TOP SECRET/S.I.™ Game

FREE Lancers

by Jeff Grubb

TSR, Inc.

TOP SECRET/S.I.

F.R.E.E. Lancers

By Jeff Grubb

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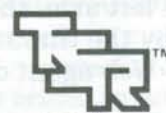
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It was a muggy, foggy night, the type of night on which streetlights hovered like man-made moons in the gloom, and the air felt like the lake had finally overflowed its banks and drowned the city. Refit checked his weaponry and cursed. He'd been waiting with Charm and the others for three-quarters of an hour, waiting for the pigeon to emerge.

Beside him, Charm stretched out his legs and yawned. "Any sign yet?"

Refit shook his scar-crossed head just a fraction, keeping his mismatched eyes on the doorway. Suddenly, the door opened and a hunched, gangly figure, clothed in rags, stumbled out. His fingers clutched a worn, brown paper sack.

"That's it," said Refit. "Let's move."

The shabby figure got halfway down the block before Refit and Charm caught up with him. Refit, a patchwork giant towering over the pair, let Charm do the talking.

"Pardon, sir," began Charm with a grin that broke hearts on three continents, "I was wondering if you would be interested in sharing with us what's in that bag."

Refit could almost smell the persuasiveness oozing out of his small companion, filling the alley with a feeling of calm friendliness. "Just get the package and we can get out of here," thought the giant.

The small man wasn't buying, however. Refit saw the flash of gunmetal as the shabby bum reached for a handgun tucked in his waistband. Behind him, the piles of uncollected garbage shifted as two more Web agents slid out of hiding, one carrying a taser, the other a backpack laser.

Refit shoved Charm to the ground just as the barrel flashed, carving a pattern of slugs up Refit's right arm. With his left arm, the patchwork giant jerked the man up by the throat and flung him against a wall. The Web agent disguised as a bum didn't get back up.

"Damn," thought Refit, feeling the sticky blood ooze down his arm. "Now I'm going to have to replace the arm. Again."

Dimly, in the background, Refit heard Charm on the wrist tranceiver, "The gaff's been blown, repeat, the gaff's been blown." But already the others were on the move. Dervish dropped down out of the darkness like a shadow and cut the laser operator apart from behind before he had a chance to move. On the other side, Captain Ares dropped in front of the taser man just as he fired. The electricity whined through the caped man's body, but the Captain fought it off, knocking his assailant out with a tap to the chin.

Back at the doorway there was activity as well, the muffled thump of controlled explosives going off, and the shouts of Agent Prime's combat ops. There was a staccato burst of gunfire, then nothing.

Refit sat up, holding his bad arm. "Check the body," he said.

Dervish shook her head. The floppy containing the data was missing. The entire operation was a set-up, a shill.

Out of the fog lumbered three huge, clanking shapes, MAPS armor, ghostly white skulls against the wet bricks of the city. The lead one spoke in the voice of Agent Prime. "Paydirt," he said. "We got the disk before it was transmitted."

"Wonderful," muttered Charm, helping the bleeding Refit to his feet, "We just get shot at for something you got from a direct raid. This ain't just a job, it's a bloody dangerous job."

In the background there was the howl of sirens and the subsonic thumping of an approaching police copter. "How far to the safe house?" asked Refit.

"Two blocks," said Agent Prime. "Need a hand?"

"Feels like I'll need an arm and some new intestines as well," said Refit. "Let's move out."

The four FREELancers headed for the safe house: Refit, the rebuilt man, Charm, the charismat, Dervish the assassin, and Captain Ares, the masked crusader. Agent Prime and his men remained behind to clean up.

When the Chicago police arrived 10 minutes later,

all they found was a burning office and lab in a deserted warehouse. There were no bodies and no evidence other than the flames that a war was being fought here.

That was Aug. 27, 1998. The secret battle for Chicago continues. ...

What Is FREELancers?

FREELancers is a *Top Secret/S.I.*™ campaign set in the near future, in the waning days of this century. (You must have the *Top Secret/S.I.*™ boxed set in order to play the FREELancers campaign.) It is a time when technology has made amazing advances, political and economic power are taking new forms, and agents with abilities far beyond those of normal men are employed by all sides. Yet human nature remains the same, and many of the problems we currently face remain as deadly as they are now.

This book sets the stage for the FREELancers campaign, with data on new advantages, disadvantages, skills, and careers for the future. It also introduces metabilities — powers for use by your super-agents. It also creates a background campaign for adventuring in the future. Finally, this book lists in detail the prominent members of the FREELancers organization, for use as Player Characters or NPCs controlled by the Administrator.

Who Are the FREELancers?

FREELancers is the common name for an agency known as the Fast Reaction Experimental Espionage Branch. Originally a part of Orion's Ganymede bureau, the agency became an independent operation in the mid-'80s. The FREELancers goal was to create a team of super-agents, including those with obvious metabilities, those with incredible natural abilities, and those aided by advanced technology.

The current leader of the FREELancers is Lee Won Underhill, daughter of the founder of the FREE organization at Orion which evolved into the current FREELancers group. She has expanded her father's work of recruiting and developing individuals with exceptional powers and turning them into a fighting force.

The group's headquarters is in downtown Chicago, in a rebuilt hotel damaged by the flooding of the late '80s and early '90s. While the FREELancers operate out of Chicago, they are not recognized officially by the U.S. government, which tolerates their presence because of the power they wield. The FREELancers in turn offer aid to U.S. agencies at reduced prices, but also have operated both with and against every major espionage organization in the world. Hence the name — FREELancers.

Since 1996, the FREElancers organization has benefited from good publicity, the support of the city government (Dorothy Hubbard, mayor), and has expanded its facilities throughout the American Great Lakes region. With their success, other agencies are seeking to increase their own use of super-human and high-technology agents.

This is not to say that the FREELancers are not without problems. The saying, "Power has its price" is very applicable to the FREELancers team, most of whose members are a part of the operation chiefly because their metabilities or training make them a threat to the outside world. The FREELancers are an extended family for these agents, who in turn do not always get along.

Problems abound from the outside as well. Organized crime has its own methods, old and new, for dealing with the increase in metable agents. Ecological guerrillas and powerful corporations engage in their own feuds. In addition, there is a growing number of rogue metables operating around the world. The FREELancers' mission is to locate, recruit, and if necessary, neutralize such potential problems.

The world of the FREELancers is the world of espionage, mixed with strange powers and wondrous inventions, set in a future all-too-close for comfort. It is a world of powered armor, skills doled out by computer, one-talent wonders who can perform tasks beyond the abilities of the best generalists, and warriors who have spent their lives honing a particular ability. It is a world of danger, mystery, savagery, and wonder.

Welcome to the world of the Freelancers.

The Future of the FREELancers

The year 1998, two years shy of the millennium, is a world very much like our own. Cars still look generally like cars, planes like planes, and TVs like TVs. Human nature remains the same, though there is a general concern in the air about what lies around the corner of the next century.

It is a world more advanced than our own, advanced in subtle ways. Medical advances have allowed easier transplanting. The sciences of cyborging and artificial intelligence are just shifting into high gear.

It is a world where old rivalries, like the Soviet Union vs. America, or Web vs. Orion, are being replaced by new ones in politics, crime, and science. There is growing regionalism, best seen in the formation of mega-city groups like the Great Lakes Authority (GLA), a bundle of cities known in the 1980s as the "Rust Belt."

There are corporations launching space stations into orbit, Japanese robots mining the moon, and Soviet cosmonauts on their way to Mars. There are all-terrain weapons suits which mimic the fanciful giant robots of mid-'80s cartoons and comic books. There are veterans of Central American wars equipped with cyborged body parts. And somewhere out there, in some lab, may be the first computer with true artificial intelligence.

It is a time of growing concern and growing knowledge. Human and meta-human abilities are being expanded and developed. Individuals with exceptional aptitudes in certain skills are coming forward — the Savants. Corporations and other power groups see them as new pawns with which to play their power games.

It is a time of choice, a time of danger, a time of knives hidden in the shadows.

It is the time of the FREELancers.

Future Characters

Creating Super-powered Agents

The basic attributes of your character remain unchanged from the *Top Secret/S.I.*™ Players Guide (STRength, INTelligence, REFlexes, WILl-power, and CONstitution), as do the methods of generating your secondary attributes, MOVement and DEXterity. The system of character generation is altered, however, to allow the creation of characters with 80 + attributes, and the inclusion of new advantages, disadvantages, and special super powers (called metabilities).

Character Generation Summary

New information for the FREELancers operation is provided in *italics* for ease of use.

1) Make five d60 + d10 rolls, adding 10 to each roll.

2) Add the five numbers together. If the result is 275 or more, the rolls stand. If the result is **less** than 275, assign the difference in points between 275 and the sum of the rolled numbers to your attributes as you see fit. *Attributes may be raised in this fashion beyond 70.*

3) Calculate your MOV (STR plus REF divided by two) and your DEX (REF plus INT divided by two).

4) Select one advantage and one disadvantage. (Reality Rule — take up to six points of advantages or disadvantages.) *Additional skills and disadvantages are provided for FREELancers characters.*

5) *Determine metability by choice or random selection, including metability disadvantage. Players are not required to take a metability to work for FREELancers, but it helps in terms of survival.*

6) Determine background characteristics (sex, nationality, hair color, eye color, general appearance, handedness, native language, and age).

7) Optional — Determine Orion Psychological Profile.

8) Pick Career Packages *Note that four new Career Packages are included here in addition to the four provided in the Top Secret/S.I.*™ boxed set.

9) Choose initial skills, spending 30 character points. *Note that new skills are available as well.*

10) Purchase initial personal equipment (if any). *Freelancers headquarters makes certain equipment available to its people depending on the mission.*

Character Attributes

Attributes can now exceed the natural 79 maximum and the modified 70 level (human norms) and reach the 80s, 90s, and 100s. In the FREELancers future, the upper limit of human (and therefore Player Character) abilities, even given metabilities and technological help, is 150. The rules included here are designed for characters with skills within the 71 to 150 range. Administrators may raise the limits above 150 at their option, though such excesses will further remove the "reality" of the game.

Individuals with attributes of 70 or greater will have obvious physical characteristics that match their abilities. Those with extreme STR or CON will tend toward massive bodies with powerful limbs. Those with extreme REF will tend toward

lean forms with well-developed muscles. Those with high degrees of INT will quickly make that intelligence known in conversation, while those with a 70+ WIL will prove themselves naturally charismatic. In short, humans with natural (rolled) abilities in the 70+ category are easily identified as special, shining like spotlights in a sea of candles.

Attributes which are increased by metabilities or technological means are not so easily spotted. It is possible that a 100+ STR metability agent may appear as a slender young wisp of a girl, deriving her strength from ambient light. (See the sections below for metabilities).

With the increase in stats, certain characters will fall into a "can't miss" category for normal actions. A character with a 100 STR will find bashing a normal door in to be a petty annoyance. In such cases, the Administrator can do one of two things:

1) Treat 95+ level attempts as normal actions. Just as you don't check for an agent to open a normal door, a 95+ STR agent is not going to have any trouble bashing a normal door off its hinges. Treat it as an automatic action.

2) Roll a normal attribute check, with the action succeeding unless a 95-99 is rolled. In cases of 95-98, a Bad Break occurs. (The door is stronger than it looks, the agent hit it wrong, etc.) On a 99, a Terrible Break occurs (the agent took damage to his shoulder when hitting the door, the bad guys on the other side open it at the precise moment and the agent goes sprawling into the room, etc.)

In general, the Administrator should let the characters get away with automatic actions when employing extreme abilities (it encourages them to use those attributes), and check for Bad Breaks only when it is necessary for the plot (or something spectacular can go wrong).

Optional Rule: Moving Into the Future

Some Administrators and players may want to take existing agents in a present-day campaign, and use them in a FREElancers campaign. The effects of aging the characters 10 years are discussed on page 9 of the Players Guide. Such characters *may*, at their option, choose to gain a metability in the process, either from some accident in the interim, some previously unknown ability, or by using technology to duplicate that metability. Such characters should still be limited to a single metability and its disadvantages.

Advantages/Disadvantages

All of the advantages and disadvantages listed in the Players Guide are available to players in the FREELancers campaign. In addition, there are a number of new advantages and disadvantages.

ADVANTAGES

Name	Points
Blandness	3
Computer Aptitude	3
Contacts	2,3,4
Dual Identity	2
Natural Resistance: Cold	2
Natural Resistance: Disease	2
Natural Resistance: Electricity	2
Natural Resistance: Poison/Drugs	3
Natural Resistance: Radiation	2
Scholarly Aptitude	3
Scientific Aptitude	3
Subculture & Jargon	1

DISADVANTAGES

Name	Points
Lost Dependents	3
Mood Swings	3
Overweight	1,2,3
Physical Vulnerability	1
Susceptibility to Disease	1,3
Vindictiveness	2

New Advantages

Blandness (3 points)

This advantage is the reverse of the Unmistakable Feature disadvantage. The character's appearance is unremarkable, making identification unusually difficult. As a result, the individual gains a +10 (as opposed to +5) per skill level in the following *skills:* Disguise, Shadowing, Evasion, Stealth, Acting, and Mimicry. The character with this advantage cannot have a natural WIL over 70, and if placed in unusual surroundings, may be easily picked out. (For example, a medium-sized white male would have a harder time hiding in a crowd in Singapore than in L.A.)

Computer Aptitude (3 points)

Characters with this advantage understand computers easily, and have a natural talent for learning programming languages. They may learn skills involving computers and programming more easily than those without the advantage.

The first level of a computer-related skill purchased by characters with the Computer Aptitude advantage gets the skill at attribute level, just as for characters without the advantage. However, subsequent skill levels in these skills give these characters +10 to their rolls per skill level, as opposed to +5. Skills which this may be applied to include: Computer Technician, Computer Programming, Electronics, Weapons Pod Devices, Weapons Suit Repair, Gleaning (if using computers), Weapons Suit Operation, Security Systems (if using computers), and Leading Edge Degree (again, if involving computers).

Contacts (2, 3, or 4 points)

Characters with this advantage have a friend or ally, outside the FREELancers organization itself, upon whom they can depend for information, advice, and, occasionally, material. When buying the contact, the player should determine the number of points being spent (2, 3, or 4). This determines both the level of the contact, and the amount of aid the agent can receive.

A 2-point Contact is a steady source of information with limited resources — a corner news vendor, a snitch, or an employee in a bank or large corporation. The contact will provide information, but not act physically on the behalf of the agent.

A 3-point Contact is a higher-up in an organization, such as an organized crime lieutenant, a midlevel researcher in a corporation, or an alderman. At this level, such characters will provide information freely. If a character from the 2-point level is chosen here, that person will run errands, do favors, and similarly get involved in helping the agent.

A 4-point Contact is a bigwig — the governor, mayor, CEO of a major corporation, head of an inde-

pendent resource lab, or movie producer. Such individuals will provide information as long as it does not harm them, as well as equipment, money, and materials within a reasonable limit. If a 3-point contact is purchased with 4 points, then that 3-point contact will run errands, do favors, and lend out material. If a 2-point contact is purchased with 4 points, the individual will do anything to help the agent, even if it means breaking a personal code or committing a crime.

All contacts are NPCs run by the Administrator. They are naturally disposed toward the agent, but player character actions can reduce their loyalty and effectiveness (If a character has a contact in Kamika Industries, but through his actions gets the contact fired, sued, or threatened at gunpoint, the character should explain his actions if he wants to continue using that contact.)

Administrators should note that the Contact advantage, like the Dependent disadvantage, creates situations where the Administrator can influence Player Character actions and get them involved in missions.

This advantage can be purchased more than once.

Dual Identity (2 points)

The individual with this advantage starts the game with "secret identity," complete with its own Social Security number, background, and history logged into the computers. In an information-heavy age, the creation of a secret ID is imperiled by the great amount of information that is available on all facets of life. Good Gleaners (see the Gleaning skill) can detect a recently created identity after minimal digging. The FREELancers organization maintains a library of fictitious individuals for use in undercover work, but this advantage allows a character to have his or her own secret ID without depending on (or revealing himself to) the organization.

A character may have multiple secret IDs, by purchasing this advantage more than once.

Natural Resistance: Cold (2 points)

The character with this advantage is less affected by cold and cold-based attacks than normal char-

acters. Such characters will suffer a maximum of 1 point per hour damage from exposure to cold, regardless of the situation.

Natural Resistance: Disease (2 points)

The character with this advantage has a stronger constitution in regards to catching a disease. The individual with this advantage is permitted a CON attribute check upon each exposure to the disease to avoid catching it, with a maximum of one such check per hour. Particularly lethal germs may call for a check every half-hour, or even every 10 minutes.

Natural Resistance: Electricity (2 Points)

Individuals with this advantage get a +10 to all WIL rolls resulting from being shocked, including the effects of tasers.

Natural Resistance: Poison/Drugs (3 points)

An individual who is naturally resistant to poisons and drugs may make an attribute check against them to reduce or nullify their effects in the body. For each exposure, the character may make such a check. Success indicates the damage the poison or drug does is cut in half, and the frequency with which the substance causes damage is increased by a number of turns equal to the player's CON. Massive doses can overwhelm these natural defenses.

Natural Resistance: Radiation (2 points)

This advantage is the same as Natural Resistance: Disease, but applies to the effects of active radiation. This advantage *willl not* give the character the ability to stand at ground zero of an atomic test, but *will* reduce the effects of long-term radiation poisoning. A character with this advantage can withstand the ambient radiation of an unshielded nuclear reactor for twice the time as character without this advantage before succumbing.

Scholarly Aptitude (3 Points)

Individuals with this ability have a natural predilection for skills in the Liberal Arts section of the Education skills list. For every skill level gained, the character adds 10 to the attribute roll, as opposed to +5.

Scientific Aptitude (3 points)

Characters with Scientific Aptitude learn Science skills (under Education skills) more easily than characters without the advantage. For every skill level of scientific studies, characters gain a +10 to their attribute roll, as opposed to +5.

Subculture & Jargon (1 point)

In the future, there will be a greater degree of specialization in various fields, plus a rise in social groupings, which will seek to exclude outsiders and limit their boundaries, often through the use of obscure, confusing language — jargon. There are already a wide variety of such "subcultures" in existence today: motorcycle clubs, professional engineering societies, people who play roleplaying games, etc.

The Subculture & Jargon advantage permits the character to gain the benefits of the Social Chameleon skill at level 3, when dealing with that specific group. (See page 54 of the Players Guide.) If combined with Social Chameleon skill, this advantage adds 10, instead of 5, for each level of the skill.

Various subcultures of the future include:

- Professional groups such as engineers, computer programmers, and genetic scientists;
- Social groups, such as youth gangs, hackers, upper society luncheon groups;
- Business groups, including corporate raiders, underworld "families," and politicians.

The players and the Administrator can develop their own subcultures to supplement this list.

New Disadvantages

Lost Dependents (3 points)

Lost dependents are just that: NPCs who were part of the character's life before play began, and who have disappeared, for one reason or another.

Such dependents may be 2, 3, or 4-point normal dependents, but the disadvantage only uses 3 points.

A lost dependent is a relative or loved one whose whereabouts are unknown, including runaways, kidnap victims, and estranged relations and lovers. In normal play, the disadvantage has no effect, and the character lives his live normally.

However, if there is a problem involving the lost dependent which reaches the ears of the character with this disadvantage, the character is required to check it out. This may be a rumor of reappearance, an actual reappearance in the character's life, or a threat to or from that lost dependent. The Administrator is encouraged to use his wits and whims to drag characters with this disadvantage into adventures, using the lost dependent as a "hook."

If, at any time, a Lost Dependent is recovered (Old Uncle Fred is revealed to have been kidnapped by a religious cult in Kansas and barely saved from the thresher), he or she becomes a normal dependent, with no change to the advantage or disadvantage numbers.

Mood Swings (3 points)

Characters with this disadvantage suffer from mercurial temperaments, and can swing from pleasant to angry at the drop of hat. The Administrator determines the timing of the mood swings, usually having them occur at the worst possible moment. The character then makes a WIL check to determine the effects.

A successful WIL check results in the character being unaffected by the change of mood — he will feel uncomfortable, but nothing more.

If a character fails a WIL check, the character's attitude toward others changes, usually in a hostile fashion. Physical attacks are out of the question (unless the plot would be furthered by violent outbursts), but harshness, insults, and depression are usually in line. Player Characters portray their characters in such a fashion for 10 turns, at which point the mood passes.

Various types of behavior brought on by such

swings include sudden activity, depression, hostility, stupor, exhaustion, etc. They may be brought on by a word, action, or situation (See Traumatic Flashbacks), or occur at random.

Overweight (1, 2, or 3 points)

Overweight characters have a number of limitations with regard to their physical activities. These increase in seriousness with the number of points spent on the disadvantage.

1-point Overweight is a little bit on the chubby side. The character is out of shape, and has an endurance rating as if his CON were 10 points less than it was. (CON never drops below 10 for this purpose.)

2-Point Overweight is obviously fat, with the effects of endurance halved (if both Overweight and Short-winded, effects for endurance are quartered). MOV for running at top speed is halved as well.

3-Point Overweight is grossly overweight, with the effects of 2-point Overweight, plus difficulty fitting into normal furniture. Movement faster than walking speed not permitted.

Overweight characters can reduce their effects by a combination of exercise and diet. In game terms, this is reflected by the character declaring such, and putting aside one Fame & Fortune point for each point of Overweight to be reduced.

Physical Vulnerability (1 point)

This disadvantage is the opposite of Toughness — a particular area of the body is *more* vulnerable to damage than others. For each point of this disadvantage taken, 2 damage boxes on the Character Dossier are blacked in. For example, if a character had a CON of 40 (four boxes per area), and took Physical Vulnerability in area 1 (a glass jaw, maybe), he would have 2 boxes there and 4 in the other nine areas. Similarly, a Physical Vulnerability could represent a childhood respiratory illness, an old war wound, a chronic shoulder injury, or a nagging back pain.

If a character takes Physical Vulnerability sufficient to completely fill in the boxes in an area, that body part is useless. While strides are being made

in our future history, the development of cyborg parts is not elegant enough to make this a viable option for player characters.

Susceptibility to Disease (1 or 3 points)

The character with this disadvantage is more vulnerable to the effects of disease than others, weakening his abilities and attributes. With increased pollution and new diseases, the chances for catching something is increased.

A 3-point Susceptibility means the character will catch a disease automatically upon exposure (the reverse of the Natural Resistance: Disease advantage). Usually such a disease, unless predetermined by the Administrator, will result in lost of 1d10 CON points for a period of 1d10 days.

A 1-point Susceptibility means the character is no more or less susceptible to disease than an ordinary person. However, they do tend toward hypochondria, believing that every exposure to germ, real or imagined, is the first sounding of the trumpet of the last judgment.

Vindictiveness (2 points)

A character with this disadvantage will not forgive any slights, real or imagined, against him, and always holds a grudge against those he perceives have done him wrong.

A character who is Vindictive may choose a particular person, group, or organization against whom to be vindictive. That group or person now can consider the character an "Enemy" (as for the disadvantage), and the character will stop at nothing to get vengeance against them at the earliest opportunity, even if this conflicts with the character's assigned mission.

Vindictive characters can be nice, pleasant folk, unless you happen to be the declared enemy of the character. The Vindictive disadvantage does not affect normal behavior.

Metabilities

DOCUMENTED METABILITIES

Attribute Enhancement
Savantism
Berserkerism
Combat Arcane
Extreme Senses
Enhanced Senses
Extreme Toughness
Telekinesis
Telepathy
Telepathic Force
Invulnerabilities
Telelocation
Pyrokinetics
Poltergeist

UNDOCUMENTED METABILITIES

Speed
Healing
Empathic Rapport

THEORETICAL METABILITIES

Regeneration
Armor
Flight
Retro-field Generation
Waterbreather

Metabilities are personal powers and attributes beyond the capabilities of most mere mortals. They allow the individual possessing them to perform actions that would be impossible otherwise. Often they make particular skills and actions easier, and as often, they allow new and otherwise impossible actions.

Metabilities provide power, but power has its price, often stemming from the nature of the metability itself. The hand that gives also takes, such that the individual often suffers as much as he or she gains.

Individuals have metabilities for a number of reasons. Some metabilities are induced by advancing technology (such as Refit's). Some are the result of recently tapped powers of human development (such as a Savant's). Some have no as- yet identifi-

able cause. (Captain Ares and Tandem, for example, are "normal" in the human sense, but have strange powers not explained by their genetic makeup.) All metabilities turn the individual with them into something more than an average human.

The following information represents the recognized and more popular theorized metabilities in existence in the FREELancers future. A metability is defined as being documented, undocumented, or theorized.

Documented metabilities are those observed in a particular, identifiable person, usually, a member of the FREELancers team. These are veiwed as the more "common" metabilities only because they have been proven to exist.

Undocumented metabilities are those whose existence is supported by great anecdotal evidence, but for which no full example has yet been recruited or identified by the FREELancers. The study of metabilities is still new, however, and the FREELancers operation hesitates to declare any metability impossible, since it may turn up next week.

Theorized metabilities include those that are the "furthest out," such as flight, body armor, energy field manipulation, and other "super powers." There is a theoretical reason to believe these powers exist, but no documented proof of them as of yet.

An Administrator, in setting up his or her campaign, can set the reality level of the campaign by limiting the types of metabilities available. An Administrator may also permit characters to take more than one metability, though no more than three should be taken (unless you want a hands-off, wahoo type of game).

When taking a metability, the players may also be required to take a metability disadvantage. Appropriate disadvantages are listed for each metability that requires one, and the player can choose from that list, the Administrator can delegate one, the player can come up with a similar disadvantage for the power, or the disadvantage can be rolled randomly from the table which fol-

lows the metability.

Each metability description ends with commentary based upon the FREELancers files about individuals known to have the metability and their place in society.

Documented Metabilities

Attribute Enhancement

One of the most common physical metabilities is the increase of basic human attributes above normal human limits. Only the primary attributes (STR, INT, WIL, REF, and CON) can be increased directly, but in enhancing these attributes, secondary attributes can also go up.

Any primary attribute can be increased by 15 points, but the players must select a 2-point disadvantage from the Players Guide or the list of new disadvantages on page 7. Any primary attribute can be increased by 30 points at the cost of a 4-point disadvantage.

In addition, if the final attribute level is 100 or more, the character must take a disadvantage from the following list:

- *Reduced effectiveness:* For every 15-point increase, the character must lose 10 points in another primary attribute. Secondary attributes are affected as well.

- *Mental block:* The character chooses one of the attributes not affected by the metability. Checks on that attribute are at ½ when a full attribute check is called for, ¼ attribute when ½ or ¼ attributes are required.

