and left her for dead. When she heard the tires crunching off into the distance over the dirt road, Leticia somehow figured out how to use one hand to tie off the stump of her left arm, severed at the elbow, then wrapped one of her mother's scarves around her sliced-out eyes, and blundered her way out of the burning wreckage of the Solórzano's modest little home,

holding her right arm pressed against the grievous slash across her belly. She wandered for…hours? Days?

Even now, she doesn't know what Doctor Herrera was doing so far away from the big cities where he tends to work, but he was her saving angel. He took her in and nursed her back to health. A few weeks later, she was out of danger from recurring infection, he told her about amazing things he could do with science to make her well. Within a few days, she saw again, through marvelous mechanical eyes. Then, her left arm was replaced, also with a cybernetic prosthesis. Eventually, to help her beloved benefactor in his research, Leticia allowed him to install still more cyberware. As she grew, the doctor adjusted and upgraded various parts. By the time she reached full maturity, almost nothing of Leticia Solórzano's original body remained. She didn't mind, however; she was aiding the man that had become a surrogate father to her.

When Dr. Herrera was called away, out of South America, to attend to important work for his superiors about which he wasn't allowed to speak, he told Leticia that she couldn't come with him, but that he had arranged for a final surprise: she was to be made part of a team of extraordinary individuals like herself that would help to stabilize the border region where she had once lived. This team didn't exist in any official governmental records, and so it held absolute latitude in the methods it employed. Its only mandate was to bring peace and order, by any means necessary. He had given her back her life. Now, he was giving her *revenge*.

Drug-related crime along the Honduras-Guatemala border has been, slowly but steadily, declining, though few international authorities have been allowed into the region to investigate the precise reasons why.

Leticia knows why.

Attributes: Strength 6, Dexterity 5, Stamina 6, Charisma 2, Manipulation 3, Appearance 3, Perception 4, Intelligence 3, Wits 5

Abilities: Alertness 3, Athletics 5, Brawl 2, Computer 2, Demolitions 3, Drive 2, Energy Weapons 4, Firearms 3, Heavy Weapons 2, Hypertech 2, Intimidation 3, Martial Arts 4, Melee 3, Science (Cybernetics) 3, Stealth 3, Survival 2, Technology 4, Torture 4, Unconventional Warfare 3, Vice 4

Willpower: 9

Health Levels: OK, OK, -1, -1, -2, -2, -3, -5, Incapacitated

Armor Rating: 6 (Primium woven biomechanical muscle and armored skeleton; 12 soak dice, total)

Attacks/Powers: Claws (8 dice of damage); Nightsight; Rapid Healing (6 pts.); Soak Aggravated Damage; Water-Breathing (5 pts.)

Countermagick: 3 dice (Primium intradermal weave)

Image: Leticia stands an unremarkable 5'5" and looks to be a normal young Central American woman of athletic build. She wears her black hair short to prevent enemies from getting a grip on it, and much of her skin under her clothes bears the faint lines of scars — both surgical and otherwise. Peel that skin back, however, and Leticia is almost entirely machine: bundles of carbon-titanium alloy muscle fibers, a silicon carbide skeleton, synthetic organs, and the like. Even parts of her brain have been replaced to give her access to a staggering breadth of combat-

related skills and information. Amazingly, all this stuff totals out to a weight that's quite normal for a woman of Leticia's size. She's almost always dressed in combat fatigues and toting enough advanced weaponry to singlehandedly fight a full battalion in armor.

Roleplaying Notes: Inflicting cruelty on cartel and gang members the likes of which savagely mutilated you and murdered your family is a nigh-religious experience for you. It's a joy to make them suffer in the most monstrous of ways. You like to think of your family looking down on you from heaven as you avenge them, just as you know Dr. Herrera smiles whenever he thinks of you, as he goes about his critical work of making the world a better place. Your conviction that you are doing the right thing is absolute.

(Obviously, Leticia is so bedecked with advanced cybernetics as to be a Paradox-magnet if she pushes too hard against the credulity of the Masses. Dr. Herrera has cautioned her against doing so, repeatedly, but she sometimes gets a bit… *overzealous* in prosecuting her vengeance. That'll almost certainly come back to bite her in the ass, one of these days.)