- *Vulnerability:* Weapons which inflict bruise damage inflict wound damage instead.

- *Shocking appearance:* The individual looks inhuman and can be immediately recognized in a crowd. The character is impossible to disguise. This disadvantage should be tied into the attribute modified by the metability, but can include extreme height or girth, odd color (blue or green skin, for example), feathers, fur, swollen head or limbs, or other distinguishing marks that cannot be hidden.

- *Transient increase:* The metability-enhanced attribute functions at the increased level for a short period (10 turns maximum), once per day, at the summoning of the character. The Administrator may ask for a WIL check if the character is attempting to summon the higher attribute in a stressful situation.

The character can choose from the above list, propose a disadvantage of his own creation (with Administrator approval), or roll on the table below for the effect that applies to his character:

% Roll	Disadvantage
01-30	Reduced effectiveness
31-50	Mental block
51-60	Vulnerability
61-80	Shocking appearance
81-00	Transient increase

The Attribute Enhancement metability is probably more common than FREELancers files indicate, as it often merely raises a low attribute to a level still within human limits.

Savantism

Savantism is the commonest form of mental metability. The metability involves the sudden development of a skill or skills at a level higher than humanly possible, usually (but not always) involving skills the recipient did not originally have. There have been incidents of musical and mathematical prodigies throughout recorded time. The sudden increase in Savantism may be the result of ongoing and rapid human development, or the simple fact that in the modern world, more people are exposed to those skills in which Savantism is found. Dr. Andrew Rhand has put forth the idea that computer technology Savants have been around for generations, but only in the past 50 years has the machinery appeared to allow them to display their talents.

Savantism usually manifests itself in the Mechanical, Specialty, General, Education, and Language skill groups. Savantism in the Combat skills area

is referred to as *Berserkism*. A character developing Savant skills usually begins at skill level 6 for that ability. Higher initial levels are possible, but carry a heavier disadvantage as well. The player choosing Savantism must also choose the skill or skills in which he or she wishes to excel.

Entering a Savant state is an act of willpower, and the individual doing so must make a successful roll against the WIL in order to achieve a state in which actions may be performed at a higher skill level. Disturbances, loud noises, gunfire, and fear half, or in extreme cases, quarter the WIL roll required to slip into Savant state. The Savant state lasts until a particular task is completed, or until three rolls are made against the Savant skill.

An "ordinary" Savant (skill level 6) must take one disadvantage. A Savant in multiple skills, or one with skill levels of 7 or higher, will have one extra disadvantage for each additional skill or level above 6.

Disadvantages are:

- *Trance:* The character can't move any part of the body not being used in the completion of the task. Tasks are performed in a blank-stared, zombie-like state. The Savant is aware of his actions, but cannot break the trance until physically stopped or the task is completed.

- *Separate personality:* Some Savants develop an alternate personality when in Savant state, often one at opposition with the true personality. Relationships vary between Savants and these alternate personalities. Some form alliances among their personalities. Others have personalities which hate one another. This is the player's choice.

- *Erratic duration:* The Savant state lasts for 1d6x10 minutes, or 1d6 uses of the skill involved. While this disadvantage allows the character several chances to use a skill, it also creates uncertainty — the Savant state can end before the task is completed.

- *Hunger:* After using the Savant skill, the individual will be wracked by hunger pangs, and must eat. If no full meal is available, the char-

acter suffers 1 point damage to all parts of the body per hour.

- *Sleep:* This is the same as hunger, except the individual needs to sleep six to eight hours before continuing after each use of Savant sills.

- *Erratic trigger:* The Savant state can only be consciously triggered by a ½ WIL check, and a similar check must be made in situations where the Savant skill may be used (whether it is needed or not). The ½ WIL check is then made to *avoid* going into Savant state.

Agents who are Savants generally do not use this ability directly in the field, but often use their knowledge to create items which they do use. For example, Matrix is a Savant in Computer Programming and uses it directly in handling her job, while Scratchbuilt's Mechanical Savantism was used to produce a suit of mobile armor.

The character with Savantism may choose both the area of the Savantism and the disadvantage. As an option, the player may roll on this table for disadvantages:

% Roll	Disadvantage
01-50	Trance
51-60	Alternate personality
61-75	Hunger
76-90	Sleep
91-95	Erratic duration
96-00	Erratic trigger

There has been one case of Savantism moving from one area of skills to another — that of Dr. Andrew J. Rhand, better known as Dr. Random.

Berserkerism

Berserkerism is a form of Savantism involving Combat skills. Like Savantism, the character gains a skill at levels over and above those thought attainable by any, save combat Arcanes, but unlike Savants, Arcanes are limited to a single Combat skill. There have always been tales of great warriors, and this metability may explain those tales.

Berserkerism manifests itself in most Combat skills, though to date there has been no evidence of the metability in Mortars, Tank Guns, Artillery,

Missiles, and other "impersonal" weapons. (The Administrator may choose to exclude these weapons from the list of skills to which Berserkerism applies.) Basic Melee, Heavy Weapons, and Basic Firearms cannot have Berserker metability. Individuals with Berserkerism metability may have initial Combat skills, but when in Berserker mode, the Berserker numbers are used.

Berserkerism metability gives characters one combat skill at level 6. Prerequisites, if any, do not apply in Berserker mode. A character without Basic Firearms skill but with the Berserkerism metability in Pistol can still wield a pistol at skill level 6.

Berserkerism is different from Savantism in that the Berserker state can usually be entered at will — after 1 turn of concentration. (The character must spend 1 turn concentrating to achieve the state.) The state lasts from 5-14 turns (1d10 + 4). At the end of that time, the berserker must wait 10 turns before entering the state again.

There are a number of potential disadvantages for Berserker metables. The "normal" Berserker (skill level 6) must have one disadvantage, either from the list below or designed with the Administrator's approval. Berserkers with higher skill levels, or those with Berserker functions in multiple Combat skills, must have multiple disadvantages, one for each additional skill or level of skill affected.

Disadvantages are:

- *Indiscriminant attacks: Everything* in the area is a randomly selected target for the Berserker — enemies, friends, innocent bystanders, trees, small animals, *everything,* for the duration of the Berserker state. Individuals with this disadvantage tend to be unpopular in large groups.

- *Erratic duration:* The Berserkerism metability only lasts 1d10 turns before elapsing.

- *Willed Berserking:* The individual must make a WIL check at ½ WIL in order to enter Berserker mode. In combat situations, this becomes ¼ WIL in order to enter Berserker mode.

- *Uncontrollable Berserking:* A prearranged situa-

tion (by Administrator and player) will cause Berserking activity. The item or situation should not be impossible, nor overly uncommon. Good suggestions include handguns, men with stocking masks over their heads, or a particular enemy.

- *Focus:* The character can only enter the Berserker state by focusing on a particular item, usually (but not always) a special version of the weapon in which he has Beserker Combat skill. Deprived of the focus weapon, the Berserker can only make normal attacks and can't fight as a Berserker. In addition, for every week without the weapon (or a replacement, if the first is destroyed), the character's WIL is halved.

No current FREELancers agents exhibit the Berserker metability, though a number of foes over the years have recruited mainly among Berserkers. Berserkers, with their predilection to charge into battle, tend to have short life spans.

A character with Berserkerism metability chooses both the skill affected by the metability and the disadvantage, choosing from the list here, creating one of his own (with the Admin's approval), or rolling on the table below:

% Roll	Disadvantage
01-30	Indiscriminate attacks
31-60	Erratic duration
61-70	Willed berserking
71-80	Uncontrollable berserking
81-00	Focus

Combat Arcane

There are two known ways to increase one's combat skills to a superhuman level. One is through the Berserkerism metability. The other is by Combat Arcane. Combat Arcane is not a "true" metability in that there is no genetic mutation, outward manifestation, or visible difference between a master at Combat Arcane and the rest of the world. The Combat Arcane has merely spent his or her entire life perfecting a particular skill or ability (to the exclusion of all other skills and abilities).

The Combat Arcane can have up to three Combat skills which start at level 6. The purchase of these

skills is explained under the Combat Arcane career (page 29), and reflects the fact that all the studying in this individual's life (usually from birth) has been devoted to mastering up to three Combat skills. Skills other than perfected Combat skills must be purchased and developed in play. Combat Arcanes are initially very powerful, but only in limited areas.

Further, while Combat Arcanes do not suffer from the disadvantages of other metabilities, they do not have careers in the normal sense. Most have spent their lives in military operations, monasteries, religious retreats, and mad scientists' basements, and as such, have no starting funds or sources of income. In addition, Combat Arcanes' former masters do not take the loss of longtime disciples lightly, so a Combat Arcane must either decide to remain true to his Arcane heritage or quit to join FREELancers, which will result in the Arcane group (the person or persons who have imparted Combat skills to the Combat Arcane) becoming an enemy.

An Arcane group is initially created by the player creating the Combat Arcane, but is run and developed by the Administrator. The player may say, "My character is an Arcane from the Order of the Kiwi, an Australian monastery specializing in Kung Fu and Shotguns." The Administrator might then have the Combat Arcane meet up with a group of assassins in hairy feathers carrying double-oughts.

In the FREELancer organization, the one current Combat Arcane is Dervish, of the Blade of Sirroco, based in Jordan.

Extreme Senses

This metability is actually a group of five metabilites, each affecting one of the five senses. Each sense enhanced counts as a separate metability. The senses are heightened even beyond the level of the Acute Senses advantage. Characters with the Extreme Senses metability *must* takes the Acute Senses advantage.

Extreme Hearing: The character gains +30 to the INT score on all attribute checks involving hearing, and any sound-based attack he makes is dou-

bled in effect and damage. As a disadvantage, the individual is susceptible to loud, persistent noises, those sounds which last at least 10 turns that are at least as loud as a police siren seems to someone standing alongside the squad car. The Administrator determines what is a sufficiently loud enough noise to be injurious, but generally, neither a single sharp noise, such as a gunshot, or a persistent noise interrupted by pauses, such as a ringing telephone, will cause CON damage. (However, a series of sharp noises, such as a gun battle, would do CON damage.) If a character with Extreme Hearing is subjected to a sufficiently loud noise for 10 straight turns, then he will suffer 1 point CON damage for each subsequent turn the noise persists. A character with Extreme Hearing who suffers CON damage as a result of loud noise will suffer CON damage as described on page 71 of the Players Guide, except that if his CON reaches zero, rather than dying, he will lapse into unconsciousness and will have his Extreme Hearing bonus permanently reduced by 10. Any character who's rendered unconscious because of a loud noise will be out for 1d10 turns.

Extreme Smell: The character gets +40 to INT checks involving smell and can even detect "odorless" gases. As a disadvantage, characters with Extreme Smell metability are susceptible to the effects of odors. They take double damage from tear gas, poison gas, and other gas-based attacks. Even cigarette smoke, meat-packing plants, raw onions, and air pollution may be debilitating.

Extreme Taste: The character gets +40 to INT checks involving taste. As a disadvantage, the individual is more susceptible to consumed items, such as alcohol, and, if he drinks poison without identifying it, makes any checks at ½ normal ability.

Extreme Touch: The character gets +30 to all attribute checks involving touch. As a disadvantage, the individual is more susceptible to pain (not *damage*, but pain). If he takes damage, the character must make a WIL check or go unconscious for 1d10 turns.

Extreme Vision: The character gets +40 to all attribute checks involving vision. As a disadvan-

tage, the individual can be stunned by bright lights (such as a naked, 100-watt light bulb, flash bulbs, strobe lights, floodlights, etc.) unless a WIL check is made.

All Extreme Senses are always in operation, unless the individual takes action to dull them (dark glasses, earplugs, gloves, etc.).

Enhanced Senses

Enhanced Senses differ from Extreme Senses, in that Extreme Senses merely bring in more of the standard information, while Enhanced Senses bring in different information, or a more detailed version of that information.

Enhanced Hearing: A character with enhanced hearing can pick up noises beyond the range of normal ears, from very high-pitched sounds (like dog whistles and bats) to very low-pitched noises (like the lowest register of pedals on a giant pipe organ). The sense is no more accurate than human hearing, it just operates on a broader band. There is no disadvantage.

Enhanced Smell: This is the same as the Acute Smell advantage, except a character with Enhanced Smell can ascertain or recognize individual human spoors in a crowd and can track much like a bloodhound can. There is no disadvantage.

Enhanced Taste: A character with enhanced taste has an incredibly acute palate. Not only would he be able to identify all the myriad ingredients in a Cajun gumbo right down to the cayenne pepper and the thyme, he could also accurately determine the amounts of each ingredient and how long the gumbo had simmered. The character would even be able to determine, just by the taste, if an orange was grown in California or Florida soil.

Enhanced Touch: The character has a greater sensitivity to the world around him, such that subtle breezes, unnoticed by most, make an impression on his senses. A character with this ability gains a +10 on tracking and other skills for which increased sensitivity (as opposed to dexterity) is needed. There is no disadvantage.

Enhanced Vision: The character can take in a wid-er range of visual signals than normal agents. Vision may stretch into the infrared (allowing the character to see heat patterns) and/or into the ultraviolet (cosmic radiation). A disadvantage is that colors as we know them appear very different to the individual, so that the character is effectively color blind. More extreme cases, such as being able to see radio waves, gamma radiation, or X-rays, would result in a Vision Impairment as described on page 26 of the Players Guide.

Extreme Toughness

Toughness, described on page 19 of the Players Guide, increases the amount of damage chracters take by 1 to 4 points per body area. Extreme Toughness increases this to 5, 6, or 7 extra points, but at a price:

Toughness-5 halves normal movement, and the character suffers a −10 to all DEX rolls.

Toughness-6 quarters normal movement, and the character suffers −20 to all DEX rolls.

Toughness-7 restricts movement to no greater than a walk under any circumstances, and the character suffers −30 to all DEX rolls.

Extreme Toughness is a reflection of the increased ruggedness of the individual. Extreme Toughness is not armor — it does not protect from attacks, it only allows the character to take more damage from those attacks.

Telekinesis

Telekinesis is the ability to move objects at a distance by mental power alone, without touching the object. Telekinetic abilities have been demonstrated throughout the 20th century, though a scientific explanation is still a long way off, and rival theories about the nature of telekinetics, telepathy, and other "mind powers" abound.

Current studies indicate that a standard telekinetic can move an object of about 1 pound at a distance of 30'. The telekinetic individual must make a successful WIL check. Once made, the WIL check does not need to be made again unless the character is disturbed, his concentration is disrupted, or he seeks to move another object.

A number of factors can affect whether a telekinetic stunt is possible. The factors below are cummulative, and if an attempt is reduced below ¼ WIL, it becomes impossible.

- For each doubling of distance beyond 30', the WIL is halved.

- For each doubling of weight over 1 pound, the WIL is halved.

- If the item is secured to a larger item (a button on a shirt, a clasp on a gunbelt), the WIL is halved.

- If the item is relatively complex (the trigger on a gun, a button on a control panel), the WIL is halved.

- If someone is holding onto an object, the WIL is halved.

Telekinetics cannot stop bullets or other objects in flight. They *can* alter the aim of an opponent just a tad, causing a miss, if a ½ WIL check is made.

Objects moved by Telekinesis move very slowly, either dragged along the ground or floated in the air. They cannot move fast enough to inflict damage. (Though an object like a grenade can be moved by telekinesis, the user should keep himself under cover or else be caught in the blast himself.)

Telekinesis comes with a variety of possible disadvantages, one of which the telekinetic must take:

- *Visible aura:* The telekinetic's eyes glow, the object being affected is surrounded by a colorful aura, or visible lines of force stretch between the user and the object.

- *Limited weight:* The base weight is ½ pound, not 1 pound.

- *Limited duration:* Attempts at Telekinesis can only be tried once per hour, with the action lasting 1d10 turns.

- *Limited distance:* Base distance is 10', not 30'.

- *Exhaustion:* With each attempt at Telekinesis, the individual must make a WIL check or go unconscious for 1d10 minutes.

An agent with Telekinesis may choose his limitation, or roll on the chart below:

% Roll	Disadvantage
01-50	Visible aura
51-60	Limited weight
61-70	Limited duration
71-80	Limited distance
81-00	Exhaustion

There are currently no telekinetics active with the FREELancers, though there are a number of documented cases involving the talent.

Telepathy

True Telepathy, or "mind-reading," is a lot less flashy and a lot more useful to the agent in the field than its literary and cinematic counterpart. Telepathy is the ability to detect images in the mind of another person without using verbal communication. As with Telekinesis and other "mind powers," the exact mechanism of the metability is unknown.

By making a WIL check, an agent with this metability can detect the presence of another person within a 60' area. The agent can also determine the intensity of the thoughts (sleep, dreaming, daydreaming, intense concentration, conversation, etc.), and be able to identify familiar thought patterns.

If the target is willing and concentrates, the telepath can pull out the image on which the target is concentrating, again by a WIL check. If the target is unwilling or isn't concentrating, a ½ WIL check is needed. Other factors which affect Telepathy are:

- Doubling of distance halves WIL check.

- Singling out one target's thoughts among many is a ½ WIL check.

- If the target speaks a different language than the telepath, a ½ WIL check is required to detect thoughts (not for mere detection of the presence of thoughts).

Only thoughts — and not memories — can be detected by Telepathy. Telepaths are used to locate prisoners, detect the presence of guards, and in interrogation of prisoners, where the interrogator asks questions while the telepath scans for honesty and specific images.

The image in the popular press of telepaths as mind-readers capable of pulling out innermost thoughts and hidden deeds make telepaths unpopular. Telepathy is usually an evoked metability, that is, it can be called upon if needed. In theory, a telepath could be "always receiving," but tests indicate that such telepaths would quickly go insane from the overload of unshielded thoughts. Savant's thoughts are so intense, they actually cause mild pain (like a headache) to telepaths. For this reason, Savants and telepaths are normally kept apart.

Telepathic characters must have one of the following disadvantages (in addition to being generally unpopular with the public):

- *Limited distance:* Base distance is 20', not 60'.

- *Visible effects:* The act of Telepathy has a visible effect on the telepath or his target(s) — a bluish glow, eyes going blank, etc.

- *Trance:* The telepath must enter a trance for 1d10 minutes to use his metability. The telepath must come out of the trance before any information gained can be imparted to anyone else.

- *Line of sight:* The telepath must see his or her target. This negates the usefulness of Telepathy in detecting the presence of unseen opponents.

- *Sensitivity:* The telepath can't sort through the various signals in an area to concentrate on a particular target. If more than five people are in an area, it will be impossible for the telepath to detect thoughts and images. If there are more than 20 people an area, the telepath must make a WIL check or go unconscious (more than 100 people makes that ½ WIL check).

The telepath can choose his or her disadvantage, or roll on the following table:

% Roll	Disadvantage
01-30	Limited distance
31-40	Visible effects
41-60	Trance
61-70	Line of sight
71-00	Sensitivity

Several telepaths operate in the FREELancer hierarchy, primarily in public relations and recruitment.

Telepathic Force

The Telepathic Force metability allows the agent to inflict bruise damage by mental energy. This outpouring of mental energy does not affect physical objects like cars, walls, and bullets, but does affect living things.

A character with Telepathic Force inflicts 1 point of bruise damage for each point of WIL spent in the attempt. WIL can be expended all at once or a little at a time. When WIL reaches zero, the character goes unconscious for 1d10 minutes. WIL is recovered at a rate of one point per minute (30 turns). A DEX check is required to hit a particular opponent. This check also determines the location of the bruise damage.

An agent with Telepathic Force can use it in short or extended bursts. A short burst gives +5 to the DEX score, and inflicts +1 damage to the target. It also does damage to all targets in a 45-degree arc. The agent using a short burst of Telepathic Force can't use his or her Telepathic Force metability for an hour after the short burst.

An extended burst gives the agent +10 to his DEX and adds +2 to damage. An extended burst affects all targets in a 90 degree arc in front of the individual. The agent firing an extended burst of Telepathic Force can't use his or her Telepathic Force metability for up to an hour after the extended burst, and in addition, must make a WIL check or fall unconscious for one hour.

Bursts of Telepathic Force affect *all* within the target range, friend or foe.

Telepathic Force is not affected by soft cover, but negated by Hard Cover. Normal range is 60', with 60'-180' requiring a ½ DEX check, and beyond that, a ¼ DEX check.

A character with Telepathic Force must choose from one of the following disadvantages, or roll on the table which follows:

- *Visible effect I:* The Telepathic Force appears in the form of missiles, fists, arcs of lightning, or whatever else the player or Administrator chooses, issuing from the hands or eyes of the character using the metability.

- *Visible effect II:* The Telepathic Force is itself invisible, but the character using it undergoes some visible effect (glows, eyes bug out, etc).

- *Long recharge:* After every shot, the character with Telepathic Force must make a WIL check. Failure indicates that the Telepathic Force cannot be used for another 5 turns.

- *Overkill:* The character with Telepathic Force only fires bursts and can't fire normal shots. All effects of firing bursts of Telepathic Force occur.

% Roll	Disadvantage
01-60	Visible effect I
61-80	Visible effect II
81-90	Long recharge
91-00	Overkill

The FREELancers team has an active pair of agents who use the Telepathic Force metability, a young male and young female named Tandem. Their Telepathic Force ability is tied into another ability they have, Synthesis, such that they can only use their power when in contact with each other. No examples of Telepathic Force power in a single individual have been documented, but there is undocumented evidence of Telepathic Force agents working in various government operations.

Invulnerabilities

Invulnerabilities are physical characteristics, genetic in nature, that provide special protection against certain types of attack. These special protections are over and above those provided by natural resistances, and in many cases, supercede those natural resistances. A character may choose one (or several) of the following, each as a single metability:

Invulnerability, Cold provides complete immunity to all forms of cold and cold attack — the character will not get hypothermia under any circumstances. You can still kill the character by dropping a

mountain of snow on him, but he can't be harmed by the effects of the cold.

Invulnerability, Heat provides complete immunity from all forms of heat-based attack, including flame throwers, bonfires, and the like. The individual will not catch fire, though his clothes and surroundings will. The individual can still be affected by smoke inhalation and other effects of fire.

Invulnerability, Radiation provides complete immunity from the effects of radiation. The blast of an atomic device will still destroy the character with this ability, but the resulting long-term radiation effects would leave him unharmed.

Invulnerability, Poison makes the body totally resistant to outside drugs, gases, and toxins. As this also makes the body completely resistant to medicines as well, some thought should be given before selecting this metability.

Invulnerability, Electricity makes the character immune to effects of high voltage. The character cannot be harmed by tasers, but can be affected by lasers and other conventional weapons.

None of these metabilities have a disadvantage, save for Invulnerability, Poison.

These metabilities tend to be passive in nature (You don't know until you walk away from an atomic test if you're invulnerable to radiation.), and the number of people with these abilities is unknown.

Telelocation

Telelocation is the ability to find specific items or people, based on the power of the mind. The individual with this metability concentrates on the target, and can determine the general location and situation of the item or person being sought.

Telelocation has a range of 100 miles. If the target is within that area, the telelocator can contact it by making a WIL check. The check is ½ WIL if the target is beyond 20 miles, and ¼ WIL if the target is beyond 50 miles.

If Telelocation succeeds, the agent gets a flash of the current surroundings of the individual and/or the item. If an item is currently stashed in a trunk, the telelocator will get an image of the inside of a closed trunk.

If Telelocation fails, the agent gets a flash of an area the target was in at another time, a similar item, or some other red herring. Another attempt may be made a day later.

The Administrator rolls the dice to determine if Telelocation succeeds or not, and no Fame & Fortune points may be used to alter the roll.

A telelocator must take one of the following disadvantages:

- *Trance state:* The telelocator must go into a trance of 1d6x10 minutes, and any information gained can only be passed on to others when the trance ends.

- *Item focus:* In order to perform the telelocation, the individual must have an item that was near or with the individual or lost item within the past two days. If no such item is available, the check is against ½ WIL.

- *Area focus:* This has limitations similar to item focus, but the telelocator must be in an area the target was in during the previous two days. Naturally, the telelocator must travel to that area.

- *Empathic link:* A telelocator with this disadvantage only tracks on people, forming a psychic link with the person involved. Any damage inflicted to that person for 24 hours after the WIL check will also be inflicted on the telelocator. This has resulted in some messy deaths.

% Roll	Disadvantage
01-40	Trance state
41-65	Item focus
66-90	Area focus
91-00	Empathic link

Telelocation is still an untested art, first used by mediums and other meta-psychs in California. The Chicago Police Department uses a team of three telelocators, but keeps that fact out of the press. A number of storefront detective agencies offer telelocation services, with 90% of them being frauds. Standard FREELancers policy is to deny Teleloca-

tion as a viable metability unless the telelocator proves himself over a long period of time.

Pyrokinetics

Pyrokinetics is the ability to manipulate fire with the power of the mind alone. A pyrokinetic can increase, decrease, and direct flames, and, in some cases, force spontaneous combustion.

Given an existing flame, a Pyrokinetic can double its volume, causing it to flare, and inflicting double damage that round. This requires a WIL check. Note that a pyrokinetically enhanced fire can spread normally in subsequent rounds, but will inflict normal damage unless caused to flare again.

A Pyrokinetic can snuff out an existing flame in a single round. This also requires a WIL check. Anything larger than a bonfire requires a ½ WIL check. A house fire can be extinguished with a ¼ WIL check.

A pyrokinetic can direct an existing fire in any direction offering sufficient fuel by making a WIL check (with limitations similar to those detailed above for large fires).

A pyrokinetic can cause flammable material to combust spontaneously. This requires a ¼ WIL check, and may be entirely negated by proper storage and safe handling of volatile materials. The item must be visible and motionless to combust spontaneously.

A pyrokinetic must take one of the following disadvantages:

- *Uncertain results:* If the pyrokinetic WIL check fails to affect the flames, the reverse effect occurs — the flames dim instead of spread (or spread instead of dim), move in the wrong direction, or affect objects other than the one desired combust spontaneously.

- *Exhaustion:* The pyrokinetic must make a CON check or fall unconscious for 1d10 minutes from the strain.

- *Sympathetic damage:* If another person is damaged by flames under the pyrokinetic's control, the pyrokinetic takes similar damage and must

make a WIL check or fall unconscious for 1d10 minutes.

- *Limited combustion:* The pyrokinetic can only make a certain type of physical item burst into flames (cloth, raw wood, paper, etc.) Normal pyrokinetics can affect any flammable material, but a pyrokinetic with this disadvantage has a mental block against all but a particular type of combustible material.

- *Uncontrollable combustion:* When placed in a stress situation, the pyrokinetic must make a WIL check to *avoid* causing a fire someplace within 20' of himself.

Pyrokinesis does not provide invlunerability to flame and heat. A pyrokinetic can still be burned by his own flame, though he may redirect it or snuff it out by use of his metability. The pyrokinetic metable may choose from the above disadvantages or roll on the table below:

% Roll	Disadvantage
01-30	Uncertain results
31-40	Exhaustion
41-50	Sympathetic damage
51-70	Limited combustion
71-00	Uncontrollable combustion

The FREELancers' resident pyrokinetic, Fireflash, has been missing in action since a recent explosion in a Lake Michigan water intake plant. Most of what is known about pyrokinesis was gleaned from tests on Fireflash.

Poltergeist

A character with Poltergeist metability may cause a typical item to move by force of will. This is similar to the Telekinesis metability, except that the metability is limited to a particular type of item and further restricted to the physical function of that item. Typical items include furniture, firearms, ground vehicles, air vehicles, houses, etc.

An individual can cause an item to move or operate by a WIL check (½ WIL for particularly dicey situations.) If successful, the individual can cause that object to move according to the physical limtations of that object. A poltergeist who affects firearms may cause them to go off, while one who

affects ground vehicles may cause one to start up and go down the street, but not fly in the air.

There are a number of possible disadvantages with this metability, including:

- *Object entry:* The individual's spirit enters the object, leaving the body behind, and unprotected, in a trance state. The body is vulnerable in this state, while the spirit moves the object around. If the object is destroyed, the individual must make a WIL check to return to his or her body.

- *Visual aura:* The individual's spirit remains with the body, but the object affected glows with a colorful radiance, glows brightly, or otherwise calls attention to itself.

- *Trance state:* The spirit remains with the body, but the poltergeist must make a WIL check to remain conscious while using the ability. Otherwise, the attempt fails and poltergeist is unconscious for 1d10 turns.

- *Object destruction:* The poltergeist can move an object, but that object stands a chance of falling apart in 1d10 turns after being moved. At that time, make a second WIL check, which allows continued movement for 1d10 additional turns.

The best-documented poltergeist on the FREELancers team is Agatha Greywood, aka Golem. A sculptress, she has used her ability to enter objects to manipulate the statues she carves.

The poltergeist can choose from one of the above disadvantages, or roll on the following table:

% Roll	Disadvantage
01-40	Object entrance
41-60	Visible aura
61-80	Trance state
81-00	Object destruction

Undocumented Metabilities

Speed

A character with the Speed metability has the ability to move great distances at high velocity. The listed MOV is doubled for purposes of movement when this metability is used. This includes long-distance running, escape, and trying to reach an object across a room, but does not include drawing a weapon or other abilities that rely on REF or DEX attributes.

The table below equates the MOV attribute with typical speeds. Remember that the definition of the MOV attribute is the number of feet that can be covered in one turn.

MOV	Speed (mph)
10	3
20	7
30	10
40	14
50	17
60	20
70	24
80	27
90	31
100	34
110	37
120	41
130	44
140	47
150	51
160	54
170	58
180	61
190	65
200	68

An individual with the Speed metability can reach top speed in a single round and can stop from top speed in a single round. Running into things inflicts damage according to the relative speed of the two objects. Roll on the Crash Table, on page 86 of the Players Guide, ignoring damage to the

vehicle and applying only wounds to the individual.

Actions taken while using this metability, including throwing or firing weapons, changing direction by more than 30 degrees, or catching objects, require a REF check, with failure meaning the runner crashes. (See above.) A character with Speed metability must pick one of the following disadvantages.

- *Slow start:* The character can attain 1/2 the MOV distance in a single round, and move to full speed in the second turn.

- *Slow stop:* The character can reduce speed by 1/2 of his top speed in a single round, taking two turns to come to a complete halt from top speed.

- *Hunger:* After using the Speed metability, the individual must have a full meal or suffer from hunger pangs (-1 per turn to CON for every turn until food is provided).

- *Exhaustion:* After using the Speed metability, the individual must rest for 1d10 hours. Failure to do so will result in a CON check every five turns to check to see if the character passes out for 1d10x3 minutes.

- *Slow reflexes:* All REF-based actions are at 1/2 skill level while using the speed metability.

The character with Speed metability may choose one of the above, or roll on the table below:

% Roll	Disadvantage
01-20	Slow start
21-40	Slow stop
41-60	Hunger
61-80	Exhaustion
81-00	Slow reflexes

There are no proven cases of "speed demons," individuals who have the metability of speed — even the finest Olympic track stars remain within the limitations of human norms. Stories of meta-speedsters persist, however, and a Speed metable may be discovered in the near future. The suggested reason why none has been found is that the high REF and STR required to really benefit from this ability are so rare, that those with the metability may just suffer from low stats and have no significant outward manifestation of their enhanced ability.

Healing

There have been reports through the ages of individuals with the ability to cure damage to others. The metability of healing, while unproven, has a wide base of support in folk tales and must be considered a possible metability.

The healing metability involves the removal of filled-in damage boxes from the subject. The healer must make a WIL or INT check to remove 1d10 damage boxes from a single area OR to remove 1 damage box from each of the 1d10 areas (even if no damage was taken in some of those areas). Failure means the attempt was unsuccessful, and the *healer* takes 1d6 points of damage to a random area of his body. (Which type of check — WIL or INT — is chosen by the healer when the character is created.)

Unfortunately, damage doesn't just go away in this healing process — it must be "sent" elsewhere. The would-be healer must choose one of the following effects for his healing powers:

- The damage is transferred to the healer, area by area, and he must heal normally.

- The damage is transferred directly to another target with whom the healer has contact, who will take the damage. The target gets a WIL check to avoid the damage, and, if successful, the damage is totally negated. (This is the only case where damage disappears entirely.)

- The damage can be held by the healer up to 30 turns (1 minute). At the end of that time, the healer must pass on that damage to someone else OR suffer that damage AND go unconscious for 1d6 hours.

Transfer of damage results in Bruise damage, regardless of the type of damage originally inflicted. Severed limbs cannot be restored by this metability, but a limb or body part for which all the damage boxes have been filled may still heal in this fashion. In addition, wounds will close, blood flow will stop, and broken bones will knit when this metability is used. A bullet lodged in a healed

area will be healed over, and may require later surgery to remove.

A healer cannot heal himself. The healer metable has no other disadvantages than those listed above.

Empathic Rapport

There are individuals who seem to have a basic rapport with animals, plants, and, in some cases, even objects and machinery. Like the Empathy advantage, the metability allows the individual to make judgments about a creature's actions based on very few clues. A character with Animal Empathic Rapport, could, by making an INT check, determine an animal's mood (hungry, angry, etc.), while one with Machine Empathic Rapport could determine the probable actions of a computer program.

The various types of Empathic Rapport, and their advantages and disadvantages are:

- *Animal Rapport:* The individual has a basic understanding of wild creatures, and can even communicate basic concepts, making his or her desires known. The effect is the same as the Animal Training skill coupled with the Animal Friendship advantage. In addition, by making an INT check, the character with this metability can get animals to perform actions they would normally avoid, as well as prevent attack by such creatures in combat situations.

- *Plant Rapport:* The individual with this metability, in addition to having a "green thumb," has a basic understanding of plant behavior and reactions. While plants are not sentient in the same sense as animals, this ability does permit certain skill-like abilities, including Survival, Tracking, Climbing, and Navigation in forested areas. If the character already has these skills, he or she gains +10 per level of skill instead of +5.

- *Machine Rapport:* The character has an underlying understanding of machine intelligence. The character gains a +10 advantage per skill level for Computer Programming, Surveillance, Electronics, and Mechanical skills. A character with Machine Rapport also can, in 1d10 turns,

dope out the layout of sophisticated surveillance and protection equipment.

There are no disadvantages for this ability. Since this tends to be a very subtle metability, the bulk of its effects are undocumented.

Theoretical Metabilities

Regeneration

In theory, there should be individuals with the ability to do for themselves what character with Healing metable does for others — restore lost damage boxes. There have been no recorded cases of regenerators, but that does not mean they do not exist.

A regenerator is able to restore filled-in damage boxes only from himself. He may do this by making a WIL check, with the number of boxes being removed equal to the reduction of the character's WIL for 1 day. If a regenerator heals (removes) 10 damage boxes from his Character Dossier, his WIL drops by 10 points for one day. It does not matter if the damage was Wound or Bruise damage.

Regenerators must take one of the following disadvantages:

- *Special situation:* The regenerator can only regain lost damage boxes under certain situations: in bright sunlight, while standing on natural earth, while drinking a milkshake, etc. Whether this is as a result of the power itself or some mental requirement is up to the player and Administrator.

- *Trance state:* The regenerator can only regain lost damage boxes while in a trance lasting 1d6 turns. During this time the regenerator is totally defenseless, and must be protected from outside attack.

- *Odd regeneration:* In most cases, regenerated tissue will be the same as normal tissue. This disadvantage means the regenerated tissue is another color (blue, green), or texture (scaly,

feathers, etc.) After a few combat situations, a regenerator may find himself looking very different from his fellow agents, with a similar decrease in popularity, ability to pass unnoticed in a crowd, etc.

- *Vampirism:* The best-known form of Regeneration is also the most unlikely. There are no proven vampires in the FREELancers universe, though studies in the mid-'80s indicated that a blood disease may be the cause of "classic" vampire legends. Vampiric regenerators regain lost damage boxes by taking them from others. The vampire must *touch* the victim, and, if the victim fails a WIL check (one each round the vampire is in contact with the victim), the victim loses a point of CON for each damage box healed.

There are no reported regenerators in the FREELancer files.

% Roll	Disadvantage
01-50	Special conditions
51-80	Trance state
81-90	Odd regeneration
91-00	Vampirism

Armor

The Toughness advantage and equivalent metability allow an individual to withstand greater damage than normal, but as of yet, no individual has manifested a metability that provides natural physical protection, in effect, personal armor. While such individuals may exist, proof of their existence has not yet come to light. (Dr. Rhand's own idea on this matter is that those with armor-like abilities tend to put themselves into more dangerous situations, which in turn cuts down on their numbers.)

An individual with Armor metability has the benefit of Hard Cover at all times. Armor-piercing bullets affect the character normally, but melee weapons which inflict Wound damage only inflict Bruise damage. Weapons which inflict Bruise damage affect the armored character only if more than 4 points of damage are inflicted. The individual *with* the metability may take one meta-*disadvantage.*

If the optional Reality Rule on levels of penetration and armor is used, players can choose the level of Hard Cover (1-5) their characters have. For each level of Hard Cover, the character gets one meta-disadvantage. It is possible to have characters with "ordinary" Armor metability operating with those from the optional rules, without affecting play.

The nature of the armor is up to player, and may tie in with the nature of the meta-disadvantages. Characters might generate a substance other than flesh and bone, developing a hard carapace, or generating an impregnable force field.

Disadvantages are many for the theoretical armored agent. The individual can choose from the list below, roll randomly from the table which follows, or create a disadvantage of his own, with the Administrator's approval:

- *Immobility:* The Armor metability can be turned on or off at will, but while in armored form, the individual cannot move.

- *Limited movement:* The Armor metability can be turned on or off by a WIL check, but all REF, DEX, and MOV checks are at ½ value. (If a ¼ REF, DEX, or MOV is called for, then the action requires a Lucky Break.)

- *Concentration:* Some amount of concentration is required to maintain the armored form, so that all WIL and INT checks are at ½ value. (If a ¼ WIL or INT check is called for, the action requires a Lucky Break.) The Armor metability may be activated at will.

- *Partial protection:* The armor protects only three adjacent body areas (player's choice or random selection). Damage affecting other areas is treated normally. The armor may be called upon at will, or be in place continually. The armor can't be "moved" to fit the situation.

- *Obvious appearance:* This form of armor is continually in effect, and gives the individual with this metability a particular "look" (carapace, huge size, etc.) which makes him easy to pick out in a crowd.

- *External manifestation:* This form of armor may be engaged by a WIL check, but the armoring-up process affects the environment, calling attention to the transformation into armored form. Suggested manifestations include claps of thunder, whirlwinds, flashing lights, or mild earth tremors.

- *Mental strain:* This form of armor may be engaged at will, but requires a WIL check every 10 turns or the individual goes unconscious for 1d10 minutes.

- *Physical strain:* This is the same as mental strain, but a CON check is required to maintain armored form.

Multiple disadvantages have a cummulative effect.

% Roll	Disadvantage
01-10	Immobility
11-30	Limited movement
31-50	Concentration
51-70	Partial protection
71-80	Obvious appearance
81-90	Transformation
91-95	Mental strain
96-00	Physical strain

Flight

Dr. Random has proposed that a telekinetic with enough power and an excellent sense of self could attain flight by lifting and transporting his or her own body. Sounds good on paper, but no one has evidenced it yet.

An individual who could fly would be limited to a speed no greater than his MOV, and would suffer from the standard limitations for endurance and exhaustion. A little thinking would indicate the individual could use a paravane, glider, or other device to keep aloft for a long time without ill effect.

The amount such a flier could lift would be determined by normal encumbrance rules. If MOV is quartered by weight, then no additional weight may be carried. Any individual in flight who takes damage must make a REF check or drop 30' per round, until the check is made or the character hits the ground.

The disadvantages of such a would-be flier are still under discussion, but would include the following:

- *Concentration:* In order to fly, the individual must be in a state of intense concentration. Breaking that concentration causes the flier to drop like a rock. (See damage from a fall on page 8 of the Administrators Guide.) The flier can perform most actions normally, but any interruption (such as gunfire, thunderstorms, and the like), requires a WIL check to maintain concentration. If concentration is lost, the player must make a REF check to regain control.

- *Light structure:* A flier would benefit from a light bone structure, but there's a downside — light-structured fliers are extra vulnerable to damage. The flier has one less damage box in each area than normal.

- *Hunger:* In order to maintain a high metabolism, the flier must eat continually. Failure to have nine square meals a day (give or take a couple) will result in loss of concentration, altitude, and life.

- *Visible effects:* As if a character in flight is not visible enough, the metability creates an additional showy device. (The character sprouts huge scarlet wings, or trails sparkling dust motes behind him.)

% Roll	Disadvantage
01-30	Concentration
31-50	Light structure
51-70	Hunger
71-00	Visible effects

Retro-field Generation

Retro-field Generation is similar in many ways to Pyrokinetics, save that field generators apply their talents to the creation, increasing, and decreasing of physical phenomena. While no evi-

dence exists of individuals manifesting these abilities, they remain a possibility, on the outskirts of science. A metable with Retro-field Generation could affect one of the following areas:

Gravity Control (Gravikinesis): A successful WIL check allows a character with this ability to increase or decrease the weight of objects by a factor of two. Characters and objects targeted by gravikinetics have their MOV and REF halved.

Magnetic Control (Magnokinesis): A character with this ability can make a WIL check to increase or decrease the attraction between iron-based metals, causing objects to stick or be repelled. This ability can also be used to fry computer circuitry by a successful ½ WIL check.

Water Control (Hydrokinesis): A successful WIL check allows a character with this power to redirect the flow of water, throw balls of water, or cause water to turn into fog (by increasing the space between molecules).

Air Control (Aerokinesis): The chracter with this metability can affect volumes of air, creating gusts, dust storms, and the like, by a successful INT check. He can create partial vacuums by a ¼ INT check, since this involves maintaining a large volume of air *away* from the opponent.

Disadvantages for this metability would be the same as for Pyrokinesis.

Waterbreather

The individual with this metability is able to breathe water through natural or artificial gill-membranes, without use of a re-breather or scuba gear. The metability does not confer swimming skill, but there is no danger of drowning in normal water.

A character with the Waterbreather metability must have one of the following disadvantages:

• *Dependency:* The character can *only* breath water, and if stranded in the open air, will die. (Use the asphyxiation rules on pages 7-8 of the Administrators Guide.) A waterbreather could "hold his breath" for a number of turns equal to his CON.

• *Disease:* An individual breathing water would find that the waters of North America are fairly polluted, with the result that anyone in the water for extended periods of time (1 hour +), has a 10% chance of catching something nasty, requiring a barrage of antibiotics to cure.

• *Weak spot:* The character would be vulnerable around the chest and neck as a result of this mutation or change. Reduce the number of damage boxes in each area by 2 (to a minimum of 1 box).

The player can choose any of these for his character, or roll on the following table:

% Roll	Disadvantage
01-30	Dependency
31-50	Disease
51-00	Weak spot

New Career Packages

All of the standard Career Packages from the *Top Secret/S.I.*™ boxed set are available (Military, Professional, Worker, and Entertainer). In addition, there are a number of new Career Packages that may be used in the FREELancers campaign.

Espionage: These are characters whose training is in the spy trade, whether with Orion, the Web, the CIA, the KGB, or other organizations.

Street: Street careers are similar to Worker careers, but greater emphasis is placed on General skills.

Student: The Student career offers fewer choices than some other Career Packages, but also has fewer mandatory skills. Many young agents in the FREELancers program are recruited directly from school.

Combat Arcane: This career package ties in with the Combat Arcane metability. It reflects characters who have spent the bulk of their lives in some remote area honing a single skill (usually a Combat skill) to its ultimate perfection. A character who takes the Combat Arcane background is not required to take the Combat Arcane metability, but a character who takes that metability *must* have this as a background.

Espionage Career

Mandatory Skills: Mechanical — 0; Combat — 8; Specialty — 8; General — 6; Education — 0; Language — 2.

An Espionage character may spend up to 35 points on skills, within the requirements presented above.

Starting Savings:

$3,000-$18,000 (3d6x$1,000)

Level of Achievement: Characters with Espionage background usually are relatively new agents, since long-term agents either retire or are terminated to prevent them from revealing the secrets they have learned. A character with Espionage background may be a product of CIA-funded

education, someone who has worked his way up iwh the FREELancers ranks, or a turncoat or escape or from a rival organization. In the latter case, that sic rival organization will be an automatic Enemy Le (see page 23 of the Players Guide) to the characte on The FREELancers organization is on good terms re with U.S.-based intelligence operations — agents op who have "defected" to the FREELancers are ge th erally considered "on assignment" with the supe agent group. Foreign agencies take a dimmer vie of spies changing jobs, as do Orion and the Web.

Street Career

Mandatory Skills: Mechanical — 4; Combat — 4 (sp Specialty — 4; Education — 0; General — 8; Lan- 0; guages — 0.

St The Street Career has 30 points available for $(spending on skills.

Starting Savings: T

$1,000-$6,000 (1d6x$1,000) de m The Street Career reflects a wide and diverse in group, including adventurers, former criminals, p writers, unemployed professionals, and many oth li ers. al

Level of Achievement: Self-made businessmen b and other leaders and innovators are often found si in this group. The "career" is usually cash-poor, A however. ac si li

Student Career

Mandatory Skills: Mechanical — 0; Specialty — 0; Combat — 0; Education — 6; General — 4; Language — 4.

The Student Career has 25 points available for spending on skills.

Starting Savings:

$1,000-$10,000 (1d10x$1,000)

The Student Career is for young agents, or those,

who, for whatever reason, have not yet completed, or do not expect to complete, a standard, Professional, career package.

Level of Achievement: Education may include one or more college degrees, but this is not a requirement. Student careers have more free options than any other career, but are limited in the total number of skills available.

Combat Arcane Career

Mandatory Skills: Mechanical — 2; Combat — (special); Specialty — 2; General — 4; Education — 0; Language — 4.

Starting Savings:

$0

The effects of the Combat Arcane metability were described earlier, but even those without that metability can devote their lives to combat training. This Career Package gives a player 30 skill points, all of which must be spent in the categories listed on the table above. Selecting this package allows three free combat skills *at level 6*. The Combat Arcane careerist can also ignore all prerequisites in the Combat skill category. The Combat Arcane is, in many ways, the most powerful character around, but he's also severely limited outside of his chosen combat specialties and is further limited in initial character development by the lack of skill points to spend on non-combat skills.

New Skills for FREELancers

Combat Skills

#	Skill	ATT	COST	PRE*
1	Archaic Weapon	MOV or DEX	3/4/6	7, 21
2	Unique Weapon	DEX	3/4/8	7, 21, 13
3	Impromptu Weapon	STR or DEX	2/3/4	21
4	Laser	DEX	4/2/4	—
5	Pulser	DEX	4/3/4	7
6	Taser	INT	3/4/6	—
7	Flame Thrower	MOV	2/4/4	—
8	Wrist Rockets	MOV	3/4/6/	—
9	Stuttershot	INT	4/5/8	13
10	Beanbag Gun	DEX	2/3/5	—
11	Net Gun	DEX	3/4/4	7
12	Weapons Pod Device	INT	2/4/5	8*
13	Weapons Suit Melee	REF or INT	4/4/5	8*

* Prerequisite numbers which are marked with an asterisk refer to the General skill list in this book. Otherwise, all prerequisite numbers refer to the Combat skill list on page 38 of the Players Guide.

1. Archaic Weapon

ATT: MOV or DEX (depending on weapon selected)
COST: 3/4/6
PRE: Basic Firearms (7), Melee Weapons (21)

This skill gives the character an understanding of a type of weapon outside the standard weapons list. Each archaic weapon must be learned separately; understanding of one archaic weapon does not mean that another is similarly understood. Archaic weapons which use gunpowder require Basic Firearms (7). Those which are used in hand-to-hand combat require Basic Melee (21). Nunchaku and other Oriental weapons may be used without penalty or prerequisite, but are often combined with Oriental Martial Arts (28) for greater effect. Players and Administrators should work out the specifics of weapon and skill use during character creation.

2. Unique Weapon

ATT: DEX (or the appropriate attribute)
COST: 3/4/8
PRE: Firearms (7), Melee Weapons (21), Heav[y] Weapons (13)

The character with this skill specializes in a particular weapon or weapon system, often unique and/or experimental in nature. The DEX attribu[te] is used to determine success with this weapon, unless the weapon obviously would use some oth[er] attribute. (This is the Administrator's choice, wi[th] the note that most Heavy Weapons are INT-base[d,] most firearms DEX-based, and melee weapons c[an] be either STR-, MOV-, or DEX-based.)

In developing this skill, the character also is capa[-] ble of handling modified and/or improved versio[ns] of the experimental device. A character who begins working with a backpack-mounted grase[r] (gamma-ray laser) will have enough working knowledge not to suffer when it becomes a helm[et-] mounted device. As with Archaic Weapon skill, details of weapon and skill use are left to player[s] and Administrator to negotiate.

3. Impromptu Weapon

ATT: STR or DEX (depending on weapon selected)
COST: 2/3/4
PRE: Basic Melee (21)

The character will this skill is adept at using rocks, bottles, chairs, and other "found" items a[s] weapons with greater ability than most others. This skill, a sort of Advanced Basic Melee, is co[m-] mon with brawlers and individuals who have n[ot] had the opportunity for specific training in part[ic-] ular weapons.

The damage these weapons inflict is 1 point less than the weapon they most resemble — a broke[n] bottle is a Dagger −1, a chair leg is a Club −1, and a sailfish hurled across the room is a Spear [−] 1. Improptu weapons analogous to weapons whi[ch]

inflict 1 point of damage will inflict no real damage, but may still confuse or frustrate an opponent.

4. Laser

ATT: DEX　　　**COST: 4/2/4**　　　**PRE: —**

The character with this skill is able to use the standard operational laser (SOL).

Ten years in the future, the SOL is a backpack-mounted device with a wand-like firing unit, similar to a flame thrower. (For damage and effects, see page 43.)

5. Pulser

ATT: DEX　　　**COST: 4/3/4**
PRE: Basic Firearms (7)

The character with this skill is able to use the standard operational pulser (SOP).

The SOP is an experimental device still being tested at the FREELancers' labs. It is a bulky, one-handed, throwaway laser, good for 10 shots. (For damage and effects, see page 44.)

6. Taser

ATT: INT　　　**COST: 3/4/6**　　　**PRE: —**

The character with this skill is able to use the standard operational taser (SOT) and related electrical weapons.

The SOT is a wrist-mounted weapon, usually used with an insulated glove. It fires a set of two darts from compressed air launchers, each dart spooling an insulated or uninsulated line. An electrical charge is passed through the wire, injuring the target.

7. Flame Thrower

ATT: MOV　　　**COST: 2/4/4**　　　**PRE: —**

The character with this skill can use a flame thrower. This includes firing, maintenance, and getting into and out of the harness, even in crisis situations. (Such as when the fuel tanks are exploding!)

A character with this skill can use all flame throwers with equal ability. (See page 44 of the weapons section for effects of these weapons.)

8. Wrist Rockets

ATT: MOV　　　**COST: 3/4/6**　　　**PRE: —**

This skill allows the user to wear and fire the new Wallaby Wrist Rocket. (See page 45.) These gyro-jet weapons, which have a variety of payloads, first arrived on the shores of the U.S. in 1997. About two dozen knock-off plants are operating in the United States, producing dangerous, low-quality equipment. This skill allows the user to safely identify and disassemble the weapon.

9. Stuttershot

ATT: INT　　　**COST: 4/5/8**
PRE: Basic Heavy Weapons (13)

This skill allows the character to use another new weapon, the stuttershot machine gun. (See new weapons, page 45.) The stuttershot is a bulky sub-machine gun linked by a fiber-optic cord to the user's eye. The user can fire at targets in a crowd, hitting only those he wishes.

10. Beanbag Gun

ATT: DEX　　　**COST: 2/3/5**　　　**PRE: —**

This skill allows the character to use any of the

stun-guns available on the open market, ranging from the Ministun to the Stunbuster semiautomatic. These weapons use CO_2 canisters to fire bags of lead shot. This type of weapon has been in existence since the early '70s, but has only come into common use in the past few years.

11. Net Gun

ATT: DEX   **COST: 3/4/4**
PRE: Basic Firearms (7)

This skill gives the character the knowledge to use the net gun, a restraining device which fires entangling mesh or bands. These guns are used for crowd control and mass arrests. The skill helps both in hitting the target and making the judgment as to whether the net gun has a chance of hitting and entangling the intended target.

12. Weapons Pod Device

ATT: INT   **COST: 2/4/5**
PRE: Driving/Weapons Suit (8*)

This skill allows the user to manipulate the wide variety of weapons pods that can be fitted to man-amplifying power suits (MAPS). Characters with this skill are versed in the use, care, maintenance, and repair of one of those weapon systems. (See new devices, page 50, for the details of MAPS.)

13. Weapons Suit Melee

ATT: REF or INT   **COST: 4/4/5**
PRE: Driving/Weapons Suit (8*)

This skill allows the character to fight effectively when encased in a man-amplifying power suit (MAPS) or similar device. An individual with Weapon Suit Melee skill can use other close-combat techniques only if he has mastered Weapon Suit Melee at skill level 5.