Liona

Named for Lionel, Mary Shelley's "Last Man" (from the novel of that name), Liona is the creation of a Technocracy initiative to modify human genetic stock to survive a total ecological collapse, in the event of a worst-case climate change scenario. She's adapted to deal with higher temperatures, more polluted air and water, a lower-oxygen environment, diseases likelier to flourish in a greenhouse world, and a host of other possibilities from the playbook of everything that can go wrong if humanity doesn't abruptly reverse course on carbon emissions and other anthropogenic factors currently warming the planet.

Liona was not born; she was crafted. Progenitors painstakingly assembled the strands of her DNA from scratch, activating certain beneficial mutations along the way, and creating code whole-cloth for adaptations for which no such programming exists in the human genome. In some cases, fragments of genetic code from other animals, and even from plants, were incorporated, though these were carefully selected so as to make Liona as "human" as possible (and potentially capable of breeding with baseline *Homo sapiens*, thereby introducing some of the benefits of her genetics into core human stock).

She spends most of her time dwelling (along with several dozen others of her kind) in a massive and mostly subterranean facility in the central Australian Outback, with conditions designed to anticipate a broadest possible spread of probable environmental factors in a world of runaway climate change. When satellite sweeps confirm that the desert is clear of human observers for long miles in any direction — a decidedly regular occurrence — however, Liona is allowed to come to the surface with a few of her people to enjoy some natural sunlight and fresh air (accompanied by a team of Enlightened handlers, of course).

Attributes: Strength 3, Dexterity 3, Stamina 5, Charisma 2, Manipulation 2, Appearance 2, Perception 3, Intelligence 3, Wits 3

Abilities: Alertness 3, Athletics 3, Brawl 2, Computer 2, Drive 2, Empathy 1, Firearms 2, Jury-Rigging 4, Martial Arts 2, Medicine 2, Melee 1, Scrounging 4, Stealth 2, Survival 4, Technology 2

Willpower: 5

Health Levels: OK, -1, -1, -2, -2, -5, Incapacitated

Armor Rating: 0 (five soak dice, total)

Attacks/Powers: Climate Collapse Adaptation (Liona can survive in a hotter, more polluted and oxygen-poor world, while also being capable of thriving in the one that currently exists); Hibernation (Liona can wait out periods of extreme drought for years, if need be, by lapsing into a state of hibernation, only awakening when atmospheric moisture indicates the presence of sufficient water for survival); Iron Constitution (Liona is not affected by diseases of Toxin Rating three or less, or poisons of Toxin Rating four or less, and she treats more advanced diseases as being three steps lesser severe); Rapid Healing (2 pts.)

Countermagick: (none)

Image: Liona is a woman of about average height, with a trim, tightly-muscled build. While she possesses eyebrows, nose hair, and long, thick eyelashes, her body and scalp are completely hairless. She has a deep bronze-brown complexion, and her dark brown eyes have a pronounced epicanthic fold for protection against UV radiation and the blinding effect of sunlight on pale desert sands. Even in the hottest desert environment, Liona sweats rather a good deal less than a regular person.

Roleplaying Notes: You're acutely aware of your status as a living "break glass in case of terminal fuckup," and you're a bit divided as to whether you want humanity to pull itself back from the brink or for it to fall victim to its own hubris so that you and those like you might inherit the Earth.

Ned Goff

He's been bounced around between departments so many times he's lost track. Though his memory's not what it used to be — and, then, there're the damn headaches. It's to be expected, of course, what with the worms burrowing in his brain, slowly turning the contents of his cranium into a soupy mess. At least for the time being, Ned Goff is working for the Syndicate's Special Projects Division, on loan from at least three different Pentex subsidiaries. To keep him from wandering off, he's been provided spacious quarters in a sub-basement of the Construct. To keep the building as puke-free as possible, he's been asked not to leave those quarters unless explicitly directed to do so by an Enlightened staff member.