Mechanical Skills

#	SKILL	ATT	COST	PRE
1	Weapons Suit Repair	INT	3/2/4	7
2	Computer Technician	INT	3/3/5	7

* All prerequisite numbers on this list refer to the Mechanical skill list on page 35 of the Players Guide.

1. Weapons Suit Repair

ATT: INT   **COST: 3/2/4**
PRE: Electronics (7)

This skill allows the character to repair, modify, and maintain the MAPS and other weapons suit their weapon systems, and their controls. This skill does not permit understanding of Savant-created devices such as Scratchbuilt's weapons suit. (See Scratchbuilt.)

2. Computer Technician

ATT: INT   **COST: 3/3/5**
PRE: Electronics (7)

This skill allows the character to modify, build, and repair computer hardware, including all phical manifestations of the computer (terminals, drives, modems, printers, and the like). It *no long er* provides sufficient knowledge of software to keep up with 1990s computer programming. (See Computer Programmer under Educational Skill

General Skills

#	SKILL	ATT	COST	PRE
1	Gleaning	INT	4/4/4/	-
2	Acrobatics	REF	4/4/7	-
3	Bureaucratics	INT	2/2/4	-

4	Persuasion	WIL	3/3/4	—
5	Driving/Hovercraft	DEX	2/3/6	—
6	Piloting/Airship	DEX	3/4/8	23
7	Piloting/Space Shuttle	DEX	4/4/8	28
8	Driving/Weapons Suit	DEX	2/4/6	—

7* All prerequisite numbers on this list refer to the
General skill list on page 47 of the Players Guide.

1. Gleaning

ATT: INT **COST: 4/4/4** **PRE: —**

The problem with an information-heavy age is the huge amount of information available — the answer to just about any question exists somewhere, but finding that answer requires both patience and skill.

Gleaning is the process of picking over files, manuscripts, and computer data to locate information. It is also useful in locating data that has been hidden and/or partially destroyed and restoring damaged computer records.

Given the correct data-base, the gleaner can come up with an answer in 1d6 hours. Make an INT check, +5% per level of Gleaning skill (plus an additional 10% if using a computer and having the Computer Aptitude advantage). Information that is secret requires a ½ INT check, and finding data that is top secret, or deliberately hidden, requires a ¼ check. If the first check fails, a second INT check should be made to see if the process is a dead end (no further checks), or more information is needed (acquiring more records and starting the process again).

A gleaner may double-check the information by making another 1d6 hour search and making an INT check.

2. Acrobatics

ATT: REF **COST: 4/4/7** **PRE: —**

This skill allows the character to perform flips, rolls, tumbles, and other gymnastic maneuvers. This skill may be used to avoid damage in falls, as well as leaping over pits, evading objects, and in place of other REF-based checks.

In addition, the character with Acrobatics skill may try to dodge attacks (both in melee and ranged weapon combat). For each level of skill, 10% is subtracted from the attacker's chance to hit. For the individual with this skill, any actions taken while dodging will require a skill check.

3. Bureaucratics

ATT: INT **COST: 2/2/4** **PRE: —**

This skill gives the character the ability to deal with all types bureaucracies, from civil organizations to political structures to corporate red tape.

The ability to handle bureaucracy with patience will help in freeing up information through normal channels, getting reports, equipment, and personnel needed, and gaining access to data that might otherwise not be available.

To use the skill, figure the amount of time the request would normally take. The character with Bureaucratics requires somewhat less time to perform the task: Reduce the time required by the level of skill times 20%, with a maximum reduction of 80% of the "normal" time.

4. Persuasion

ATT: WIL **COST: 3/3/4** **PRE: —**

This skill allows a character to mislead or misdirect others, as well as persuade others (NPCs *only*) to perform certain actions for his benefit.

The Administrator may ask for a Persuasion roll whenever a character is attempting to influence an NPC to do something not in in the NPC's best interests. Player Characters are never affected by this skill — they have to make up their own minds. Dangerous and/or difficult requests should have an Administrator-determined modifier. (Asking an NPC to risk his or her life should have a modifier of −100 or greater.) Certain actions

should not be allowed: Convincing an attacking mob to go away, or a hostile individual to surrender, or a powerful NPC to do practically anything significant, should be impossible.

5. Driving/Hovercraft

ATT: DEX   **COST: 2/3/6**   **PRE: —**

This skill allows the user to maneuver hovercraft, also called ground-effects vehicles. (See new vehicles, pages 48-49.) Driving checks are required for novices (those without this skill) at all stages of the operation. Driving checks are required for individuals with this skill when performing hazardous operations.

6. Piloting/Airship

ATT: DEX   **COST: 3/4/8**
PRE: Piloting/1-engine (23)

This skill allows the individual to safely pilot blimps, dirigibles, balloons, and other lighter-than-air ships. Such airships are in increasing use in the future by both military and civilian personnel for exploration, intelligence gathering, construction, and moving heavy materials in closed spaces.

7. Piloting/Space Shuttle

ATT: DEX   **COST: 4/4/8**
PRE: Piloting/Multi-engine Jet (28)

This skill is as described on page 52 of the Players Guide, except that a character with this skill is conversant in the operation of all space vehicles, including shuttles, landers, the Euro spaceplanes, etc.

8. Driving/Weapons Suit

ATT: DEX   **COST: 2/4/6**   **PRE: —**

This skill allows the user to handle a weapons suit. (See weapons suit under new devices, page 50.) The individual is skilled in basic movement and is aided in performing actions as for the driving or piloting skills. This skill does not allow the use of a weapons suit in combat, except by default, (See Weapons Suit Melee skill.) nor does it allow the use of the suit's weapon systems. (See Weapons Pod Device skill.)

Specialty Skills

#	Skill	ATT	COST	PRE
1	Stunting/STR	STR	3/5/8	—
2	Stunting/INT	INT	4/6/8	—
3	Stunting/REF	REF	3/5/8	—
4	Stunting/WIL	WIL	3/6/8	—
5	Stunting/CON	CON	4/6/8	—
6	Stunting/MOV	MOV	3/5/8	—
7	Stunting/DEX	DEX	4/6/8	—
8	Security Systems	DEX	4/3/6	—

Situations often arise where a character wishes to use skills, attributes, advantages, and metabilities in a manner not normally used, such as a character with Slingshot trying to ricochet a shot off two walls to a target, or a telepath trying to read a lost dog's thoughts to take the pooch home. Under normal situations, the skill or attribute check would be halved, quartered, or disallowed entirely.

The Stunting skill allows an individual to pull off otherwise impossible actions. This "skill" reflects non-linear thinking and innovation in a particular area, and, unless the Administrator allows otherwise, may only be used once per hour per attribute. The player must still come up with a plausible (if not necessarily realistic) reason for his stunt, and why the skill or attribute he wishes to use is applicable. The Administrator still may determine that the proposed stunt is too far-out for his own campaign, but in general, an "impossible"

stunt requiring a Lucky Break becomes possible at ¼ attribute check, a difficult task requiring a ¼ check becomes possible at ½, etc. A straight attribute check cannot be improved by a stunt.

In addition, ¼ and ½ attribute checks also benefit from a +5 bonus per skill level of the stunt ability. Full attribute checks gain no such benefit.

8. Security Systems

ATT: DEX   COST: 4/3/6   PRE: —

This skill allows the character to detect and possibly neutralize security devices and systems of a technological nature, including burglar alarms, tripwires, photoelectric cells, weight detectors, and the like.

To detect the presence of a security system, the skilled character must spend at least one full minute studying the area guarded by the system. A successful skill check would indicate that the alarm system is spotted.

A character may deactivate the security system by making a second check. This may be modified depending on the type of security device. A simple putty-and-wire burglar alarm (such as used on many homes today) wouldn't require a modifier, a surveillance camera would require a −20 modifier, a set of photoelectric plates and random light beams would take a −60 modifier, and a computer-operated "smart" system would require a −100 modifier. A character may seek to bypass, rather than deactivate the system, with the modifiers listed above halved.

Education Skills

#	SKILL	ATT	COST	PRE*
	SCIENCE SKILLS			
1	Computer Programming	INT	2/3/6	7

ADVANCED DEGREES
LEADING EDGE

2	Robotics	INT	3/5/10	11
3	Genetics	INT	3/5/10	9
4	Artificial Intelligence	INT	3/5/10	1*
5	Cyborging	INT	3/5/10	14
6	Viruses	INT	3/5/10	13
7	L-5 Colonies	INT	3/5/10	8
8	Computer Politics	INT	3/5/10	6
9	Corporate Politics	INT	3/5/10	13
10	Savantism	INT	3/5/10	13

* Prerequisite numbers which are marked with an asterisk refer to this list. Otherwise, all prerequisite numbers refer to the Education skill list on page 56 of the Players Guide.

1. Computer Programming

ATT: INT   COST: 2/3/6
PRE: Basic Science (7)

This skill allows the individual to create and understand computer programs. Anyone can put a disk into a machine and run a program, but this skill permits the user to create his or her own programs for specific tasks. The skill also allows the individual to scan software programs for viruses, bugs, and programming glitches that might have been accidentally (or purposefully) inserted into the program.

2-10. Leading Edge Degrees

ATT: INT   COST: 3/5/10
PRE: See list above

The "Leading Edge" category represents that research deeply involved with the next revolutions in scientific and socioeconomic fields. Individuals with this skill choose a particular area in which to specialize, and in that area, gain advantages to their ability to invent, create, and generate ideas, and understand other theories in those fields.

The following rules are all optional and designed to increase enjoyment of the FREELancers future.

Specific Damage Rules for Vehicles

The *Top Secret/S.I.*™ game rules allow vehicles to become disabled as a result of a Crash Table roll. This is a streamlining feature when weapons are used against the vehicle. These optional rules treat vehicles more like characters for combat purposes. A successful attack will damage a specific part of a vehicle, much like a specific wound only affects one part of a character's body.

Size Modifiers for Attack Rolls

All other things being equal, it's easier to hit the broadside of a dump truck than it is to make an end-on shot against a motorcycle. Attacks made against moving vehicles can include these modifiers to simulate this effect:

Type of Shot	Attack Roll Modifier
Motorcycle, end	½ ATT
Motorcycle, side	−10
Medium truck, side (dump truck, tank, GEV, etc.)	+10
Power Armor	+10
Large truck, side	+30

Vehicle Sections

At the back of this book are a number of vehicle diagrams. Each diagram shows a sketch of a typical vehicle, with damage boxes just like the human hit location diagram in the Character Dossier. Each part of the vehicle has a location number and several damage boxes for the various sections. As the vehicle is damaged, you black out unused boxes, just as you would for a character.

In most cases, determining how many damage boxes each area of a vehicle has is a matter of dividing its Protection Value by 4 and rounding up. For example, a sedan (Protection Value −45) would have 12 damage boxes for most areas (11.1 rounded up).

There are, however, some exceptions to the rule above:

- Tires have three damage boxes apiece.

- Engines are tougher to hit (and just tougher) than many other vehicle components. Therefore, add two to the number of damage boxes. Thus, the sedan above would have 14 engine damage boxes, rather than 12.

- Windows have four damage boxes unless bulletproofed. Bulletproofing gives windows eight damage boxes.

Vehicles only suffer damage from weapons capable of doing greater than 1d4 points of damage. A pocketknife isn't going to do much against a car. A baseball bat would do a little more, a gun, still more. To reflect this, weapons that do bruise damage (assuming they do at least 1d4 amount of damage in the first place) do only half damage, rounded up. Projectile weapons do full damage to vehicles.

Explosives do normal damage, not only to the area hit, but damage adjacent areas as well. Adjacent areas are not determined by hit location numbers, but rather are areas *physically* adjacent to the area on the Vehicle Hit Location Diagram affected by the explosive. For example, an explosive hit on the left wing of an airplane affects the wing, the left front body (area 5) and the left rear body (area 6). A tail hit (area 9) affects both tail planes (area 3) and, if your story would be made more dramatic, the gas tank (area 10).

Locating Damage on a Vehicle

The same system used to determine human hit location is used for vehicles: Make a d% roll. If the roll is lower than the percent chance of success, the shot hits. Read the ones digit rolled to find the hit location number. Check that number on the Vehicle Hit Location Diagram for the target. Roll damage dice for the weapon being used and assess damage to the area hit.

Note that vehicle passenger compartments do not have hit location numbers. In order to hit a passenger inside a vehicle, you must destroy all damage boxes in an area adjacent to the passenger compartment. Once you've done this, excess damage points (or subsequent hits to that area) go to the passenger most directly in the line of fire.

The only other way to hit a passenger is to roll a critical hit. Criticals go directly to the interior of the vehicle, if the shooter chooses.

As with explosives, adjacent areas are those which are physically next to the passenger compartment. Admininstrators will have to make a lot of judgment calls when determining passenger compartment hits. Think about where the passengers are located in the vehicle type you're using, apply a little common sense, and make the best judgment you can.

Once you've determined that a hit penetrated to the passenger compartment, apply damage to a randomly determined body part. Only exposed body parts can be hit — it's unlikely a gunman can fire into a car and hit the driver in the abdomen, for example. Use the Hard Cover rules on page 73 of the Players Guide. If using the optional levels of Hard Cover and armor, weapons which are of equal penetration strength to the armor can penetrate and inflict bruise damage to the targets, while those of higher penetration value can inflict full damage.

Damage Location Charts

Consult the table for the type of vehicle at which you're shooting. There's a chart for cars, another for airplanes, another for boats, and another for motorcycles and snowmobiles, and lastly, ones for helicopters and power armor/weapons suits. This should cover most situations. If you need a chart for some other type of vehicle, make one up, using the ones provided as guides.

When using the charts to determine hit location, use common sense. The location of a hit often depends on the position of the attacker — a shooter on the left side of a car won't hit the right side (area 7) even on a roll of 7. Draw a line between the shooter and the target area on the car. The first area it hits that blocks the aim will be the area affected. A shooter directly in front of a car might roll a 7 hit, but instead hit the right headlight or right front fender. A mine directly beneath a car will damage the lower portion of a fender, destroy a tire or a gas tank, but it probably won't hit a windshield.

The player's die roll should determine the general location of a hit, but the final determination of hit location is up to the Administrator — a windshield hit from below might be called an underbody hit, for example, with the damage being done to the engine or controls (since they're closest to the windshield). Similarly, a helicopter strafing a car will do most of its damage to the upper surfaces of the auto.

Always take into account common sense, the needs of your story, and player wishes when determining the exact location and effects of weapons fire against vehicles.

Note that several of the hit location numbers below refer to more than one part of the vehicle ("rear window OR rear side windows," for example). In cases like these, you can let the player decide where he or she hit, or you can make the decision yourself. If it's important that the contents of the trunk be undamaged, don't let them

be damaged. If it would be fun, funny, or exciting to have the trunk contents hit, hit 'em.

Note also, that there are 12 hit location numbers on each chart. Areas 10, 11, and 12 can only be hit by players of high enough skill levels to "bump" their shots. Unskilled players can only hit those internal components on a critical hit to a surrounding area.

Automobile Damage Chart

0	Cooling or lubrication system
1	Windshield or front side windows
2	Front tire
3	Rear tire
4	Rear window or rear side windows
5	Left front body or fender
6	Left rear body or fender
7	Right front body or fender
8	Right rear body or fender
9	Trunk, trunk contents, or wing
10	Gas tank
11	Engine
12	Controls

Aircraft Damage Chart

0	Cooling or lubrication system
1	Windshield or side windows
2	Left wing, right wing, or rotor (helicopters)*
3	Left tail plane or right tail plane
4	Propeller, engine housing (jets), or rotor (helicopters)
5	Left front fuselage
6	Left rear fuselage
7	Right front fuselage
8	Right rear fuselage
9	Tail or tail rotor (helicopters)
10	Gas tank
11	Engine
12	Controls

* This can be considered a landing gear hit when all wing spaces are gone, when there is a critical hit to the wings, or when the landing gear are extended.

Motorcycle/Snowmobile Damage Chart

0	Cooling or lubrication system
1	Windshield or passenger
2	Front tire or ski (for snowmobile)
3	Rear tire or tread (for snowmobile)
4	Engine
5-6	Passenger (left side)
7-8	Passenger (right side)
9-10	Gas tank
11	Engine
12	Controls

Boat Damage Chart

0-1	Windshield or side windows
2	Port bow
3	Sail or port bow
4	Port stern
5	Sail or port stern
6	Starboard bow
7	Sail or starboard bow
8	Starboard stern
9	Sail or starboard stern
10	Gas tank
11	Engine
12	Controls

Weapons Suit Damage Chart

0-1	Windshields
2	Left hand
3	Left arm
4	Right hand
5	Right arm
6	Left leg
7	Right leg
8	Shoulder-mounted pods
9	Engines
10	Power source
11	Controls
12	Fire control

Damage Effects

Specific damage effects are described below. One general rule applies to *all* hit locations, however: When all damage boxes in a particular area are

filled in, subsequent damage to that area goes to the location directly behind the destroyed one. For example, all of a sedan's 12 trunk boxes are filled in. Excess and subsequent trunk hits go to the gas tank. If all of the gas tank boxes are filled in (and the tank doesn't explode), subsequent hits go to the passenger compartment.

Critical hits bypass surrounding areas, if the shooter wishes, and go directly to underlying areas. For example, a critical hit to the windshield can be taken as a windshield hit or go to the passenger compartment (player's choice).

Damage to the right location can seriously impair vehicle performance.

Engine damage causes decreased Maximum Speed and Acceleration. Each rating loses 10% (rounded up) of its original total for each engine damage box that has been filled in. Neither rating can be reduced below 10% (rounded up) of its original total as long as at least one engine box remains undamaged. When all engine damage boxes are filled in, the vehicle's engine is destroyed.

If the *Cooling System* is destroyed, it will cause the engine to overheat (and stop running) within 1d10 turns of the destruction of the cooling system. If the system is damaged, but not destroyed, the vehicle stands a chance of overheating. Check after each hour of damaged operation by rolling d%. The chance of overheating is equal to the number of damaged boxes x10 — thus, three damaged cooling system boxes would give a vehicle a 30% chance per hour of overheating.

Windshield, Side Window, and Rear Window damage forces the driver to make an immediate Driving Check; failure sends the vehicle out of control. The driver must then make a second check, or crash. In addition, if hits penetrate the passenger compartment, passengers are injured as described above.

Control damage affects steering, throttle, brakes, and/or electrical systems. (The Administrator can use 1d4 to determine which system is damaged: 1 — steering, 2 — throttle, 3 — brakes, 4 — electrical system, or pick the one with the most dramatic game result.) If a control system is destroyed, that

system ceases to function and, very likely, so does the vehicle. Partial control damage is treated the same as cooling system damage — check every hour, based on the number of damage boxes filled in. If the check is lower than the percent chance of malfunction, the control system stops working.

Fender damage primarily causes cosmetic damage.

Gas Tank damage will cause the gas to leak out. A driver with a damaged gas tank must check every five minutes the vehicle runs to see if he is out of fuel. The number of damage points, x10%, equals the chance he will run out of gas.

Of course, any flame touching the gas will reduce running out of fuel to a low-priority problem. Anytime a fuel tank is hit by a bullet, there is a 10% chance that it will explode. In this unhappy circumstance, treat each passenger as if he received full damage from eight sticks of dynamite (1d6 wounds, for 1d8 points of damage each).

If the fuel tank is damaged by incendiary ammunition, including tracers, it will automatically explode. If the damage was caused by an explosive attack, there is an 80% chance that the fuel tank will explode.

Trunk damage has a 10% chance, per hit (cumulative) of jamming the trunk shut. There is also a 20% chance, each time the trunk is hit, that some object (roll randomly if more than one are present) in the trunk will be hit as well.

Wing damage will cause an aircraft to lose lift. The vehicle crashes, or cannot take off, if any wing is destroyed. The aircraft loses 5% of its Maximum Speed for every point of wing damage, to a minimum of its Stall Speed.

Rotor/Propeller or Engine Housing damage will result in impaired flying. If the last propeller or engine housing on a vehicle is destroyed, the vehicle crashes (or cannot take off). Treat points of damage as Cooling System damage — there is a % chance every hour of operation that the system will fail. Aircraft with two or more engines can fly with a single engine, but Maximum Speed and Ceiling are both reduced by half.

Tail Plane damage is treated like wing damage.

Tire, Ski, or Tread damage affects ground vehicles as explained for tire damage in the *TOP SECRET/S.I.*™ rules. Aircraft are affected if a tire, skid, or pontoon has been destroyed, and the vehicle tries to take off or land. All Piloting skill checks for such attempts are made at ½ ATT-¼ ATT if two or more tires, skids or pontoons have been destroyed.

Sail damage affects the speed and handling of a sailboat. Each point of damage subtracts 10% of the boat's Maximum Speed, and gives a −1 penalty to the Handling rating. If the sail is destroyed, the boat cannot move — except by oars, paddles, a motor, or a tow.

Damage to a weapon suit's *Hands and Arms* is primarily cosmetic damage until they are destroyed. Then the limb and any weapons pods mounted in those areas are completely useless.

Weapons Pods are shoulder- or top-mounted weapon systems in weapon suits. Each damage box filled in reduces the chance of that weapon hitting by 5%.

Power Source for power suits is equivalent to gas tanks for normal vehicles, but the weapons suit's solid-fuel packs have no chance of exploding, though they are both flammable and caustic. If this area is destroyed, damage to this area will leak out into adjacent areas for 1 point damage per turn, and further damage to this area will cause the weapons suit to catch fire. (Which is dangerous to occupants only if the hull integrity has been breached.)

Fire Control respresents the targeting computers, navigation systems, and weapons links. For every point of damage done to this area, the target's Weapons Pod Device and Weapons Suit Melee Combat skills suffer a −5% penalty. Destroying this area means the weapons suit wearer can't make any attacks. The suit can still move on back-up systems.

Reality Rules: Armor and Weapons

As the *Top Secret/S.I.*™ rules now stand, armor plating provides Hard Cover, and, in effect, immunity from most normal weapons, save those which have armor-piercing properties. In reality, there are a number of different levels of protection and penetration. A tank has a much tougher armor shell than a Lincoln Town Car, but both are vulnerable to attack.

Matters get worse with the introduction of MAPS and metabilities which boost strength levels above human norms. Can an individual with an 100 STR rip a car door off its hinges? Can a MAPS with 100 STR stove in the front of a tank?

For purposes of the FREELancers future, there are five types of armor, represented as Hard Cover (HC 1-5). Certain attacks will function against certain HC values and not against others.

HC-1 — Metal chain, bulletproof glass, vehicles with Protection ratings of greater than 20, but less than 50.

HC-2 — Plastic/Kevlar chain, standard walls, Protection ratings 51-69.

HC-3 — Steel and aluminum sheet, brick, bomb blankets, Protection ratings 70-100.

HC-4 — Tank steel, reinforced concrete, Protection ratings 101-150.

HC-5 — Reinforced steel block, tougher materials, Protection ratings 151 and up.

The following items are stopped at each level of hard cover:

HC-1 — Normal bullets.

HC-2 — Armor-piercing bullets from pistols and rifles.

HC-3 — Armor-piercing bullets from automatic weapons.

HC-4 — High-velocity armor-piercing bullets from all small arms.

HC-5 — Explosive shells, explosions.

Increased Strength and Armor/Hard Cover

As STR increases, it becomes possible for characters to damage materials weaker characters can't even dent. A "normal" individual, whether STR 20 or STR 50, will have no luck breaking down a brick wall. With STR going into the 100s (and, possibly even beyond), it becomes important to know what STR levels are required to affect different types of materials.

The following STR levels allow damage to different HC levels:

HC-1 STR 71-80
HC-2 STR 91-110
HC-3 STR 111-131
HC-4 STR 131-150
HC-5 STR 151 +

An important reminder is that, no matter what a character's STR, hitting a wall with bare hands will break the hands before breaking the wall. Sledgehammers and other tools are recommended.

Cyborging and Biotechnology

It is already possible to replace many body parts with transplanted parts or mechanical devices. Advancements will continue over the next 10 years, but, until the turn of the century at least, mechanical devices will not prove superior to the original equipment. Cyborged material will tend to be extremely large, bulky, and noisy. As a general rule, the more a device can do, the more difficult it is to operate.

Examples of cyborg technology and the effects of replaced parts include:

Legs: One or both legs can be replaced by mechanisms which either enhance the limb's remaining abilities, or replace it entirely. The full apparatus in either case appears as a bulky harness operating off a belt-worn power pack (good for 24 hours of normal use).

The limbs have several disadvantages. They are noisy (at best, a continual whirring noise), causing stealth checks to be made at −50. They are also slow. The limbs provide movement at walking speed only. They cannot run, though a shift that permits running at ½ speed is currently under development.

A replaced leg will take 5 points of damage before becoming inoperative. It is considered HC-1 for purposes of hitting and damaging it. Damaged leg mechanisms may be repaired by individuals with the tools for electronic equipment repair and Electronics skill.

Arms and/or Hands: The greatest advances in cyborg technology have been in the area of hand/arm replacement technology, where a great deal of detail work is needed to make them work effectively. A hand or arm may be replaced by a mechanical device with some loss of motor function. In addition, a replaced arm can increase STR attributes when that arm is used.

Replaced hands and arms reduce REF by 15 points. (If *both* hands and/or arms are so replaced, the reduction is 30 points.) MOV and DEX scores are adjusted accordingly. The hydraulics also make noticeable noise when in operation.

A replaced or enhanced hand/arm linkage provides the character with a +2 increase in STR. Some individuals have built weaponry — small pistols, wrist rockets and tasers — into replaced limbs. These weapons are destroyed if the limb in which they're emplaced takes half damage.

A replaced hand or arm (areas 4, 5, 6, or 7) will take 4 points of damage. They are Hard Cover targets (HC-1 if the Reality Rule is used), and if damaged, may be repaired by an individual with electronic equipment repair tools and the Electronics skill.

Internal Organs (areas 1, 2, 3): Artificial organs within the body, including the heart, lungs, and intestines, have been modernized so that they can be self-contained. An individual with an artificial heart, lungs, or kidneys can live an ordinary life, with little indication of his artificial organs other than a monitor plug jutting out of the skin.

Replaced internal organs have some disadvantages next to natural ones — they tend to set off airport metal-detectors and they reduce the number of damage boxes in the affected area by one. Multiple replacements result in multiple damage box reductions. (On your fourth heart, you'll have four fewer damage boxes in area 2 than you started with and might consider a desk job.)

Eyesight: Visual Impairment 2 or 4 can be partially restored by goggle-like vision enhancers, which convert light energy directly to electromagnetic signals. These signals are routed to a port at the base of the neck, and plugged directly into the brain from there.

An individual with such a device will be readily recognizable (wearing heavy goggles at all times) and will suffer from the disadvantages of Vision Impairment and Color-blindness. The vision enhancers are an improvement over total blindness, but only a small one.

Vision enhancers take the first 2 points of damage done to area 0 (the head), and afterward become non-functional.

Brains: Researchers in cybergenetics are currently studying devices which directly link man and machine. The download and deadline devices are examples of such items.

Transplants: Organ replacement is related to mechanical replacement. An individual who replaces a lost body part with another runs several risks, including tissue rejection (There's a 10% chance of rejection; if the roll fails, treat tissue rejection as a disease.), and reduced effectiveness. (There's a 20% chance of failure whenever the replaced body part is used; if the roll fails, the task is attempted at ½ ATT.) It is possible for a surgeon to replace almost any body part by making a Surgeon skill check. Then, the patient

makes a CON check to see if he makes it through the operation. (If the character fails the CON check, then the operation failed and he'll have to undergo the same surgical procedure again, losing an extra damage box in the affected area. CON rolls for subsequent surgical procedures are made with a cumulative −10% penalty. If the character fails his CON check with a Bad Break, he dies.) Brains cannot be transplanted.

Researchers are developing a system by which body tissue may be cloned and specific body parts regrown for later use. This is still under development as a "leading edge" science.

Cryogenics: Often a patient is too badly damaged, diseased, or old to be repaired by mechanical or biotechnological means. Individuals working for some major corporations and agencies (including FREELancers) who request it, can be placed into cryogenic storage, their bodies flash-frozen so that they may be revived later. The founder of the FREELancers, George Underhill, is in such a state, waiting for a cure to the particularly virulent cancer with which he is afflicted.

From a roleplaying angle, playing a TV dinner is no fun, but it is a method of placing badly damaged agents "on-ice" while other agents pursue missions.

FREELancers has an experimental cryo-cybernetic hookup that allows communication with the officially deceased Underhill. (Note — freezing a living individual is regarded as manslaughter in Illinois in 1998, so only the officially dead are frozen.) This is the only such known operation, and its effects on Underhill are not known.

File 1 - Weapons and Gadgets

All weapons from the Equipment Inventory and the G4 File are usable in the FREELancers future campaign. In addition, the weapons listed below are also available.

The columns beside each weapon are as follows:

Weapon — The weapon's name, including caliber (if any), and the weapon's country of manufacture.

Weight (Wt) — The weapon's weight in pounds, fully loaded, armed, or charged.

Cost — The weapon's cost in dollars.

Damage (Dam) — The die an attacker rolls to determine how many points of damage a successful attack with the weapon inflicts.

Range — All ranged weapons are given a short, medium, and long range, measured in feet. Weapons are ineffective beyond long range.

Ammunition (Ammo) — The number of rounds making up a full load, or number of shots from a fully charged power pack. Weapons with more than one number in this column can use a variety of loads.

Load — This column lists the number of turns needed to reload the weapon. The reload time will also have a letter indicating type of load: b — belt, c — clip, d — drum, q — quick-loader, p — no reload, r — weapon recharges.

Modifiers (Mods) — This number is added to or subtracted from the *Initiative roll* of any character using the weapon.

Lasers

Weapon	Wt	Cost	Dam	Range	Ammo	Load	Mods
Sandusky X-13 (U.S)	30	4,000	3d6	50/150/300	50	30r	-1
TI-45p (U.S./South Korea)	25	5,000	3d6	25/50/100	30	3c	—
Silver Spector (U.K.)	40	5,500	4d4	50/100/300	40	5c	—
Hrun (U.S.S.R.)	45	6,000	2d8+2	100/150/300	50	50r	-1
Beretta/Douglas Nova (Italy)	10	7,000	1d6	10/50/100	20	20r	—

Notes on lasers:

The typical laser is a backpack-mounted device with a fiber-optic cable connecting the pack to a wand-like control/fire center. The device looks similar to a World War II flame thrower and functions in much the same way.

Like automatic weapons, lasers can fire bursts, with a single burst from a laser consisting of 10 charges. The effects of a laser burst for targeting, hitting, and multiple targets are the same as for bursts from other weapons.

Lasers must be recharged via a power pack which plugs into most household sockets. Note, however, that these packs will often overload the electrical systems of older houses, so care is advised. Standard recharging time is one charge restored per turn. Power dials on the control/fire wand indicate the number of charges left.

The Berretta Nova is an exception to the above. Available only in prototype form, the Italian company has created a weaker weapon with a power pack on a belt harness as opposed to worn on a backpack. Field tests are under way with several major espionage agencies (including FREELancers), and underground versions are already beginning to appear. When the Nova is marketed, in circa 2002, the price should be brought down to under $4,000.

The standard issue laser (when one is used) for FREELancers operatives is the TI-45p, a utilitarian, common-usage laser created by a joint U.S.-South Korean research venture.

Lasers listed as "r-loads" have their own internal plugs and can be recharged by being plugged into wall sockets. Those listed as "c-loads" require separate, standard-issue chargers ($500 U.S.), which, for all intents and purposes, function the same as clips for semiautomatic weapons.

Clips of power-pack ammunition cost $100 U.S., regardless of type.

Pulsers

Weapon	Wt	Cost	Dam	Range	Ammo	Load	Mods
Model V "Jocko" (US)	2	200	1d6	30/60/90	10	p	1
Model VI "Ralphie" (US)	1	600	1d6	30/50/150	10	p	2

Notes on pulsers:

Pulsers are hand-held lasers made of low-grade materials. Waste heat generated by the pulser is such, that by the time the 10th shot is fired, the weapon is useless and should be discarded. For every shot after the fifth, a -10 penalty is applied to hit. Pulsers can't be reloaded or recharged.

Two models of pulser have been developed by Dr. Random's labs for use by FREElancers personnel. Current debate over the use of pulsers vs. handguns is ongoing. In the pulser's favor, the weapons have no muzzle noise and a low replacement cost.

Weapons similar to Orion pulsers are available to most major espionage agencies. The Web makes them available to line agents, while the FBI is still researching them.

Pulsers are still experimental, and, in adverse conditions (rain, immersion in water, intense heat, etc.), may malfunction. The base chance is 1% per shot fired. Malfunction results in explosion of the device. (1d8 points of damage per shot left to all within 5' of the device.)

Tasers

Weapon	Wt	Cost	Dam	Range	Ammo	Load	Mods
20v Malamuke (U.K.)	15	79	1+WIL check	5/20/50	2	2c	1
30v Grasscutter (IRA)	4	150	1+WIL check	5/10/50	2	1c	2
United Weapons 25v TI-20x (U.S.)	2	100	1+WIL check	10/20/40	2	1c	2

Notes on tasers:

Tasers are wrist-mounted devices which use CO2 cartridges to fire darts trailing lines of electrical wire. The darts themselves hit for 1 point damage. An electrical charge is then passed through the line, causing a man-sized opponent to make a WIL check or be knocked unconscious for 2d6 minutes.

The Texas Instruments 20X is the standard operational taser in the Freelancers armory, but is rarely used save for covert operations. The British Malamuke was the original taser, first put on the market in 1993 as a big-game hunting weapon. The device straps onto the lower arm, and is difficult to conceal. The IRA's Grasscutter is a modified and refined Malamuke, reduced to a usable and concealable size. The Grasscutter is the weapon of choice for disabling kidnap victims and overpowering traitors to the IRA cause. The TI-20X is a further refinement of the Grasscutter.

Flame Throwers

Weapon	Wt	Cost	Dam	Range	Ammo	Load	Mods
SM-23 (US)	45	3,500	2d6	-/180-	4	45c	-3
Remco Squeezefire 1000 (US/Taiwan)	1	100	1d6	-/20-	1	p	2

Notes on flame throwers:

The SM (standard model) 23 is a typical backpack flame thrower of the type in use since the close of World War II. It fires a form of jellied gasoline ignited at the spout. The Squeezefire is a terrorist weapon about the size and shape of an oven baster, with an ignitor near the tip. It tends to be a one-use weapon, like the pulsers, but very effective if used by surprise.

FREELancers will only issue flame throwers and Squeezefires from the armory to individuals who show both good sense and the ability to use a flame thrower effectively. Pyrokinetics would also help.

Wrist Rocket

Weapon	Wt	Cost	Dam	Range	Ammo	Load	Mods
Wallaby Wrist Rockets (Australia/China)	3	500	1d6	10 0/300/600	3	1c	1

Notes on wrist rockets:

This is a relatively new device, recently put into production by a joint venture of Australia and the People's Republic of China. It was marketed in the

United States for the first time in 1998 with print and television advertising featuring "Captain Wallaby." Despite the cheery adds and recommendations of safe target use, these things can be deadly.

The wrist rocket is a set of three mini-gyrojets latched into an insulated launcher worn at the top of the wrist. A self-contained CO2 cartridge launches them. After launch, internal rocket engines carry them to the target, and flight is kept level by an on-board computer chip. The device is relatively inexpensive, but the ammo is expensive (initial purchase includes three such rockets).

Damage given for the device is as for the "typical" wrist rocket. Types of shot and cost are listed below:

Standard shot	100/rocket	1d6
Armor piercing	200/rocket	1d8
Paint	50/rocket	0
Incendiary	300/rocket	2d6
Explosive	500/rocket	EXP

All but the standard and paint versions are available only on the black market or from independent labs.

Stuttershot Gun

Weapon	Wt	Cost	Dam	Range	Ammo	Load	Mods
Ingram M-11ss (US)							
	8	550	1d6	60/100/300	36	2c	—

Notes on stuttershots:

Introduced in 1998, the Ingram M-11 Stuttershot is a modification of the standard U.S. submachine gun. Its aim and firing mechanisms are aided by on-board computer chips, linked to the gun by an eye-tracking scanner worn over one eye (called a "monocle" in the trade). The scanner coordinates eye movement with the firing mechanism, allowing the user to fire *controlled bursts*.

A *controlled burst* can be either short or extended, but has the advantage of being effective against multiple targets without hitting unintended targets in between. The Ingram stuttershot effective-ly allows the user to shoot into a crowd and only hit the bad guys.

The Ingram, already part of the FREELancers armory, is currently the only stuttershot on the market. Other manufacturers are racing to catch up, so agents can expect the other makers of submachine-guns to offer stuttershot weapons by early 1999. Cost for these weapons is double that of the non-stuttershot versions, but other stats will remain unchanged.

Use of the stuttershot for *controlled bursts* requires a REF check. Failure indicates that all targets in the area are affected by the burst. Success allows characters to hit only the targets they want in the burst arc.

Beanbag Guns

Weapon	Wt	Cost	Dam	Range	Ammo	Load	Mods
Tabor Bashmaster							
	1	100	1d6	10/20/100	1	1c	—
Creason Ministun (Taiwan)							
	½	80	1d4	-/20/-	2	2c	—
Tabor Stunnetto							
	½	85	1d4	-/10/-	1	3c	2
GR-7000 "Gorby" (USSR)							
	2	120	1d8	-/30-	3	1c	—
United Weapons Stunbust Auto							
	12	400	1d4	-/40/130	100	5c	-1

Notes on stunguns:

Stunguns, a class of "non-lethal" weapons, have been in development since the early 1970s, but have only come to prominence in the past few years. They are used primarily as a weapon for small shopkeepers and bar owners, as well as riot police. Stunguns use CO2 cartridges as opposed to gunpowder, and as such, don't fall under gun control legislation, and are acceptable in Morton Grove and other communities which have banned firearms.

The principle of the stungun is to fire beanbags filled with lead shot, inflicting bruise instead of wound damage. The CO2 cartridges cost about $25 per box of 25. The weapon is about the size and shape of a policeman's baton. The Bashmaster is typical of the mainline beanbag gun, and is the

most popular in everyday use.

The Stunetto and Ministun are the leading rivals among small beanbag guns, the latter being a wrist-mounted device that can be concealed easily, (though it is a pain to reload). The "Gorby" is a Russian weapon used by their secret police, but it is beginning to appear in the United States through black market connections. The Stunbuster is a tripod-mounted, belt-fed, beanbag gun which can fire bursts of up to 10 shots per round. It is not available on the open market, but is being used by Chicago police in their crowd-control vehicles and APCs. (A belt of 100 beanbags costs $100.)

The amount of damage a beanbag gun inflicts depends upon the CO_2 pressure, so training is done with low-pressure cartridges (damage 1 point max). Similarly, CO_2 cartridges capable of inflicting double damage are available on the black market at four times the normal cost.

Net Guns

Weapon	Wt	Cost	Dam	Range	Ammo	Load	Mods
.308 Netmaster (US)							
	15	$2,000	0	10/50/110	1	6	—
Cassandra 332 "Boloboy" (Mexico)							
	10	$1,500	0	10/30/50	1	4	—
United Weapons Anaconda (US)							
	16	$2,300	0	10/60/100	1	5	—

Notes on net guns:

Net guns are generally used as animal rescue, crowd control, and suspect apprehension devices. They consist of a rifle stock on which are mounted four padded missiles. Between the missiles is a stretch of nylon weave net. The net gun is fired at target or targets, expands in flight, and catches a broad range in its net.

Nets inflict no damage by themselves. (However, in dangerous situations, other factors may damage a target.) Individuals in nets have their REF, MOV, and DEX reduced by 1d100%, for 1d4 turns, and are unable to move until they have untangled themselves. The Anaconda and Netmaster affect an area up to 12' by 12', capturing anyone and anything in the area of the first target struck. The

Boloboy is a smaller version, using only two missiles, and is normally fired at a single target's feet.

Net guns have a number of disadvantages. They are not able to expand fully in enclosed spaces, and thus, are −10 to hit. They also hit and entrap the first target in line of flight, further limiting their use in crowds, unless mass-arrests are needed. Still, many major police departments have net guns in their armories for use in large-scale emergencies.

Zappers

Weapon	Wt	Cost	Dam	CCV
Electrical shock device	½	$200	1d4 CON	15

Notes on zappers:

Zappers are also known on the street as prods, shockakhans and buzzbusters. A huge number of domestic and foreign manufacturers flooded the market with these relatively cheap electrical shock devices in the early '90s, resulting in their being banned by many communities. However, new models, versions built from scratch or from kits, and old versions from before the bans are still available on the underground market.

Most zappers operate on the same principle as the cattle prod. Two contacts are pressed against bare flesh, inflicting temporary damage to an area, and requiring a CON check to retain consciousness. (Check at ½ ATT for blows to the head.)

Ammunition

Type	Standard	AP	HVAP	Rubber	Para
5.56mm, .22	$4	$6	$10	$4	$12
7.62mm, .25-.32	$8	$12	$25	$8	$30
9mm, .38 + cal.	$10	$15	$30	$10	$30

Ammo is sold in boxes of 25. For magnum weapons (+1 to damage), add $2 per box.

Standard ammo refers to ordinary bullets. These can be stopped by Hard Cover (HC-1 if the Reality

is- Rule is being used).

Armor-piercing (AP) ammo refers to Teflon-coated bullets, capable of piercing Hard Cover and armor (HC-2 if the Reality Rule is being used).

High-velocity armor-piercing (HVAP) ammo refers to bullets with built-in propellants, designed to penetrate normal armor (HC-3 if Reality Rule is used).

Rubber bullets do not inflict Wound damage. Instead, they inflict Bruise damage.

Para-bullets or paralyzing bullets, are gel capsules which explode on contact, causing 1 wound and forcing an unprotected target to make a CON check or fall unconscious for 1d10 + 10 turns.

Gizmos

All "tools of the trade" from the *Top Secret/S.I.*™ boxed set and the *G4 File* are usable in the FREELancers future. In addition, here are a few devices characters may find useful in play:

Item	Weight	Cost
Lap-top Computer	3	2000
Modem	1	400
Laser Printer	10	500
Desktop Computer	15	3000
Computer Lockpicks	1/2	3000
Computer Watchdogs	1/2	2000/level
EMP Gun	25	2000

Notes: Lap-top computers are small, portable units which fit into a briefcase and can be hooked up via modem with larger systems. They carry up to four megabytes of memory. The typical desktop computer will have four to 16 megabytes of memory, color graphics, and inboard modem.

Computer lockpick is a program released in the late '80s through the computer hacker subculture, and updated over the next decade. It represents a set of simple cracking programs to break into other systems. The computer lockpick will automatically break into an unprotected system. For protected systems (and most are), a character with Computer Programmer skills is needed to use the program effectively, though anyone can use it by default.

Computer watchdogs are security systems designed to protect programs and hardware from bugs, viruses, and intruders. There are several levels of computer watchdog, up to level 6. Each provides a −10 modifier to attempts to break into the system. If the system is compromised, the watchdog will send out an alert, unless the program is overridden (again with a −10 modifier per level of complexity).

The EMP (electro-magnetic pulse) gun is a particularly nasty device. It inflicts no damage on living targets, but fries computer chips, rendering them useless.

Ten years ago such a device would have been of questionable value, but with increased use of memory chips, boards, and computers in vehicles (and elsewhere), the EMP is deadly. A modern vehicle hit by an EMP gun suffers a −30 to handling and must check for crashing. (By comparison, a 1980s vehicle would suffer little, if any, damage.)

The limitations of the EMP gun are many — it has a short range (60'). The model described in the table is low-powered, and targets behind Hard Cover (HC-2) are unaffected. The device is rather bulky, looking like a large backpack laser with a huge flashlight attached.

File 2 – Vehicles

Cars of the Future

General Rules: In the next 10 years, we will see an increase in computer-aided driving. Devices such as anti-lock brakes, greater safety features, on-board computers, and self-tuning engines will become more common. In look, there will be a greater tendency toward the aerodynamically efficient teardrop shape with rounded edges. Some specific new cars with special stats are listed

as follows on page 49. However, to figure the stats of a "1990s Chevy," make the following changes to current vehicle statistics:

Max Spd:	Increase by 10% (drop fractions)
Accel:	Increase by 5% (drop fractions)
Handl:	Increase by +5
Brake:	Increase by +5
Prot:	No change
# Pass:	No Change
Range:	Increase by 10%
Cost:	Increase by 20%

For example, take the "typical" Acura Integra from the G4 File, with the following 1980s stats:

Max Spd:	121
Accel:	14
Handl:	+10
Brake:	40
Prot:	−30
#Pass:	4
Range:	395
Cost:	$12,700

The future statistics for the Acura Integra would be:

Max Spd:	133
Accel:	14
Handl:	15
Brake:	45
Prot:	−30
#Pass:	4
Range:	435
Cost:	$15,240

The car would likely not be named the Integra, nor even be of the Acura line, and the Administrator is encouraged to think up new names if the players are that interested. Stats for typical vehicles in the future (and some special ones), are:

Vehicle Type	Max Spd	Accel	Handl	Brake	Prot	#Pass	Range	Cost
Full-size sedan	121	10	+5	35	−45	4	330	12,000
Compact sedan	110	10	+15	45	−30	4	330	12,000
Sports car	165	19	+35	55	−20	2	302	30,000
Police car	132	12	+15	45	−45	4	385	14,400
Limousine	126	8	−15	30	−55	8	440	36,000
Pickup truck	99	10	−5	25	−50	2	330	11,000
4-wheel-drive truck	99	8	−15	25	−50	4	330	18,000
Motorcycle	121	17	+25	55	−10	2	385	4,800
Police cycle	132	12	+15	55	−10	2	385	4,800
Van	126	10	−15	20	−45	6	440	18,000
APC	44	4	+45	25	−80	2	275	100,000
Tank	49	4	+45	25	−125	5	2	201,000,000
Philigenco Aquino	68	10	0	30	−20	3	120	6,000
Police tactics van (PTV)	120	12	−5	20	−50	12	440	20,000
Police assault van (PAV)	40	4	+40	20	−80	11	275	50,000
Oldsmobile Aerotech Romana	160	22	+45	55	−20	4	650	26,900
Alfa Romeo CLS Quadrifoglio	169	30	+50	65	−25	2	285	35,750
Off-road ground effects vehicle (GEV)	200	21	0	50	−20	2	500	15,000
Police/military GEV	250	25	−10	50	−25	4	700	90,000
Weapons platform GEV	200	50	−5	100	−80	12	1,000	2,000,000
Transport GEV	300	30	−10	60	−50	200	2,000	1,500,000

Aircraft Type	Max Spd	Stl Spd	Ceilg	Prot	Pass	Range	Cost
Powered paravane	65	12	12	0	1	150	7,000

Notes on Vehicles in the Future:

APCs: The typical APC is equipped with twin machine guns and, as an option, a rocket launcher.

Tanks: The typical tank carries two heavy machine guns and a 105mm tank gun.

Philgenco Aquino: This low-priced entry into the compact car market is manufactured in the Philippines, almost entirely of plastic and ceramics. Introduced to the U.S. market after success in the Third World in 1997, the Aquino is a low-priced, low-mileage accident looking for a place to happen. Aquinos are popular with first-time drivers, and the unique design is becoming as ubiquitous as the Volkswagon Beetle in the late 1960s and early '70s.

Police tactics van: The PTV is a fast van capable of holding a squad of officers, riot gear, and weapons.

One is usually dispatched to the scene of extreme bloodshed and/or metable activities.

Police assault van: The PAVs are war-surplus armored personnel carriers from a decade or more ago, converted to civilian use by the attachment of tear-gas launchers, net guns, and beanbag guns instead of machine guns. The PAV, which has heavy treads, is brought into play in hostage and standoff situations.

Alfa Romeo CLS Quadrifoglio: This just-off the line for 1998 Italian sports car is the ultimate in leading-edge car design, leaps and bounds above what is available from most other manufacturers. The FREELancers have two such vehicles, lovingly tended by "Icewater" Johnson (Agent Prime — head of the combat ops). While in theory they are company cars, "Icewater" will go on a major jihad if one of them is so much as scratched.

GEVs: Ground effects vehicles are highly specialized hovercrafts, with computer-guided jets which adjust the shape of the air bubble on which the GEV rides in order to allow it to climb hills, ride over rough terrain, and the like. GEVs are still considered off-road or experimental recreation vehicles, and are restricted to off-road, police, and military operations.

The off-road GEV was first made available in 1996, and has sparked a new interest among snowmobilers, dirt-bike enthusiasts, and the like. Its listed speed is for both on and off-road use, but care should be taken by the user to avoid things like trees and buildings.

The police/military GEV is a two-man cruiser, usually armed with riot gas and/or machine guns. The GEV has proved useful in riot situations, since little damage is done to people it runs over, and the cushion of air tends to repel civilians, sort of like a water cannon.

The weapons platform GEV is the largest and most heavily armed hovercraft-type vehicle in military use, mounting an array of up to three tank guns, a howitzer, and several heavy machine guns. This vehicle type has been used by the Coast Guard and DEA for dealing with smugglers, but has proved popular with Third World countries as well. It is rumored over the lunch tables at FREELancers that the Dragon Lady (Underhill) has one of these in the basement.

The transport GEV is as large as the weapons platform version, but is used for civilian purposes. More of an oddity than a viable means of transport, the vehicle is used for the Dover-Calais run, and to cross Lake Michigan from Milwaukee.

The powered paravane is a refined form of ultra-light aircraft, consisting of a single fabric wing and a light, quiet, Wankel engine. The paravane was used in California in the early '90s for police observation, carrying an officer and a radio. Experiments in Chicago with this device proved ineffective, given the lake breeze, cold winters, and updrafts between the buildings. Today, FREELancers has 25 of these devices, marked "Chicago Police Department."

Weapons Suits

Weapons suits are one or three-man mobile tanks, better suited for rough terrain or tight situations than tanks. They are being developed by the military as potential urban and wilderness weapons. The weapons suit described here is the man-amplifying power suit (MAPS) used by the FREELancers and other large organizations. The FREELancers currently maintain a squad of 12 MAPS, in four teams of three, under the command of "Icewater" Johnson, Agent Prime.

Vehicle: Man-amplied power suit (MAPS)

Maximum Speed	50 mph
Acceleration	10
Handling	+15
Braking	20
Protection	−60
# Passengers	3
Range	200
Cost	$1,200,000

The MAPS are 17' high and bipedal in configuration, looking something like skulls on legs. They carry three people, in most cases, a team skilled in Weapons Suit Melee and Weapons Pod Devices. In

a pinch, a single man can operate all functions of the MAPS, allowing the other two seats to carry passengers.

In military operations, the MAPS always work with three-man teams. In the FREELancers, one-man operations are recommended. The disadvantage of one person operating a MAPS device is that actions requiring multiple use of skills will result in those skill checks being halved or quartered, depending on the situation. This multiple-task problem does not exist for the Savant-built armor of Scratchbuilt; Scratchbuilt's armor is different from most MAPS armor in many ways. (See page 63.)

MAPS give the user a strength of 100, and the armor can enter combat and fight as a normal human target (both for taking and dealing out damage). Weapons Suit Melee skill is needed to use the armor effectively in close combat. Without this skill, MAPS can still be used as a ram, but then there is the danger of being involved in a crash.

Damage to the MAPS armor is detailed on the chart for that armor. (See pages 95-96.)

The offensive capability of the MAPS is found in the weapons pods — replaceable weapon systems mounted on the arms and/or shoulders of the MAPS. These devices, identical in effect to normal weapon systems (see boxed set for weapons statistics), are tailored especially for use with the MAPS system. Conventional MAPS weaponry includes:

• Flame thrower
• 40mm grenade launcher
• 80mm missile launcher
• 60mm mortar
• .50-caliber heavy machine gun
• 105mm howitzer
• 105mm tank gun

Grenades can be fragmentation, gas, incendiary, or smoke. Machine guns may fire rubber bullets as well as normal ones.

It takes up to 10 minutes with proper equipment to change a weapons pod, 30 minutes working from scratch. In either case, the individual doing

the reloading must have Weapons Pod Devices or Weapons Suit Repair skills. A maximum of two weapons pods may be carried and used at one time, with a third, inactive pod strapped across the back.

Note that weapons suit technology is in constant development, and new versions of these suits should arrive on the scene by the turn of the century. The MAPS are just the first assembly-line products of weapons-suit technology.

FREELancers: A Brief History

The roots of the FREELancers are in the closing days of World War II. The nascent Orion foundation, founded more than a decade earlier, was expanding into new areas, which eventually resulted in such specialty branches such as the Ganymede Bureau, The Titan Team of counter-terrorists, and the FREELancers.

The original outfit, called Oberon, was to be a team of highly skilled professional agents, the Orion version of the vaunted "00" agents of the British Secret Service. Its first leader was the young George Anthony Underhill, who recruited from heroes, international espionage agents, and rumored "mystery men" of the era — individuals with skills and abilities at the leading edge of espionage activities. These men and women were by nature loners, acting not as part of a team, but as free agents. Underhill brought them under one roof with established training to make them the best in their fields.