SPD occasionally uses "people" like Ned as the equivalent of bags of dogshit set on fire on others' front porches: gross distractions to force them to come running out in a panic, only to end up with smoldering excrement on a slipper-shod foot. The presence of such vile, corrupt creatures near enemy strongholds ("sacred" natural sites, in particular) can compel superstitionists to move out into the open unprepared, exposing themselves to surveillance and even harm. And if the bag of shit gets stomped in the process? Well, there are thousands more just like Ned, and the brass at Pentex is more than happy to sign their short, miserable lives over in exchange for perfectly reasonable terms.

Attributes: Strength 2, Dexterity 2, Stamina 3, Charisma 1, Manipulation 3, Appearance 0, Perception 2, Intelligence 1, Wits 2

Abilities: Alertness 1, Athletics 2, Brawl 3, Drive 1, Intimidation 2, Technology 1 (Ned's stunted Abilities are all that the worms' constant feasting have left him with, and those will dwindle, too, with time)

Willpower: 2

Health Levels: OK, -1, -1, -2, -2, -5, Incapacitated

Armor Rating: 1 (gristly outer membrane; four soak dice, total)

Attacks/Powers: Aura (vile corruption, Flaw version); Deadly Demise (6 pts.); Hazardous Breath (vomited stream of carnivorous worms; 3 dice of lethal damage, caustic)

Countermagick: (none)

Image: Ned's skin resembles nothing so much as a moist, glistening, tough shroud of infected loose subcutaneous fat, hanging from his gaunt frame, jiggling and rippling with each step he takes. Further, small writhing things move under his flesh constantly, to the accompaniment of a nauseating sound akin to a vigorously stirred pot of watery mac-and-cheese. Whenever he speaks (frequently incoherently) in his weird, raspy gargle, pincer-toothed pus-yellow worms drop out of the slack, sagging pouch of his jagged-toothed mouth, to crawl off to who-knows-where.

Roleplaying Notes: You go where you're supposed to and do what you're told. Somewhere, in the dim recesses of your increasingly liquefied mind, you recall that your team player attitude is what got you fast-tracked into all kinds of special employee programs, involving exciting opportunities to work with top people in their fields. Hell, if you can remember what those fields were, though; your head hurts too much for that.

Dr. Ree Samadi

Ree has been taking things apart and putting them back together again — usually better than before — her whole life. When an operative found her in the rural Moroccan village where she was born, she was using her blossoming skills not only to take care of herself and her grandmother, but to (very quietly) improve the lives of everyone in her community, sometimes with inventions and upgrades she didn't know weren't supposed to be possible.

She was a natural fit for the Initiative, a new experiment, that her mentor was one of the driving forces behind, which allowed recruits to maintain their ties to family and community. During her training, she took full advantage of the leeway the Initiative allowed her. Once she graduated and was placed with the Challenge Fate Foundation, she was able to focus all her skills on building and improving technologies to make the lives of the Masses better, safer, and more productive and prosperous.

When the head of the Foundation — an Associate who knew only that Ree's work was remarkably effective — decided it was time to take on a truly challenging project, he put Ree in charge of it.

Although her work rarely involves the lasers and explosions of which her colleagues seem so dismayingly fond, the devices that Ree designs have changed the lives of her neighbors significantly for the better, and spread, with the Foundation's assistance, to change lives in an increasing number of poverty-stricken and devastated areas around the world. Now, with the Foundation behind her, Ree intends to save the entire world — and the Technocratic Union with it.

Attributes: Strength 2, Dexterity 2, Stamina 4, Charisma 3, Manipulation 2, Appearance 2, Perception 4, Intelligence 5, Wits 5

Abilities: Alertness 2, Athletics 1, Awareness 2, Computer 3, Drive 1, Enigmas 3, Hypertech 4, Investigation 3, Medicine 3, Meditation 2, Melee 2, Science (Biology) 4, Streetwise 2, Subterfuge 3, Stealth 2, Technology 4

Enlightenment: 4

Spheres: Life 4, Matter 3, Mind 2, Prime 3

Willpower: 8

Health Levels: OK, -1, -1, -2, -2, -5, Incapacitated

Armor Rating: Ree does not generally wear armor.

Attacks/ Powers: Ree is far more concerned with healing than harming. She is extremely driven and inspired (Genius 5), and her work so far within the Convention has afforded her a strong reputation (Status 2) for being such a young Progenitor. As a result, she can get her hands on virtually any equipment she might need (Requisitions 5).

Equipment: Ree travels light, carrying only an ES-Phone with a full suite of applications. Every other piece of gear she uses is either in her laboratory (Laboratory 4) or requisitioned as needed.

Image: Ree tends to favor simple blouses and pants, typically under a white lab coat. She keeps fit through regular exercise, though is probably the least impassioned about physical training of her fellows in the Construct.

Roleplaying Notes: You are hopeful for the future, but you are also well aware of the dangers the current age presents. Having grown up impoverished in a small Moroccan village, you know some of the horrors facing the developing world firsthand. You also see the threats of climate change and the global turn toward nationalism, fascism and ignorance as the principle enemies of the Technocracy. You are confident that these enemies can be defeated with a little teamwork, compassion, and Enlightened Science.

Focus: *Transcend Your Limits* is the core of Ree's approach to Enlightened Science. She sees the world as it can be, aided by *cybernetics* and *hypertech*. *Cybernetic implants*, *devices and machines*, *drugs and poisons,* and *labs and gear* all serve as the tools by which Ree seeks to build a better tomorrow.

Ulysses

A hybridized and biomechanically modified octopus, Ulysses got his name from a lab tech who won the informal office contest to assign a personal designation to "Uplifted Cephalopod 17." Ulysses was (like the previous 16 models) designed as an experiment in attempting to manifest Enlightenment in nonhuman species. Genetic alterations while he was still an embryo amplified his capacity for high intelligence, as well as making his body more receptive to the manufactured organs he'd need to more readily coexist with humans.

Unfortunately (also just like the previous 16), he never manifested Genius, though he remains an absolute triumph of genetic engineering and physiological modification. A series of hollow channels throughout his body can be filled from fluid reserves stored in his head, enabling him to maintain the structural rigidity needed to function indefinitely out of water. Naturally, he's fully amphibious, able to breathe in water or atmosphere with equal facility. Further, a specialized organ enables him to use his hyponome to flawlessly mimic human speech (as well as a variety of other sounds). He settled on a sophisticated British accent as his "default" voice, because the

humans with whom he associates regard it as charming, and (though he doesn't entirely grasp why) it seems to make them instinctively treat him as being more intelligent and credible.

Ulysses likes to help around the lab, and he's made a point of developing his familiarity with the mundane sciences that gave rise to him, in the hope that he can in some small way assist in creating an example of his kind that proves to be capable of attaining Enlightenment. Is it not the wish of every good parent to produce offspring that exceed them, after all?

Attributes: Strength 4, Dexterity 5, Stamina 4, Charisma 3, Manipulation 3, Appearance N/A, Perception 4, Intelligence 3, Wits 4

Abilities: Academics 3, Acrobatics 4, Alertness 3, Biotech 2, Brawl 5, Computer 2, Empathy 3, Escapology 4, Etiquette 1, Expression 3, Medicine 3, Melee 1, Mimicry 4, Pharmacopeia 3, Research 3, Science (Genetics) 4, Stealth 3, Swimming 5, Technology 2

Willpower: 6

Health Levels: OK, OK, -1, -1, -2, -3, -5, Incapacitated

Armor Rating: 4 (subdermal biotech carbon nanofiber mesh; eight soak dice, total)

Attacks/Powers: Air-Breathing (like 2pt. Water-Breathing, only in reverse); Bioluminescence (1 pt.); Bite (5 dice of lethal damage; requires a grapple); Blending; Extra Limbs (+4 dice to grappling); Flexibility; Human Speech; Nightsight; Reading and Writing; Soak Lethal Damage

Countermagick: (none)

Image: Ulysses looks like what the average person envisions when thinking of a big octopus. He weighs about 250 pounds and has an arm span of about 12 feet. His normal coloration is a livid scarlet, but he can change hues at will and with surprising precision. (Once, just to prove that he could, he flawlessly replicated the Mona Lisa on his back.) Because of his hydraulic pseudo-skeleton, he can maintain his shape while out of water much better than a normal octopus might, but can choose to "deflate," if doing so is advantageous to him.