Throughout the '50s and '60s, the Oberon division functioned as an elite unit, accepting both the most dangerous assignments and the most dangerous agents — those deemed useful, but too unstable to leave in the field under normal circumstances. A botched rescue and the resulting scandal involving one of the original agents, Crossbow, landed the team in a bureaucratic backwater for most of the '70s, with special actions relegated to the new Titan Team.

Though relegated to secondary status, Underhill continued to hunt out and recruit powerful agents for the organization. With the explosive rise of technology since the last days of the world war, more of his agents became involved with devices with unusual powers. Oberon was at this point renamed FREE (Fast Reaction Experimental Espionage) and attached to the Ganymede Bureau as a field-testing wing. Again, the bureau became a dumping ground for problem agents, including those damaged by experimental devices.

In 1977, Underhill met and unknowingly recruited his half-Vietnamese daughter, Lee Won. Lee Won proved to be both a shrewd politician and an excellent manager, and soon occupied the second position in the organization. Most of the original

and second-generation agents were dying or retiring by this time, and Lee Won Underhill led the recruitment of many of the new agents. It was under her stewardship that the first Savants (agents with the metability to create and invent devices beyond normal limits) appeared and were recruited into the FREE organization. The greatest find was Dr. Andrew J. Rhand (code name Dr. Random) who joined in 1982. Since then, research in both high technology and metabilities has skyrocketed.

The year 1982 also marked the severance of the FREE organization from Orion. In a bureaucratic move, Orion cited budgetary concerns and ceased funding the organization. FREE was set up as a separate entity. Bureaucrats figured that the organization would soon dry up and blow away.

They were wrong. Led by the Underhills, and the technology created by Dr. Random and other Savants, the FREE Agency became the FREELancers, a for-hire team of meta-normal agents wielding odd powers and great technologies. By licensing various Savant patents, the FREELancers were able to expand their operations throughout the '80s and into the '90s. During this time, they maintained a low profile, at the wishes of George Underhill, seeking out and recruiting agents above and beyond the norm.
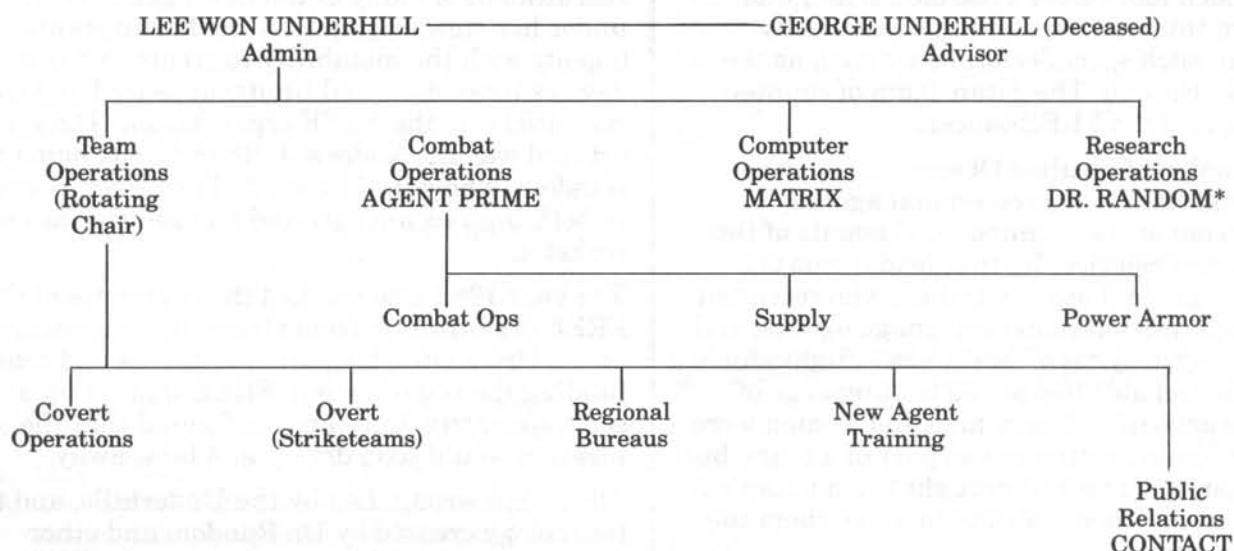
George Underhill was diagnosed as having inoperable cancer in 1993, and at that time was frozen cryogenically. Control of the FREELancers passed to his daughter, Lee Won.

Most of the younger and stranger agents of the FREELancers have joined since Lee Won took control of the firm. In addition, the agency has sought more publicity, seeking to make its actions known to both promote itself and to increase public knowledge of the growing metable population. It's debatable as to whether the increase in agents with metabilities is on the rise as a result of increased mutations, or only is now being recognized because of the higher level of technology available.

In 1996, Lee Won Underhill accepted the invitation of Mayor Dorothy Hubbard to base her orga-

ORGANIZATIONAL CHART

FREELancers

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LEE WON UNDERHILL ─────────────────────────── GEORGE UNDERHILL (Deceased)
        Admin                                            Advisor

    Team              Combat              Computer              Research
  Operations        Operations           Operations           Operations
  (Rotating        AGENT PRIME             MATRIX             DR. RANDOM*
    Chair)

                  Combat Ops              Supply             Power Armor

  Covert          Overt           Regional        New Agent
Operations      (Striketeams)     Bureaus         Training

                                                                  Public
                                                                 Relations
                                                                  CONTACT
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*DR. RANDOM is titular head of Research Operations in order to expedite his often large requests for equipment. In day-to-day operations, a second in command is usually present at meetings. This lieutenant usually lasts for two to six months before the pressures of dealing with both Dr. Rhand and the rest of the FREELancers results in resignation or retirement.

nization in Chicago. The team has moved into an abandoned hotel complex on the banks of the rising Lake Michigan, and is kept on retainer by the City of Chicago and the Great Lakes Authority (GLA). The agency still performs missions throughout the world, but concentrates its actions in the American Great Lakes region.

In 1998, when the FREELancers campaign begins, there is a growing number of agents in the field, at outposts throughout the GLA, in Detroit, Indianapolis, Cleveland, and Pittsburgh. FREELancer franchises may be sold throughout the rest of the United States. The agency has in its employ a stunning (or shocking) array of metable agents, including:
Refit — The remade man.
Charm — The vampiric empath.
Dervish — The Mideastern assassin.
Matrix — The computer wizardess.
Captain Ares — A would-be super-hero.
Scratchbuilt — A young man with power armor.
Golem — An old woman poltergeist.
Dr. Random — The brilliant, erratic inventor.

Download — The man with computerized skills.
Agent Prime — Leader of the combat ops.
Tandem — A couple with extraordinary powers.
Contact — The recruiting officer.
Centaur — A machine horse/man.

These are the FREELancers — Are your agents remarkable enough to join their ranks?

FREELancers Operation Policies

Charter: FREELancers is a self-incorporated agency based in Chicago, Ill., to serve as a for-hire espionage operation, specializing in advanced technology and extralegal activities. Founder, George Underhill (officially deceased). CEO, Lee Won Underhill.

Organization: FREELancers contains 150 "core" personnel with another 100-200 "stringers" who

work on a case-by-case basis.

Administrator: Lee Won Underhill is the group's administrator, as well as CEO and majority stockholder.

Advisor: Though legally dead, George A. Underhill is kept in a cryogenic tank and may communicate through the mainframe computer.

Research Operations: This department is concerned with research and development of new devices, including the understanding Savant-created devices and the testing of experimental inventions from other agencies. New inventions are patented in the name of FREELancers, Inc, with the creative team receiving 50% of the royalties. The titular head of FREELancers/RO is Dr. Andrew Rhand, better known as Dr. Random, who holds the position so he can have his often large requests for equipment expedited. Day-to-day operations, meetings, chores, and bookkeeping are handled by a lieutenant. There is a lot of turnover in this secondary position, since most have a hard time dealing with the demands of both the board of directors and Dr. Random.

Computer Operations: The FREELancers/CompO is in charge of maintaining data gathering and processing, and has a staff of 10 programmers with the Gleaning skill. (See new skills, page 33.) The head of the department is Irene Domino (Matrix), who, in addition to her other duties, tends to the life-support system of advisor Underhill.

Combat Operations: The FREELancers/CombO, is the military arm of the FREELancers organization, and used in situations in which firepower is needed. It consists of the combat ops wing, the supply wing, and the power armor division.

- The combat ops wing consists of five teams of 10 men each, with a fantasy creature designated as a team name: Team Griffon, Team Unicorn, Team Dragon, Team Blue Ox, and Team Wizard.
- The power armor division consists of four teams of three sets of man-amplified power suits (MAPS), Alpha, Bravo, Charlie, and X-ray.
- The supply wing is in charge of support of the

combat ops and power armor divisions. The wing consists of a team of five specialists who get most of the work done through outside contractors. The head of FREELancers/CombO is Thadeus "Icewater" Johnson, also known as Agent Prime. Combat ops and weapons suit teams may be assigned to team operations for particular missions.

Team Operations: FREELancers/TO is the home of 25-30 specialized agents who go on specific missions. The chair for this position on the board rotates among all full-status agents, according to desire and availability. The TO branch has the following departments:

- *Covert operations:* This group generally works undercover and is involved in intelligence gathering.
- *Overt operations:* Also called strike teams, these groups are used on specific missions with predetermined goals and, usually, limited time constraints. Combat ops may be assigned to strike teams.
- *Regional bureaus:* These were first set up throughout the Great Lakes Authority in the mid-'90s. The plan is to have fully operational satellite centers of agents throughout the area by the year 2000. Operations vary from almost full setups (Pittsburgh and Milwaukee), to small branch offices (as in Buffalo, Cleveland, and Indianapolis). This department has also been charged with the development of the FREELancers franchise operation.
- *New agent training:* New recruits are tested as to metabilities (if any) and capabilities for admittance as agents in team operations or as combat ops. Those rejected tend to be picked up by other agencies.
- *Public relations:* The newest department under FREELancers/TO, this department is headed by Summer Davison, (code name: Contact). This group makes the initial contact with new clients and recruits promising individuals with metabilities. Regarded as a joke by long-term agents, who prefer total secrecy, the PR department is responsible for maintaining good rela-

tionships with clients, in particular the government of Chicago and the GLA.

Agent Status: Agents in FREELancers have a status attached to their files, depending on their current conditions:

Training: The agent is relatively new and has yet to prove he possesses metabilities. FREELancers is cautious that this agent sees little in the way of top secret material and dangerous situations.

Active: The agent has proven metabilities and may be trusted with top secret documents at his leader's discretion. The agent understands that the nature of active agent status is such that it may result in loss of life or limb. The agent is fully vested in the health plan.

Retired: The agent's no longer active, but is still an agent in good standing and may be called upon if the situation warrants it.

Probation: The agent is active, but is under disciplinary action for infractions not serious enough to merit expulsion. Probation generally lasts one month, and during that time, the agent is demoted to training status for most purposes. The agent remains fully vested in the health plan.

Expulsion: The agent has been expelled from the FREELancers. The life expectancy of expelled agents is about five to seven weeks due to enemies' longstanding grudges. Expelled agents are kept under surveillance.

Deceased: The agent is dead and is removed from the active list, and a FREE insignia is set into the stone in the office lobby. (There are 37 such symbols already.) Deceased usually means the end of an agent's career, but as science marches on, this may no longer be the case.

MIA: The agent is presumed dead, but no body has been found.

Rogue: The agent has quit the organization, usually to join a rival one. Rogue agents are usually neutralized or terminated as soon as possible.

Code of Conduct: FREELancers has written into its letters of incorporation the code of conduct of the Orion Foundation:

1) Never take a human life, unless doing so is absolutely necessary for the advancement of the mission.

2) Do not contact FREELancers headquarters unless failure to do so will result in failure of the mission.

3) Obey national and local laws to the greatest extent possible without compromising the mission.

Failure to obey these tenets will result in peer review, probation, and possible expulsion. Every leading member of the FREELancers organization, with the exception of Matrix, has been on probation within the past three years.

Missions: FREELancers, Inc. will accept missions according to its manpower and time limitations. FREELancers generally will refuse missions which involve fomenting revolution against peaceful nations or taking sides in wars.

FREELancers is kept on retainer by a number of organizations. These organizations pay a fee for the privilege of having their problems addressed with the highest priority by the FREELancers. The revenue from these retainers covers operating expenses for the teams. The organizations, in order of priority, are:

City of Chicago
Great Lakes Authority (a regional group of cities and states in the "Rust Belt")
U.S. Treasury
U.S. Food and Drug Administration
United Nations
City of Los Angeles
City of New York (three months late on payments)
Chubb Insurance Group
Pan-Business League (organization of five of the largest Fortune 500 corporations)

Second priority is given to large organizations for specific missions. Payment is in advance.

Personal missions by agents seeking to deal with specific problems are discouraged but not disallowed, provided that the activity doesn't interrupt other FREELancers work or interfere with police

activity. The agent sets his own price for the mission, with the company taking 80%. Excessive pro bono (free) missions will result in a review by the Board.

Types of Missions Accepted: Members of the FREELancer teams are expected to perform their duties to the best of their superhuman abilities without shirking or questioning. Typical missions will include:

1) Assisting local authorities — usually in matters beyond their bounds of control;
2) Recovery of stolen property;
3) Recovery of stolen information;
4) Detection and recruitment of individuals manifesting metabilities;
5) Capture of dangerous drugs, substances, or technology entering the country illegally;
6) Investigation of industrial sabotage;
7) Gathering evidence for court cases.

An agent may refuse a mission at the initial briefing for personal reasons, and so be released from that mission, unless otherwise specified by the CEO or her representative. Continual refusal may result in peer group review and probation.

Agent Compensation: Base pay for an agent in training or on probation is $30,000 per year (about $400 per week, after taxes). Base pay for an agent in good standing is $40,000 (about $500 a week, after taxes). Room and board may be provided by the FREELancers at the headquarters building. Rooms outside headquarters will be paid for by the organization only if they are to be used as bases for FREELancers operations.

An agent keeps 20% of all revenue gained from rewards, as well as fees from discretionary missions.

FREELancers, Inc. maintains one of the best medical and dental plans still available, backed up by in-house medical facilities for transplant or cyborging of damaged limbs, and full recuperation facilities. These offerings are restricted to active agents and those on probation, and are not available to agents in training and those who have been expelled.

General Look: For costumes, in each case start with a standard-issue team jumpsuit, something a group would wear for easy identification. The jumpsuit is gray or light blue with red piping along the the arms and legs. The FREE logo is over the heart (reinforced in that location with Kevlar plating.) The creators of the uniforms envisioned everyone looking similar, like little clones in a row. In reality, each member of the team takes the uniform and manipulates it to his or her own desires: Refit is missing the sleeves, Tandem One has a plunging neckline, Dervish has converted hers into martial arts gear, etc. There will be exceptions to this general rule.

Code Name: Underhill (Lee Won Underhill)

STR	INT	REF	WIL	CON	MOV	DEX
45	69	69	60	56	57	69

Sex	Female
Race	Mixed (White/Oriental)
Nationality	U.S. (Naturalized Vietnamese)
Height	5'0"
Weight	120 pounds
Eyes	Blue
Hair	Black

Psychology: Cruelty (High), Loyalty (High), Passion (Some), Piety (Some), Sanity (High), Selfishness (High)

Tags: Cold, calculating, reputed unfeeling

Advantages: Attractive Appearance (2), Empathy (2), Obscure Knowledge (3), Sixth Sense (1)

Disadvantages: Allergies (3), Dependent (2), Enemy (3)

Skills: All Combat Skills (3), Oriental Martial Arts (4), All Specialty Skills (3), Foreign Language (Viet Minh — 4), French — 2)

Metability: Lee Won Underhill has no exceptional metabilities. She is, however, the leader of the most powerful organization of metabile agents in the world: FREELancers. She is well versed in all the abilities and metabilities of her agents, and is familiar, even deadly, with most of the weaponry of the system. She is also in contact with the

matrixed cryogenic form of her father, George Underhill, founder of the FREELancers.

Personal Notes: Lee Won Underhill is the daughter of American George Anthony Underhill, founder of the FREELancers organization and its head for 40 years. Underhill fathered Lee Won in French Indochina in 1954. By the time she was 21, Lee Won controlled a major chunk of the Saigon black market and was recruited by her father for FREELancers after the fall of South Vietnam. Lee Won learned her father's lesson well. In particular, she expanded the search for exceptional agents beyond the bounds of mere professionals in the fields and she began recruiting those exhibiting metabilities in non-espionage areas.

George Underhill contracted inoperable cancer in 1993 and was placed into a cryogenic unit prepared for him within the FREELancer headquarters. While limited in his abilities, Underhill can communicate with the living via a device created by Dr. Random. That device remains in Lee Won Underhill's office, and she uses her father as a sounding board for ideas, as well as a wealth of information from the past.

The image Lee Won projects, her history, and her present status (including keeping her old man in an ice cube) have contributed to her nickname "Dragon Lady." She has, in the past, ordered valuable agents on suicide missions and accepted losses rather than abandon operations. Her ultimate loyalty is to no man, living or dead, but rather to the ultimate security of the FREELancers.

Lee Won Underhill is deathly allergic to many airborne pollutants in the American Northeast. For this reason, she must receive injections four times daily or lose half her remaining CON every 6 hours. This is kept a secret from her agents and the world.

Appearance: Lee Won Underhill is a slender woman in her mid-40s who still retains much of the beauty of her youth. She prefers business skirts of gray accented with red, or an occasional slit red gown accented in gray. When she appears before the troops in a standard jumpsuit, it usually means all hell is about to break loose. She is not afraid to lead the troops, but is aware of the need for a master coordinator behind the scenes.

Code Name: Refit (Charles Henry Magastowkawicz)

STR	INT	REF	WIL	CON	MOV	DEX
70	45	30	56	102	58	38

Sex	Male
Race	White
Nationality	United States
Height	6'4"
Weight	310 pounds
Eyes	Hazel (original equipment)
Hair	None (originally brown)

Psychology: Cruelty (High), Loyalty (Some), Passion (Low), Piety (Low), Sanity (Total), Selfishness (Some)

Tags: Foul-tempered

Advantages: Stamina (2)

Disadvantages: Unattractive Appearance (2)

Skills: Basic Tool Use (1), Metalworking (3), Construction (2), Basic Mechanic (1), Basic Firearms (1), Basic Melee (2), Knife (2), Wrestling (2), Survival (3), Swimming (2), Throwing (2)

Metability: Refit has a suppressed immune system coupled with an all-receptive genotype. He is, in effect, an ultimate receiver. The result is that Refit can receive massive tissue transplants without danger of rejection, so that he may replace lost and damaged parts of his body almost at will. His body is now a patchwork of mismatched parts, crisscrossed by seams like a baseball.

In game terms, Refit can take up to 10 points damage in any area of the body. Bruise damage heals normally, but wound damage does not. He may still function normally even if all the boxes are eliminated in an area. Only damage to the head (area 0) is permanent and can kill Refit.

Wound damage to parts of the body doesn't heal, but must be replaced by a Freelancer technician. A character with Medicine skill can attempt to replace body parts with 50% chance of failure, a character with Surgeon skill with 25% chance of

failure. (A supply of appropriate body parts must be available.) The head (area 0) cannot be replaced. Replacement of such an area takes 2 hours and will result in the area being able to take the full 10 points of damage.

Personal Notes: Charles Henry Magastowkawicz was a night-shift worker at the USX Gary works until 90% of his body was burned and his legs lost in a mill accident. His legs were amputated after the accident, but doctors discovered while attempting skin grafts that Magastowkawicz showed no signs of tissue rejection. Word percolated up to Ganymede and FREE, and the former steelworker was recruited into the ranks in 1995. He, with Agent Charm (Simon Drake), is one of the longest currently active agents for FREELancers, due to his tendency to take a licking and keep on ticking.

Charles Henry, preferring the name Refit when on missions, does not reject his present state. Rather he revels in his strange immortality. His work records show him to be a bad influence and a brawler with USX, and he remains so today. He is foul-tempered and willing to injure allies when they disagree with him. His cruelty is especially intense toward Captain Ares. Refit has no known close relatives, but is thought to have a sister in the Gary area, as he will always volunteer for missions in that region.

Appearance: A mishmash of body parts covering a number of races and genotypes, Refit wears a sleeveless version of the standard uniform with slits cut up the side of the pants seams, the better to show off his fancy cowboy boots.

Code Name: Charm (Simon Drake, legally changed from Paul Drummon)

STR	INT	REF	WIL	CON	MOV	DEX
34	38	65	20/100*	54	36	52

Sex	Male
Race	White
Nationality	Great Britain/United States
Height	5'9"
Weight	180 pounds
Eyes	Smokey gray
Hair	Chestnut

Psychology: Cruelty (Low), Loyalty (Some), Passion (High), Piety (Some), Sanity (Low), Selfishness (Total)

Tags: Erratic, flighty, fastidious

Advantages: Empathy (2), Attractive Appearance (3), Presence (3)

Disadvantages: Mood Swings (3), Lechery (2), Enemies (IRA — 2, British government — 1)

Skills: Basic Melee (1), Fencing (3), Forgery (4), Interrogation (3), Pickpocket (3), Shadowing (2), Acting (4), Social Chameleon (4)

Metability: Charm is an empathic vampire, an individual who can inflict his will on others, but needs the presence of others to survive. When attempting actions which involve his WIL in social situations (seduction, interogation, etc.), his WIL is 100. When testing Charm's own WIL (resistance to temptation, standing up to questions), Charm's WIL is 20. Charm, when using his power, can force individuals to agree to actions that they would not normally consider. When the target is unaware and/or friendly, this is at full 100 WIL. When the target is aware of the attempt, this is at ½ WIL. When the target is hostile and actively involved in something else, it is at ¼ WIL.

Charm's strength is also his vulnerability. When *others* are attempting to seduce, interrogate, or otherwise influence him, his WIL is 20. Further, if deprived of human contact for more than 24 hours, Charm begins to lose both WIL and CON at a rate of 1 point per hour. At the end of the second day, Charm will agree to anything someone suggests.

Personal Notes: Simon Drake was born in Belfast, Northern Ireland in 1975, and soon discovered his metability helped him survive in an environment torn by factional strife. A Catholic who aided the government, he was soon labeled a grass and had to flee the island. Settling in London and changing his name, Drake went into the theater. He soon became a minor sensation as a star (under the stage name of Daniel Dracoli) and as a figure in a scandal when he became involved in a plot to

kill King Charles. (The other plotters, backed by Libyans, convinced Simon this was the right thing again.) FREE saved Drake from the gallows and recruited him (without the Crown's permission) to the team. Drake has remained with the team ever since.

Simon Drake appears well-polished, suave, and well-mannered, and has cut a wide swath through the female population inside and outside of headquarters. He has often disappeared for days on end, which usually requires another agent to go looking for him. He has been found in the hands of other agents, as the manager of a punk band, and as a member of various religious cults. The standing order is for Drake not to be left alone. His tendency to use others has put him in a situation where the other members of the team are suspicious of him.

Appearance: Charm is fastidious and well-groomed, with immaculate hair and clothing. His uniform (when he wears it) is always well-pressed, with crisp edges. His talents usually put him into deep cover, and he readily adapts to other situations, though he retains his peacock tendencies. (If undercover as a bum, he will be the flashiest bum on skid row.)

Code Name: Dervish (Karolyn Winters)

STR	INT	REF	WIL	CON	MOV	DEX
61	100	79	53	61	81	90

Sex	Female
Race	White
Nationality	U.S. (Naturalized Jordanian)
Height	5'4"
Weight	130 pounds
Eyes	Black
Hair	Black

Psychology: Cruelty (High), Loyalty (High), Passion (High), Piety (Some), Sanity (High), Selfishness (Low)

Tags: Cold, emotionless

Advantages: Bilingual Background (2), Eye-hand Co-ordination (3), Sixth Sense (3)

Disadvantages: Ego Signature (2), Enemy (4), Uncouth (2)

Skills: Knife Throwing (6), Crossbow (3), Basic Firearms (1), Basic Melee (1), Knife (6), Sword (scimitar) (6), Oriental Martial Arts (all known styles and probably a few esoteric ones) (6), Shadowing (2), Stealth (4), Climbing (3), Sign Language (1), Throwing (2)

Metability: Dervish is the practitioner of a form of combat known as "The Blade of Sirocco." There are only three such practitioners outside the Islamic cult's base in Jordan, and she is the only known female practitioner. She is a master (level 6) in Oriental Martial Arts, knife, and the scimitar. She has these abilities as a result of living and studying in seclusion for two decades. As a result, she has little in the way of social graces.

Personal Notes: Karolyn Winters was the illegitimate child of a British agent working in Israel and a Jordanian woman in the days of the '75 war. After the death of her mother in a PLO attack, Andrew Winters turned the child over to the cult to be raised. The child's arrival was viewed as fortuitous by the cult, and she was trained in the ways of the warrior. She proved herself to be the superior of her teachers upon maturity, but was neither permitted to engage in actions for the cult or hold position in the cult because of her sex. (There was a change in command of the cult, and a more fundamentalist sect emerged in the early '90s.) Winters went native and surfaced a year later in Japan as an agent for the Japanese underworld.

Dervish was recruited by FREELancers after a particularly nasty dust-up within the Japanese mafia that resulted in the nuking of Miribishi Bay. The presence of other Sirocco members at the scene of the blast indicated that the cult was taking yet another direction. Relocating to the U.S., Dervish was contacted by Simon Drake, who used his talent to bring her in initially. Their relationship was short-lived (as all of Charm's relationships are), and Dervish has not gotten close to any other person since.

Dervish is a social misfit in modern society, and has trouble understanding any type of relationship outside of direct conflict. For her, everything is black or white. There is no estimate of how many people she has killed. Dervish joined the the team with the understanding that, if found guilty of killing someone, she will be turned back over to her cult. Within the ranks of the team, this is taken to mean, "Therefore, she should not get *caught* killing anyone." She works as an instructor, passing on her martial arts skills, though she insists that without the cultural background, there can be no true enlightenment.

Appearance: Dervish has olive-dark skin and long hair, which is worn in an elaborate braid down her back. She has had made a special uniform that, while retaining the gray and red scheme, is a more comfortable cloak.

Code Name: Matrix (Irene Domino nee Goldberg)

STR	INT	REF	WIL	CON	MOV	DEX
21	30	86	54	30	26	58

Sex	Female
Race	White
Nationality	United States
Height	5'11"
Weight	110 pounds
Eyes	Light blue
Hair	Black

Psychology: Cruelty (None), Loyalty (Total), Passion (None), Piety (None), Sanity (Total), Selfishness (None)

Tags: Timid, quiet, mousey

Advantages: Acute Hearing (2), Acute Touch (1), Eye-hand Coordination (3), Language Ability (2)

Disadvantages: Allergies (1), Short-winded (3), Cowardice (4)

Skills: Electronics (S), Basic Melee (1), Cryptography (S), Surveillance (S), Musical Instrument (Reed pipe — 2), Radio Operator (3), Basic Science (1) Engineer/Elec (3), Computer Technician (S)

Metabilities: Matrix is a Savant, an individual with an incredible inborn predisposition to a particular set of skills and occupation. Matrix's pre-

disposition is toward electrical devices, and in particular, computers. This understanding operates at a level far beneath that of conscious thought, such that Matrix intuitively *knows* the correct programming on the first guess. She maintains the data banks of the FREELancers organization, oversees the information gathering and retrieval services, and deals with the link-up to Underhill's cryo chamber. She may apply all skills involving machines at level 6.

The price Matrix pays for this are blackouts when she is drawn into a problem. If it is a problem her mind cannot solve but her Savant subconscious can, she will literally black out. During this time, her body will still respond, but totally address the problem at hand, ignoring all other input. She will awaken with no memory of her actions.

As a result, Matrix tends to be timid and reclusive, afraid to volunteer her abilities for fear of losing control of them. She is a coward at heart, and has withdrawn from most of the others on the team. She spends most of her time in the cold rooms of the computer areas, working on improving her talent. Her secret desire is to create a computer program which mimics her Savant abilities, thus allowing her freedom from her metability.

Personal Notes: Irene Domino was a housewife subject to strange blackouts, which centered around her eldest child's video games. The blackouts were tied to the rise of her Savant personality, a personality, which in a simpler time, would have remained hidden. When the family was facing difficulties, she rewired the automatic teller machine to provide cash. While not responsible (or even aware) of her actions, she was apprehended. Her husband divorced her and gained custody of both children.

Irene served two years in a medium security woman's prison before being contacted by FREELancers. During this time, she withdrew even further, leaving her emotionally scarred and susceptible to a future nervous breakdown.

Irene is undergoing counseling with the Freelancers, and has come to terms with her Savant self by effectively surrendering to it. She is uncomfor-

table with other Savants, in particular those who seem to have come to terms with their Savant sides. She is more at home with the machines, and often talks to them while working with them.

Appearance: Emaciated, Matrix's pale complexion is highlighted by the reddish goggles she wears when in normal light. Her uniform is usually unkempt, smeared with graphite, and littered with burn holes. She wears her hair in a short crew cut, as long hair gets in the way of her work.

Code Name: Captain Ares (Real name unknown)

STR	INT	REF	WIL	CON	MOV	DEX
100	60	43	61	74	79	48

Sex	Male
Race	White
Nationality	United States
Height	6'0"
Weight	230 pounds
Eyes	Blue
Hair	Blonde

Psychology: Cruelty (None), Loyalty (Total), Passion (High), Piety (Some), Sanity (Low), Selfishness (None)

Tags: Truly wants to be a super-hero

Advantages: Acute Vision (2), Ambidexterity (1), Athletic Ability (1), Fearlessness (1), Toughness (1)

Disadvantages: Clumsiness (2), Ego Signature (2), Moral Qualms (2)

Skills: Basic Melee (1), Boxing (2), Wrestling (2), Shadowing (3), Tracking (3), Climbing (3), First Aid (2), Basic Liberal Arts(1)

Metability: Captain Ares has a number of abilities involving changes in his metabolism. He automatically inflicts 10 points of bruise damage when he hits, regardless of the result of the die roll.

As a result of these changes, Ares has a reduced sense of touch, the above-mentioned clumsiness, and is slower than similarly powerful metables. His abilities are believed to be the result of genetic experimentation, and may have left his mind unbalanced as well. (See below.)
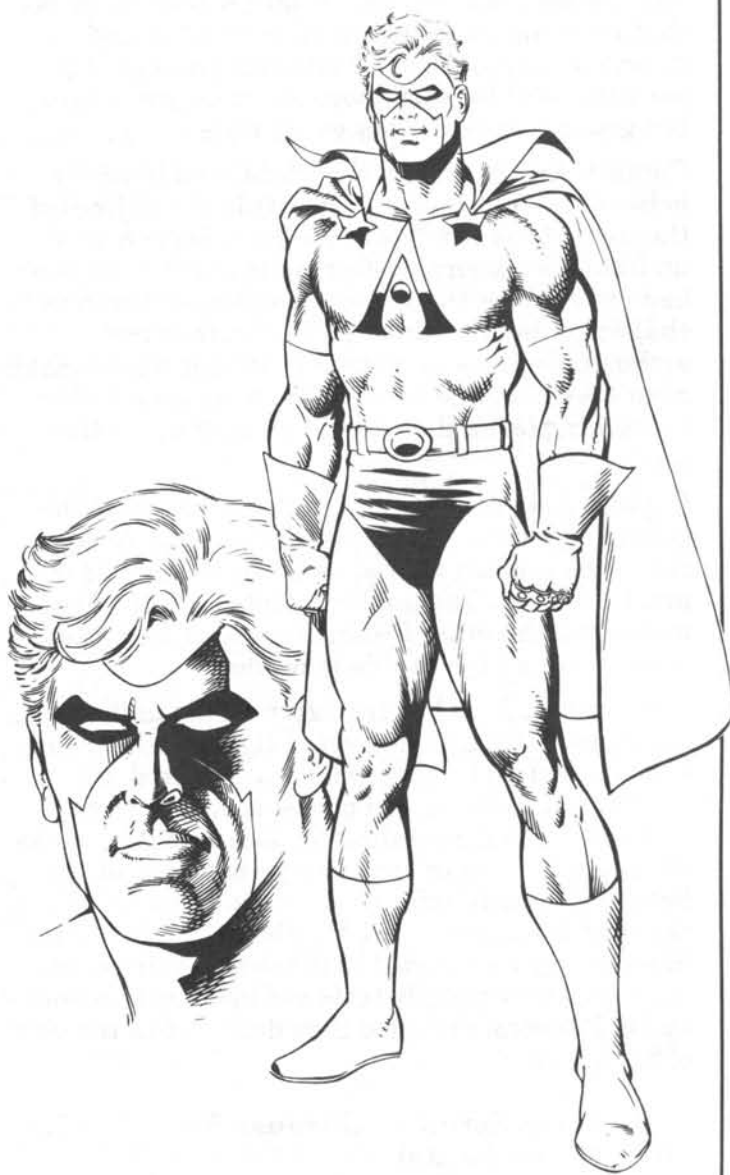
Personal Notes: Captain Ares' background and origin are unknown, and there is nothing in the data banks on him prior to his 16th birthday, when he first emerged in his Ares persona. Speculation abounds as to Ares' origin — best guess is that he is the combination of early advanced genetic manipulation. Charm has attempted to use his power to learn more about Captain Ares, but gets a different story every time.

Captain Ares is not overly bright, and honestly believes he can be a super-hero along the lines of the comic-book legends of the past. He is a very up-front sort of guy, preferring to crash in on the bad guys rather than sneak around, and prefers to challenge them to direct combat rather than ambush. He lives by a strict code that would make most blush, and he seems to have an answer to everything (even if he has to make it up on the spot).

Captain Ares is a bright, heroic spot against the general darkness of the rest of the team. As a result, he is often viewed as a fool or the butt of practical jokes. The public accepts Captain Ares more than the other FREELancers, so he's often used where a high profile is needed.

Appearance: Ares has transformed his uniform into a snug, tight-fitting set of tights with a rams-headed cowl and a cape. The gray and red are heightened to white and crimson. Ares is very protective about revealing his face in public (talks about a sick aunt or something), but around the base and in more informal situations, he will keep the cowl down, revealing Malibu good looks. Ares has a utility belt loaded with various interesting doodads, and willingly tests out new experiments by Dr. Random, provided they don't get in the way of his image.

Code Name: Scratchbuilt (Juan Miguel (John-Michael) DeChanza)

STR	INT	REF	WIL	CON	MOV	DEX
45	57	68	50	60	51	63

Sex	Male
Race	Mixed (White/Indian)
Nationality	U.S. (Naturalized Nicaraguan)

Height	5'2"
Weight	140 pound
Eyes	Brown
Hair	Black

Psychology: Cruelty (Low), Loyalty (High), Passion (High), Piety (High), Sanity (Some), Selfishness (Some)

Tags: Gangly, geeky, nervous, excitable 14-year old

Advantages: Bilingual Background (2), Light Sleeper (2), Toughness (2)

Disadvantages: Dependents (2), Traumatic Flashbacks (4)

Skills: Metalworking (S), Basic Mechanic (S), Electronics (S), Weapons Pod Device (4), Basic Melee (1), Weapons Suit Melee (4), Driving/Weapons Suit (S), Throwing (1), Foreign Language (Spanish — 4)

Metability: John-Michael is a Savant, like Matrix, but has guided his Savant identity to a discrete purpose, which is the construction of the Scratchbuilt armor. He uses the armor as a focus, and only exhibits his Savant talents when in or near his armor.

The Scratchbuilt armor uses a number of circuitry layouts and levered plate-matrixes that should not and cannot work, but do when John-Michael builds them. Attempts to duplicate these discoveries have had limited success. The armor itself is treated as a special vehicle with the following stats and special abilities:

Maximum Speed	65 mph
Acceleration	15
Handling	25
Braking	30
Protection	−60
# Passengers	1
Range	400
Cost	Unique (Savant)

   Provides Hard Cover — 2
   Provides STR — 90 for user

Armaments: Variable weapons pods are located on the left shoulder. It can be refitted with a variety of customized weapons pods, including flame thrower, 80mm missile launcher, 60mm mortar, 105mm tank gun, 40mm grenade launcher capable of lobbing standard fragmentation, gas, incendiary, and smoke grenades.

Personal Notes: John-Michael DaChanza is a native of the small town of Somotillo, near the Nicaraguan-Honduran border. His hometown, and most of the Nicuarguan-Honduran border, became a battlefield in the mid-'90s, with repeated assaults by the Contras, Sandinistas, Mequiste Indian revolutionaries, Cuban mercenaries, U.S. advisors, and Israeli security teams. DaChanza's family fled to El Norte, where they went into hiding from El Migra and the Nicaraguan death squads. (All sides have death squads operating in the U.S.) John-Michael's metability surfaced in the more technology-oriented United States, and he was recruited into the FREELancers, initially as a mechanic. It was discovered that his abilities only work on the one piece of armor on which he is working, and soon after he gives it on to another, bugs develop and the armor self-destructs. As a result, he is an agent in training, one of the younger members of the team. In return for his work, FREELancers headquarters has pulled some strings to get his family (four survivors) naturalized, though the danger of death squads remain.

John-Michael is subject to traumatic flashbacks stemming from his youth in Central America. Often automatic gunfire and explosions, if they take him by surprise, will freeze him into a catatonic state, even if he is in his protective armor. His concern for his family (he is the "breadwinner" now) outweighs his loyalty to the FREELancers organization.

Appearance: Outside the armor, John-Michael is a gangly kid, a Central American with a strong strain of Mesquite Indian showing in the cheekbones. Shy in crowds, he feels out of place with the more hostile members of the team. He prefers jeans and T-shirts, usually with pithy American sayings on them. His armor is twice the size and four times the weight of a standard weapons suit, though built along the same design concepts. It is silver with crimson stripes where the standard-issue outfit would have them. Shoulders are flared, with a mounting for the weapons pod.

Code Name: Golem (Agatha Greywood)

STR	INT	REF	WIL	CON	MOV	DEX
25	67	56	70	30	46	62

Sex	Female
Race	White
Nationality	Canada (naturalized American)
Height	5'6"
Weight	120 pounds
Eyes	Blue
Hair	Silver-gray

Psychology: Cruelty (Low), Loyalty (Some), Passion (Low), Piety (High), Sanity (Some), Selfishness (Some)

Tags: Cultured, refined, respectable, rebellious

Advantages: Acting Ability (2), Artistic Ability (2), Internal Compass (1), Language Ability (2), Wealth (2)

Disadvantages: Vision Impairment (2), Night Blindness (2), Hearing Impairment (3), Clumsiness (2 — Special)

Skills: Basic Tool Use (1), Carpentry (2), Basic Melee (1), Fine Arts (4), Lip Reading (2), Musical Instrument (Autoharp — 2), Sign Language (2), Basic Liberal Arts (1), Anthro/Psych/Soc (2), Basic Science (1), Biology/Botany/Zoology (1), Foreign Language (French — 5, English — 5, Latin — 3, Intuit — 2, Bengali — 2, Spanish — 2)

Metability: Greywood has a Poltergeist ability, allowing her to go into a trance and manipulate objects up to several yards away. Those objects may leave the area of initial contact, with her still manipulating them. She can easily manipulate objects that she has carved, but has greater difficulty manipulating less-familiar objects. In game terms, use the WIL to check the ability to "enter" an item, with a −25 modifier for material with which she had not worked personally, and −50 modifier for materials with which she has not worked at all. When "enside" (her word) she can cause objects to move in "typical" fashions: a ball will roll, a picture will come down from the wall, or a gun fire. Objects affected are surrounded by a nimbus of red light.

As a sculptor, Greywood choses to focus her ability

through her statues. She may enter one of her stone, clay, or wood statues at will, and cause it to move as a normal person. The creatures so created have Greywood's stats, plus the following: Stone — Hard Cover (1), CON 100; Clay — CON 80; Wood — CON 50.

It takes Greywood six months to ready a stone statue, a month to create a clay model, and two weeks to create a rough wood version. Each type has the physical properties of its material. (Wood floats, stone is heavy, etc.) She currently has at the FREELancers base in Chicago three stone statues which she can manipulate and a half-dozen clay ones. She takes her code name from the gargoyle-like features of her carvings, not from religion. (She was baptized a Catholic.)

When enside, Golem has all of Agatha's disadvantages. Her body is unprotected when enside, though if a Golem is destroyed, the spirit returns to Agatha's body. The Golems cannot be knocked unconscious nor healed of damage (though Clay ones can be repaired in a normal fashion). She may speak if the subject has a mouth, see if it has eyes, and hear if provided with ears. However, she cannot fly if the statue has wings.

Personal Notes: Agatha Greywood is one of the oldest members of the team. Originally a U.S. citizen (Her parents were Canadian, but had moved to Pennsylvania.), Agatha fled to Canada with her old man, Harley, during the draft dodge days of the 1960s. They broke up, and Harley returned to the states and entered the service. Greywood remained in Canada, gained citizenship, and within 10 years, made a name for herself as a sculptress, specializing in gray native granite. During this time, while using the rock as a medium, her metability surfaced. For the first 10 years, she used this ability to shape her statues. Lee Underhill discovered her ability and blackmailed her into joining the team by threatening to reveal the secret of her success. Originally an unwilling operative with the FREELancers, she has become its den mother and mother confessor. She often leads new teams into the fray, always enside one of her statues. She retains the most outside contacts of the group, as she maintains her artistic career.

Appearance: Greywood is a spritely, bemused woman in her late 50s to early 60s, prematurely gray, with a sharp tongue and a quick wit. An avowed technophobe, she is suspicious of anything more complex than the air-powered drill, and that, backed with her disadvantage of Clumsiness (where technology is involved), ensures high-tech devices aren't given to her. She prefers long, sweeping dresses for her uniforms (gray with red piping, or vice versa), and wears her silver hair in a French braid.

Code Name: Dr. Random (Andrew J. Rhand)

STR	INT	REF	WIL	CON	MOV	DEX
30	51	102	47	35	44	75

Sex	Male
Race	Black
Nationality	United States
Height	6'0"
Weight	250 pounds
Eyes	Brown
Hair	Black

Psychology: Cruelty (Some), Loyalty (Some), Passion (High), Piety (Low), Sanity (Low), Selfishness (High)

Tags: Self-absorbed, moody, egotistic

Advantages: Ambidexterity (2), Eye-hand Coordination (3), Obscure Knowledge (3), Observation (3)

Disadvantages: Deep Sleeper (2), Dependent (3), Overweight (1), Short-winded (3), Uncouth (2)

Skills: Electronics (5), Computer Technician (5), Nuclear Technician (3), Basic Firearms (1), Fencing (2), Ballistics (2), Cryptography (2), Surveillance (3), Driving/Automobile (1), Speed Reading (3), Basic Liberal Arts (1), Anthro/Psych/Soc (3), Business/Economics (2), History/PoliSci (2), Philosophy/Religion (1), Basic Science (1), Astronomy/Math/Physics (4), Biology/Botany/Zoology (4), Chemistry (3), Engineer/Civ/Elec/Mech (4)

Metability: Dr. Random calls his metability the "Rolling Savant Syndrome" (RSS). He is the only known individual with this metability, and, of course, is an expert on it. Dr. Rhand has the stand-

ard intuitive knowledge which is provided a Savant individual, but can apply it to a different area of knowledge at different times. In other words, on Monday he can be the greatest intuitive dimensional physicist, and on Tuesday he can making great strides in the field of genetics. The problem is that all previous intuitive knowledge is lost, as well as ability to repair or understand the discoveries and inventions that he may have come up with while operating as a Savant in that field. A full team of agents operating out of the Ganymede Bureau operates around the clock trying to decypher his notes, a task made more difficult by Random's excrable scrawl and by his habit of inventing new symbols, languages, and phrases for each new project. Once he has moved on, his notes mean absolutely nothing to him.

The net result is that Dr. Rhand is an expert for the day and little more. The changeover always occurs while he's asleep, so that Rhand's insomnia is an advantage, in that once he begins working on an idea, he may go a week without sleeping. Though he can stay awake a long time, after the third day, Rhand's testy personality becomes absolutely unbearable. The warehouse is filled with devices that Rhand invented, but fell asleep before he got around to describing their use, and as such, are lost.

Many of the unique items used by the FREELancers are the result of Rhand and his RSS factor. The power armor designs were modified to their present state by a particularly lucid episode, as were the superconductive generators at the bottom of Lake Michigan. Rhand does not go on missions, but is a vital part of the team.

Personal Notes: Dr. Andrew J. Rhand is a graduate of Oxford, Cambridge, the Sorbonne, Purdue, UCLA, Carnegie-Mellon, and MIT, and was teaching at the University of Chicago when his metability first surfaced and he was recruited to the FREELancers. It has been argued (primarily by Dr. Rhand), that his outstanding achievements in various eclectic fields prior to his metability surfacing were the result of the subconscious drive of that metability, with it only coming to the fore when he began achieving all he could without

using it. Rhand is at his best when he is left alone in his lab, diligently bustling away at his latest Savant project. Interruptions are not tolerated during this time, and if forced to explain his actions, he will cut loose with a line of high-tech jargo-babble that is beyond any of the listeners.

Rhand is an ultimate egotist, his ability making him absolutely sure of himself and his abilities. He does not believe any of his experiments or inventions can go wrong or be used in a manner that he did not originally intend them. He gets along fine with the other members of the team, as long as they realize that, if he is not God, he is the next best thing.

Rhand has a widowed mother living in the Cabrini-Green war zone. She has refused to move despite the deterioration of the situation there, so her son has provided her with a number of safety devices to handle the hordes.

Appearance: Rhand is a tall, broadly built black man and is clean-shaven (though he'll often forget to shave when engaged in Savant research). He doesn't like to wear the regulation jumpsuit, but usually has a white lab coat over it, the pockets of which bulge with various tools, experimental devices, and half-eaten sandwiches. When placed in a public situation, his gray power suit with red pin-stripes is his trademark. In his pierced ear, Rhand wears a skull earring, a memento of an untold adventure.

Code Name: Download (Jefferson Scott)

STR	INT	REF	WIL	CON	MOV	DEX
56	72	29	40	64	63	50

Sex	Male
Race	White
Nationality	United States
Height	5'10"
Weight	190 pounds
Eyes	Hazel
Hair	Brown

Psychology: Cruelty (High), Loyalty (Some), Passion (Some), Piety (None), Sanity (Low), Selfishness (High)

Tags: Twitchy, spooky

Advantages: Ambidexterity (2), Empathy (2), Obscure Knowledge (3)

Disadvantages: Traumatic Flashbacks (4), Addiction (Alcohol — 2), Susceptible to Disease (1)

Skills: Basic Tool Use (1), Basic Firearms (1), Basic Heavy Weapons (1), Basic Melee (1), Driving/Automobile (2), Basic Liberal Arts (2), Basic Science (2)

Metability: Jefferson Scott is the recipient of the download device, a creation of Dr. Random. This device (derisively called "the Octopus"), is a shoulder mounted contraption with steel-sheathed fiber-optic "tentacles" attached to various locations on the right (cognitive) side of the brain. Download has been surgically modified to use the device, with implant modules called "brain taps" set into his brain.

The other half of the device is in Rhand's labs, a headset which a subject wears. The subject's inborn or developed skills are copied via the headset, onto a floppy disk, which can then be loaded into the Octopus, giving Download that skill at the level of the original subject. Download can, by merely booting a new floppy disk, be a master safecracker, a champion at martial arts, or a deadly marksman.

The disadvantages are numerous. One is vulnerability to infection through the brain taps. Second is that only one skill can be downloaded at a time. Third is that any natural disadvantages of the personality that was copied is downloaded with the skill, so that Download will become psychosomatically short-winded, uncouth, obese, or nearsighted. Fourth is that all skills that Download personally gains costs double. Lastly, the Octopus is hard on the floppy disks — a disk is worth three, maybe four uses before the information is useless. A useless disk will knock Download unconscious.

FREELancers has disks on all the major player's skills (though not metabilities, or skills enhanced through Savant; an attempt to give Download one of Random's Savant states resulted in a two-month coma). In addition, there is a 90% chance of having a disk available for any skill at level 3, 75% at level 4, and 30% at level 5. Disadvantages for disks that are not directly copied from other known characters should have disadvantages in proportion to their usefulness, and administrator cruelty is recommended.

Personal Notes: Dr. Random created the download device and its attendant brain taps and upload helmet over the course of a weeklong Savant state. Needing a volunteer (i.e., a "guinea pig"), Lee Underhill brought in a former classmate who was "under treatment for substance abuse" (i.e., "in the local lock-up after repeated drunken brawls") for testing. The test was a success, as far as it goes, though the effects are still being felt.

The download device has seriously eroded Scott's already shaky sanity. He claims that the disks leave the personalities of those downloaded behind in his brain, and while no hard evidence has been found, his personality is beginning to fragment in the form of traumatic flashbacks. Alcohol makes it worse, and Scott is currently on the wagon, though the pressures of his position make it a constant temptation. As a man who can absorb any skills, he is usually drafted for the more dangerous missions. Whether there was or is anything between Lee and Scott is a subject for local scuttlebutt; equal evidence exists that Lee has tried to get rid of Download through dangerous missions, and that these missions are just a form of denial that she has any concern for him.

Download is also known for throwing odd quips into conversation: bits of long-forgotten songs, quotes from plays or movies. Whether this is part of his personality or another effect of the device is unknown.

Appearance: Scott wears a regulation jumpsuit, which ranges from unkempt to neatly pressed, depending on the type of disks he's downloaded recently. On missions on which disguise is not needed, he wears a metal helmet and visor to protect the brain tap leads from damage or infection.

Code Name: Agent Prime (Thadeus "Icewater" Johnson)

STR	INT	REF	WIL	CON	MOV	DEX
61	80	48	84	65	72	65

Sex	Male
Race	White
Nationality	Australian
Height	6'0"
Weight	165 pounds
Eyes	Blue
Hair	Bleach blond

Psychology: Cruelty (Some), Loyalty (High), Passion (High), Piety (Some), Sanity (Some), Selfishness (Some)

Tags: All-business, combat operations

Advantages: Eye-hand Coordination (3), Fearlessness (2), Peripheral Vision (2), Stamina (2), Toughness (4), Presence (3)

Disadvantages: Deep Sleeper (2), Enemy (4), Ego Signature (2), Lechery (2), Phobias (Heights — 2), Uncouth (2), Unmistakable Feature (1) Vindictiveness (2)

Skills: All Combat, Specialty, Driving, and Piloting skills (4).

Metability: "Icewater" Johnson is the ultimate product of Western combat training, in much the same way as Dervish is a product of Mideastern Arcane training. He was raised in a military camp in the Australian outback and served in that country's forces in the Vietnam War before joining the CIA. After a stink in the late '70s, he became self-employed as an international bounty hunter, specializing in various war criminals and deposed tyrants living abroad. His tendency to use a red-fletched crossbow bolt made him an overwhelming number of enemies, such that there is not a major city in the world where someone will not go out of his or her way to try to have him bumped off.

Johnson is the leader of the combat operatives (combat ops), a group of fanatical followers trained within the FREELancers. These combat soldiers are brought in for firepower where large military forces are needed, and are referred to by the FREELancer agents as "cavalry" and "red-shirts"

— their outfits are red tunics of heat-treated Kevlar with gray stripes. Agent Prime also controls the MAPS armor units, and has available most of the futuristic hardware at the group's disposal.

Johnson carries a variety of guns, but his weapon of preference is a CO_2-reload multi-shot crossbow, with the red-fletched arrows. He will use this for the coup de grace.

Personal Notes: As noted, Johnson grew up in a harsh environment, which turned him into a well-bred fighting machine. While not Savant per se, his talents give Download intense headaches when used. As Agent Prime, he is the most deadly and ruthless fighting man on the planet, leading a finely tuned machine into combat.

Johnson's problem is that he treats *everything* like a combat. He is also hindered by his tunnel vision. Cross him, or incur his ire, and you are branded an enemy, to be hunted down and punished, if not slain outright as an example to others. This applies to members of his own team as well as other FREELancers. The unexplained disappearance of Fireflash may or may not be the result of Agent Prime's actions.

Agent Prime is *very* protective of his combat ops, and will not see them thrown into suicide missions. Agents have learned to underestimate the dangers involved in any mission requiring combat ops, since Johnson has a tendency to always bring twice the firepower needed to complete the task.

Appearance: Johnson is handsome, with a single scar on the right side of his chin in the shape of a diamond. His uniform is military-crisp, with a double bandoleer for holding weapons. His crossbow is worn on his back. (It's always a sign of trouble ahead, as he has been officially requested not to use the damn thing.)