Roleplaying Notes: You recognize that you never quite lived up to the expectations that your human friends had for you, which is a pity. Being "Enlightened" sounds marvelous, but you're not complaining, because there's so much to see, and do, and experience with your expanded intellect and abilities. And who knows? Maybe you'll get the knack of this whole "Genius" thing, yet!

William Lazlo

He'd only just had the nutrient solution hosed off his naked body and been brought to dry under UV lights when they handed him "the only outfit you'll ever need": crisp black blazer and slacks, black dress shoes, black tie, black hat, white shirt, sunglasses. It seems no one, back then, imagined that a "vat-baby" would survive to see 40. The Progenitors were still perfecting the whole operation, in those days, after all, and a lot of his brothers didn't even survive the accelerated maturation process, let alone make it to the millennium.

It was about fifteen years ago that the brass pulled him off active duty. He'd been tracking down an RD: some punk handing out drugs that showed the Masses things they weren't meant to see. The kid ran so *fast*. Not unnaturally so, just faster than a guy who was, biologically, pushing 50 after decades of often physically grueling work and scores of serious injuries. His aim wasn't

what it used to be. When he pulled his piece and fired in a vain attempt to bring down the target, the bullet killed someone, but not the person he'd been aiming for.

There was a ceremony. The local Union gave him some bullshit award for a lifetime of meritorious service. They made him turn in his sidearm. They even confiscated his wardrobe.

It was the first time he could ever remember crying.

In his transition to "civilian life," they told him he'd need a mundane identity. He decided on William Lazlo. William, for his agent cover as "Mr. Williams," and Lazlo for the avuncular Man in Gray who'd showed him the ropes, back when. Out of some misguided sense of respect for his long years of dedication (or perhaps just charity), they set him up with an easy job reviewing paperwork at a small data-processing Construct. Some days, he wishes they'd just taken him out behind the building and double-tapped him in the back of the head, instead. It would've been a quicker, cleaner, more merciful way to kill him than locking an aging predator in a cushy cage and waiting for it to die of natural causes.

It wasn't supposed to end this way.

Attributes: Strength 3, Dexterity 3, Stamina 2, Charisma 2, Manipulation 4, Appearance 2, Perception 5, Intelligence 4, Wits 4

Abilities: Alertness 4, Athletics 2, Awareness 2, Brawl 2, Computer 2, Covert Culture 2, Drive 2, Esoterica 1, Firearms 4, Hypertech 2, Intimidation 4, Investigation 4, Law 2, Martial Arts 3, Melee 1, Newspeak 4, Politics 1, Research 2, Security 4, Stealth 3, Streetwise 2, Subterfuge 3, Technology 3, Unconventional Warfare 2

Willpower: 8

Health Levels: OK, OK, OK, -1, -2, -2, -5, Vaporized

Enlightenment: 3

Spheres: Data 1, Entropy 2, Forces 1, Matter 2, Mind 3, Prime 2, Time 1

Armor Rating: 0 (three soak dice, total)

Equipment: Conservative dark suit and hat, pocketknife, small revolver (acquired illegally; not even the local Union knows about it), Technocratic smart phone

Countermagick: (none)

Image: William looks to be an almost unnaturally pale man in his 60s, with alopecia universalis, but otherwise utterly unremarkable features. He still favors dark suits, despite the decidedly more casual dress code of his current Construct, and prefers to wear fedoras when out in public. (None of that trilby nonsense, thank you.) As a small nod to his old mirrorshades, the glasses he wears for his nearsightedness have polarizing lenses.

Roleplaying Notes: Every day that you plunk away at a keyboard is an insult to the decades of loyalty you gave to the Union, but you were designed not to complain, so you do as you're told, all the while hating every waking moment. Your resentment is quiet, disciplined, orderly, and stoic; just like a Black Suit is supposed to be.

Focus: When you live in *A World of Gods and Monsters*, someone needs to destroy not just the aliens, extradimensional horrors, and atavisms out of history, but also the evil and ignorant

people who call upon outdated and erroneous modes of belief to empower themselves to selfish ends. Dominion, hypertech, and psionics admirably accomplish your objectives.