Code Name: Tandem (Marsha Martini — Tandem 1 and Jimmy Conrad — Tandem 2

	STR	INT	REF	WIL	CON	MOV	DEX
Tandem 1	30	47	64	50	53	38	55
Tandem 2	52	40	28	19	53	45	35

Sex	Tandem 1 — Female	Tandem 2 — Male

Race White
Nationality United States
Height Tandem 1 — 5'1" Tandem 2 — 5'5"
Weight Tandem 1 — 120 pounds Tandem 2 — 150 pounds
Eyes Tandem 1 — Green Tandem 2 — Brown
Hair Tandem 1 — Blonde Tandem 2 — Brown

Psychology (Tandem 1): Cruelty (Some), Loyalty (High), Passion (High), Piety (High), Sanity (High), Selfishness (Some)
Psychology (Tandem 2): Cruelty (Low), Loyalty (High), Passion (High), Piety (Some), Sanity (Some), Selfishness (Some)

Tags (Tandem 1): Shameless flirt, extroverted
Tags (Tandem 2): Bookish, introverted

Advantages (Tandem 1): Athletic Ability (2), Attractiveness (2), Sensuality (2)
Advantages (Tandem 2): Mechanical Aptitude (3), Artistic Ability (2), Sixth Sense (1)

Disadvantages (Tandem 1): Dependents (2), Enemy (2), Moral Qualms (2)
Disadvantages (Tandem 2): Dependents (2), Enemy (2), Moral Qualms (2)

Skills (Tandem 1): Basic Melee (1), Oriental Martial Arts (2), Pickpocket (2), Driving/Motorcycle (3)
Skills (Tandem 2): Basic Firearms (1), Driving/Auto (3), Photography (2), Basic Science (1)

Metability: Tandem has the metability of Synthesis — or the literal exchanging of attribute scores to superhuman levels. Either member of the team can transfer basic attribute scores (STR to DEX) to the other, reducing one score by the same amount that the other gains. No basic ability may be reduced below 10 in this fashion. MOV and DEX are not modified by changes in STR, REF, and INT, though the number of boxes for hits is affected by CON.

The Synthesis may be accomplished in one round per ability affected, and touch must be flesh-to-flesh and voluntary on both sides. The exchange is permanent until returned, though maintaining a level higher or lower than normal creates problems after the first few hours.

Maintaining a superhuman level of any ability will cause fever, dizziness, and possible unconsciousness and loss of WIL as the body burns itself out to maintain the high level. A suppressed level will result in sluggishness, and loss of stamina and CON (temporarily) as long as the attribute is drained.

Tandem also has a joint power of Telepathic Force, which operates off the characters' WIL. The force inflicts 1 point bruise damage for every 10 points of WIL expended. WIL may be exchanged between the two, or the two, holding hands, can project a full strength WIL without loss to each other.

Skills, Disadvantages, and advantages may not be exchanged between the two.

Personal Notes: Marsha Joan Martini and James Lennon Conrad were both born on December 8, 1980, in Hinsdale, Ill., to separate families. It is believed that some initial modification, such as an exposed or defective batch of inoculation viruses distributed in that area at that time set them up for their full metability. The two grew up in the Chicago area, and became friends despite their different outlooks. Martini had a reputation for getting into trouble, and Conrad for getting out of it. Some transmitting of ability scores may have occurred previous to their being radiated, though not to superhuman levels.

Martini and Conrad ran afoul of the Nuygen family of South Chicago in a scam Martini set up. Conrad, called by Martini's mother, went after her. The pair fled from the scene after shooting the head of the Nuygen family and became directly involved in a FREELancers operation against the Nuygens. The operation was being run by Refit, Golem and Dervish, who was using one of Random's devices. The device malfunctioned and the resulting phased wave explosion leveled three warehouses in the center of the South Chicago suburbs. Martini and Conrad survived the explosion (possibly Nuygen as well), and at that time, had their metability run up to its present level.

Martini and Conrad were quickly recruited by FREELancers as junior operatives in order to determine the extent of their abilities and to avoid publicity regarding the failed operation. Like

Scratchbuilt, they are the younger agents in the operation, and as yet untried.

Martini and Conrad were friends before the incidents and though neither is interested romantically in the other, they have become a close team, and each looks out the for the other. Supervisors have been warned that in dangerous situations, romantic links or not, psych scans indicate that they will look after each other first, then the other members of the team.

Despite Conrad's knowledge and Martini's supposed street smarts, the two are very much babes in the woods regarding the "real world," and caution should be shown as to what is told to them.

Appearance (Tandem 1): Perky is a disgusting word that applies perfectly to Martini's actions, attitudes, and approach. To her, everything is a great adventure. She wears the standard jumpsuit with a red ribbon in her hair.

Appearance (Tandem 2): Conrad is bookish and hangdog, usually leaning up on available walls, trying desperately to look old and mature. He may or may not be growing a faint mustache. He wears a standard jumpsuit.

Code Name: Contact (Summer Davison)

| STR	INT	REF	WIL	CON	MOV	DEX
66	60	64	51	48	55	57

Sex	Female
Race	White
Nationality	United States
Height	5'8"
Weight	146 pounds
Eyes	Jade green
Hair	White

Psychology: Cruelty (Low), Loyalty (High), Passion (Some), Piety (Some), Sanity (High), Selfishness (Some)

Tags: Well-dressed, open, understanding nature

Advantages: Photographic Memory (6), Obscure Knowledge (3), Presence (3)

Disadvantages: Allergies (1), Deep Sleeper (2), Moral Qualms (2), Dependents (2), Lost Dependents (3), Night Blindness (2)
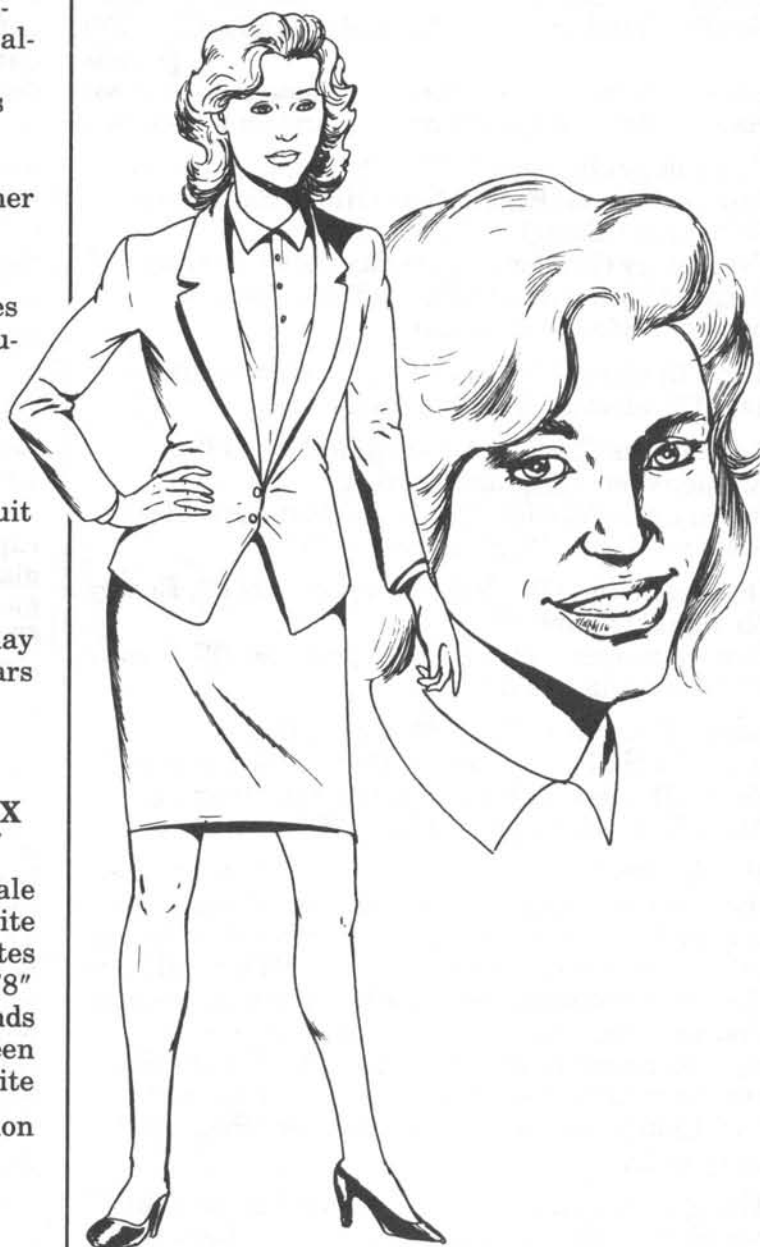
Skills: Basic Firearms (1), Basic Melee (1), Fencing (3), Crossbow (3), Oriental Martial Arts (4), Concealment (2), Disguise (1), Forgery (2), Interrogation (2), Shadowing (2), Stealth (3), Surveillance (3), Driving/Automobile (2) Driving/Motorcycle (1), Lip Reading (2), Musical Instrument (Viola — 3), Sign Language (2), Skiing (1), Sleight of Hand (2), Social Chameleon (3), Speed Reading (3), and Gleaning (5)

Metability: Contact has no identifiable metability. She does have a habit of being in the right spot at the right time where *other* metabilities are being demonstrated, which leads many (chief among them Dr. Random), to believe that the willowy blonde has a "tracking" form of Savant ability. However, all the standard tests and determinations of metabilities have come up empty, and Contact appears to be nothing more than a "normal" human being.

Contact's "normality" is her greatest advantage to the FREELancers team. She is both the primary liason and public relations director for the operation, and is the best agent for recruiting new metable agents into the fold. Both her normal appearance and positive attitude are valued in the attempts to bring new people with special talents into the organization, since most agents' idea of recruitment is to kidnap the target in the middle of the night and bundle him or her off in the trunk of a car.

Contact also acts as a personal advisor and assistant to Lee Won Underhill. While not officially recognized as such in the corporate organizational chart, everyone from Agent Prime on down recognizes that Contact often presents a sugar-coated version of Underhill's cast-iron directives.

Personal Notes: Summer Davison is the only daughter of Professor Abraham Davison, better known as Crossbow, a masked vigilante of the 1950s. Professor Davison was recruited into an early version of the FREELancers program under Orion control. Crossbow was a legendary agent of his time, and a role model for many in Orion who would follow him. Crossbow disappeared in 1965 while on a mission to the Middle East, and is presumed dead.

Summer was 5 years old at the time of her father's disappearance, and kept her father's name when her mother remarried six years later. She was unaware of her father's other identity (she thought he was a professor at the University of California in medieval studies) until she was recruited into FREELancers in 1987.

Summer "happened" to be on the scene of several early and accidental exhibitions of superhuman metabilities. She was spotted by several agents in Underhill's organization, and it was thought she might be a recruiter for an opposing group. However, a trace on her background initiated by Lee Won Underhill and Matrix revealed her true identity. Lee Won personally recruited Summer into the organization and informed her of her father's past.

As the most "normal" of the FREELancers, Summer/Contact has had her hands full both with presenting an accurate and pleasant picture of the group, and bringing in individuals who have shown promise. In her role as PR officer, she is also viewed as Captain Ares' "keeper" when the hero is out making public appearances and, much to her own disgust, the *Chicago Sun-Times* has linked the two romantically.

Summer Davison *does* have a man in her life, a civil engineer named Tony Pickens, who is currently working on Afghani refinery projects.

In addition to the unwitting ability of being present when metabilites are in use, Contact is also a "Gleaner," an individual who can scan large amounts of information, searching for specific facts or items, and later return to those files to locate that data again. In a highly informational age, Contact's abilities to locate and remember a wide variety of data makes her invaluable.

Summer Davison's greatest flaw is that she views the more bizarre members of the FREELancer team as handicapped or mentally unstable individuals, and treats them with pity. This attitude has infuriated some of the more thin-skinned members of the organization, who consider her an "outsider" because she does not bear the curse of metable powers.

This feeling of pity for the others also calls into question her own belief in recruiting for the FREELancers team. While she believes that such individuals should be gathered together and helped, she is troubled by the effects of putting these individuals into responsible positions. Lee Won and Summer have had a number of intense discussions on the subject, but the leader of the FREELancers remains unmoved.

Appearance: When performing services for the FREELancers organization, Summer wears a stylish business dress in the company colors of "blood and concrete." On her own time, she prefers more colorful and stylish dress. She does have a slight astigmatism, and wears contacts to correct the problem.

Code Name: Centaur (Matthew Fine)

STR	INT	REF	WIL	CON	MOV	DEX
50	45	40	61	64	48	43

Sex	Male
Race	Mixed (7/8 White, 1/8 Cherokee)
Nationality	United States
Height	5'10" (originally) 9'7" in harness
Weight	120 pounds 2000 pounds in harness
Eyes	Blue
Hair	Prematurely gray

Psychology: Cruelty (Low), Loyalty (High), Passion (High), Piety (Total), Sanity (Some), Selfishness (High)
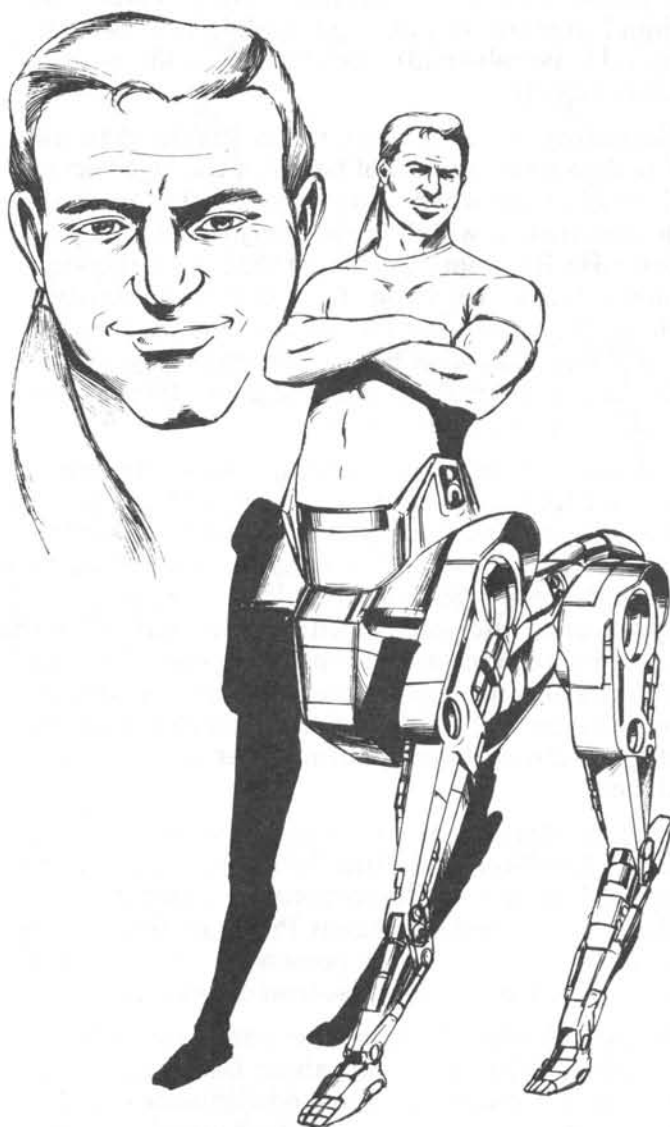
Tags: Handicapped, determined, born-again

Advantages: Mechanical Aptitude (3), Observation (3), Toughness (2)

Disadvantages: Dependent (2), Unattractive Appearance (2), Color Blind (1), Unmistakable Feature (1), Moral Qualms (2)

Skills: Basic Tool Use (1), Basic Mechanic (1), Aircraft Mechanics (3), Basic Firearms (1), Pistol (4), Rifle (2), Basic Heavy Weapons (1), Knife (2), Knife Throwing (1), Driving/Modified Van (3), Swimming (2) (without harness), Engineer/Elec (3), Engineer/Mech (2), Philosophy/Religion (2)

Metability: Matthew Fine is the owner and operator of a specialized walking harness called Cen-

taur, which he himself designed and had constructed by the FREELancers labs. (A friend of his grandmother's knows Dr. Random's mother.) The suit allows Fine more mobility than a wheelchair, and it is plugged directly into his own nervous system through a jack at the base of the spine.

The Centaur harness looks like a headless horse. Current technology has not provided "replacement legs" beyond bulky prototypes. By rejecting the human (biped) form and adapting a quadrapodal form as a base, Fine is able to house the required engines, and computer interfaces to allow more adroit four-footed movement. Fine's body fits into the area where the horse's head would be, creating the illusion of the classical centaur.

The harness also has a number of weapon systems, including hiding spaces for conventional small arms, caltrops, mines, an oil-spreading device in the tail, and a low-intensity laser hidden above the right front leg. It allows the user (Fine) both advantages of height and mobility not permitted by a wheelchair. Fine hopes that if the harness proves a success, it may be mass marketed as a replacement for conventional handicap aids.

The harness does have some inherent disadvantages, the greatest of which is the weight. Old wooden structures and flooring will not support the one-ton weight of the man and machine, and Fine must take care in order to protect it from incidental damage. As a machine, it is treated like a car or other vehicle.

The harness is also quite bulky and hard to hide in a crowd. Fine cannot use normal vehicles or seats when wearing the harness. In addition, the harness cannot be carried in a small space, such as a normal car or small plane.

Personal Notes: Matthew Fine was a former car mechanic from Evansville, Ind., who volunteered to fight as a combat engineer with the U.S. Nicaraguan peace-keeping force of the early '90s. A land mine cost Fine both his legs below the knee, and he was returned to the U.S. and spent the next several years in a variety of Veterans hospitals. During this time, Fine was confined to a wheelchair, and found the loss of mobility both galling and unsatisfactory.

It was during this time that Fine conceived of the Centaur harness, and approached a number of individuals and corporations with the idea, only to be rejected. Through family contacts, he finally made the acquaintance of Dr. Random, who agreed to divert the resources to build the outfit in exchange for Fine's service with the organization for tests and upgrading of the harness.

The present harness is the second incarnation of the Centaur design, refining many points that were found wanting in the initial prototype (currently resting at the bottom of Lake Michigan after an unsuccessful adventure). Fine has overseen its construction, and already has a fat notebook of suggestions for the next version, including a fully armored incarnation, using the same technology as the weapons suits currently in use.

During his long recovery, Fine developed an interest in comparative religion and philosophy, ranging from St. Thomas Aquinas to the Eastern mystics of the previous decades to the present-day Millenniest movement. Fine is convinced that many of the other team member's attitude problems could be corrected by a close examination of faith and doctrine, as opposed to violent action. As a result, he is loath to use violence unless there is no other choice in the situation. Some of the more ruthless members of the team (Refit and Dervish) are wary of the former combat engineer for that reason, and feel that in a crunch, he will fold up on them.

Appearance: Outside of the harness, Matthew Fine is a slender man with powerful arms and legs that end at the knees. He prefers to be in his "Centaur suit" when dealing with others, since this allows him to tower over those to whom he is talking. The harness is silver with red racing stripes, and in the field, Fine wears a red tunic with gray piping to complete his outfit. Fine has few qualms about talking to large groups of people or showing off (He is, after all, hoping to eventually mass produce and market the suit.), and will often accompany Captain Ares on PR tours for the organization. This has resulted in a few snafus as talk sometimes turns to religion, allowing Fine to put forward ideas not shared by the FREELancers organization at large.

Bad Guys and Otherwise

NPCs, Foes, and Supporting Cast

The following characters may prove useful as enemies and supporting cast for the FREELancers future. Several are mentioned in the background descriptions for the major characters, while others may prove useful as characters for future adventures.

Code Name: Fireflash (Robert Daniel "Danny-Boy" Muldoon)
Status: MIA

STR	INT	REF	WIL	CON	MOV	DEX
47	38	51	24	43	38	45

Sex	Male
Race	White
Nationality	U.S. (Naturalized New Zealander)
Height	5'11"
Weight	230 pounds
Eyes	Brown
Hair	Brown

Psychology: Cruelty (High), Loyalty (Some), Passion (Some), Piety (Low), Sanity (Some), Selfishness (High)

Tags: Overweight, preening

Advantages: Eye-hand Coordination (3), Toughness (2)

Disadvantages: Deep Sleeper (2), Overweight (1), Night Blindness (2)

Skills: Basic Tool Use (1), Carpentry (3), Basic Firearms (1), Boomerang (3), Basic Melee (1), Knife (2), Survival (3), Driving/Auto (2), Piloting/1-engine (3), Scuba Diving (2), Swimming (2), Throwing (1)

Metability: Muldoon was one of the first documented pyrokinetics discovered by the FREELancer organization and one of the first metable agents recruited by Lee Won Underhill. Muldoon was also the most power pyrokinetic existing outside of Stephen King films.

Muldoon could cause ambient flames to increase in size by tenfold, until fuel for the flame was consumed. He could also cause flames to bend in particular directions, or to follow certain paths through combustible materials. Through concentration, he could also cause small items to burst into flame spontaneously. Any of these actions would require a WIL Check for items within 20' of Muldoon, ½ that for 40', and ¼ WIL for 100'.

Muldoon's ability only functioned on items that he could see, and excluded those on video screens, even if the item being shown was within his range. In such cases, he would set the monitor on fire instead. Much of what is currently known about pyrokinetics is taken from the FREE investigations into Muldoon/Fireflash.

Muldoon would carry a regulation pistol on missions, but also equipped himself with a belt filled with 50 small cartridges. Muldoon could throw these cartridges in combat, causing them to catch fire in midair and hit the target with the explosive force of a stick of dynamite.

Personal Notes: Muldoon's family has long been connected with fire. The ancestral home in Ireland was burned down three times in recorded history through unknown causes, before the family emigrated in the 1800s to New Zealand. In addition, no fewer than 12 members of the family have been killed by spontaneous combustion. This is known primarily through the efforts of Muldoon's brother, the family genealogist.

If the above happenstances are true, then Muldoon was the first direct evidence that metabilities have a genetic vector, and can be passed down from parent to child. Examination of Muldoon's DNA reveals no genetic defect, however.

Muldoon was a bachelor farmer in New Zealand, who joined the team soon after a covert operation by the FREELancers against Green Brigade terrorists. Muldoon demonstrated his flame-bending powers at this time, and was brought on board by Contact.

Muldoon was the most out-of-shape member of the FREELancers team at the time of his membership, a fact that brought him into continual con-

flict with Agent Prime, "Icewater" Johnson. Johnson made Muldoon the butt of several cruel jokes, all centering on his weight and lack of exercise. Muldoon, for his part, argued that physical fitness was not as important as mental ability, and stubbornly refused to lose weight. The feud escalated until a mysterious fire in Johnson's quarters destroyed most of his possessions and his gun collection. While nothing was proven, Muldoon was given a warning about his abilities, and Johnson a similar one about storing live ammo in the residential wing.

Soon afterward, Fireflash, Agent Prime, Centaur, and Golem were assigned a mission involving terrorist sabotage of Chicago's water intakes on Lake Michigan. The mission was a disaster, and an explosive went off prematurely, damaging (though not destroying) the intakes. Centaur lost his Mark I harness at this time, and was rescued by Agent Prime and a combat ops helicopter. Both Fireflash and Golem were missing, presumed dead.

Two days later, Golem walked out of late Michigan, badly eroded. Greywood was immediately hospitalized, and at that time, the fate of Fireflash was learned. During the explosion, Muldoon's cartridge belt caught fire, bathing the New Zealander in flames. Muldoon forgot his training and panicked, and was unable to put out the fire. He was not wearing his protective hood and gloves at the time, and as such, took serious damage. The last Golem saw of him, he was heading for the lake. Greywood believes that he did not make it, as an immediate explosion toppled Golem into the water and probably claimed Muldoon's life.

An investigation into the death ruled it "death by misadventure," but Underhill has left his file open as MIA, because no body was found. A further investigation cleared Agent Prime of any involvement in the agent's demise, though the local scuttlebutt was that Johnson shed no tears over Muldoon's death.

Underhill has flagged in her computer files the other members of the Muldoon family, and seeks to recruit them should any start exhibiting similar pyrokinetic abilities. She is probably not the only one.

Appearance: Muldoon was a fat man whose weight ebbed and flowed through three sets of uniforms. His standard outfit was regulation FREELancer, kept neatly pressed and let out at the waist. In combat, Muldoon would use an asbestos version of his uniform, silver with red piping, with protective gloves and a full hood and mask to protect himself from his own flames. While Muldoon had control over fire to a great degree, he was as vulnerable to burns as any normal human, though he could redirect the flames away from himself with concentration.

Code Name: Deadline (Crystal Young)
Status: Rogue agent: Arrest or neutralize

STR	INT	REF	WIL	CON	MOV	DEX
34	64	44	70	50	49	54

Sex	Female
Race	Black
Nationality	United States
Height	5'10"
Weight	140 pound
Eyes	Brown
Hair	Black

Psychology: Cruelty (High), Loyalty (Low), Passion (High), Piety (Some), Sanity (Total)*, Selfishness (High)
* Status at the time of testing, prior to implant of deadline device. Current status indicates some possible brain damage.

Tags: Self-made woman, questionable sanity

Advantages: Acting Ability (2), Attractive Appearance (3), Fearlessness (2), Sensuality (2), Wealth (4)

Disadvantages: Addiction (4), Enemy (4 — FREELancers), Vision Impairment (2), Hearing Impairment (3)

Skills (known to be in the deadline device library): All Mechanical, Combat, Specialty, Driving, Piloting, and Science skills, Climbing, First Aid, Hypnosis, Parachuting, Photography, Radio, Sign Language, Speed Reading, Throwing, Ventriloquism, Law, Medicine, most Foreign Languages

Skills: (personal) — Basic Firearms (1), Basic Melee (1), Interrogation (2), Driving/Automobile

(3), Driving/Boat (2), Piloting/1-engine (3), Piloting/Multi-engine (2), Social Chameleon (3), Basic Liberal Arts (1), Business/Economics (2)

Metability: Crystal Young is the recipient of the the deadline device, a modified and streamlined version of the download device implanted in Jefferson Scott. The deadline device is a more compact, less versatile version of the download device, being readied for mass marketing and Department of Defense use by Dr. Random's labs.

While the download device was created by Random while in Savant mode, using principles both unknown and unrepeatable, certain breakthroughs were understandable enough to merit the creation of a second-generation device. The deadliner, as Crystal called it, ended up a device about the size and shape of a portable telephone. The device covered one eye and one ear, and was powered by a small battery pack located at the base of the neck.

Unlike the download device, the deadliner relied on hand-input data, homogenized to avoid the problems plaguing download. No "real" person's skills were fed into the floppies used in the device. Instead, a computer-generated model of that skill was created, which then is fed into the brain through the eye and ear. (There is no violation of the integrity of the individual; Contact recommended that the deadliner, in order to be appealing to the mass market, should not look any more threatening than a phone.) The result of this is that the skills used are limited in both effect (none higher than level 2), and duration — about 1 hour per disk. (In-built safety features prevent longer use and erase the disk.) More disks with similar skills can be generated. Skills used by the deadliner do not require prerequisite skills, though there is a chance that such use will result in automatic failure (10%). Multiple skills can be up and running at any one time.

Deadline has gone rogue for unknown reasons, taking a library of skills with her. The skill-disks are easily duped, so she has a large collection of skills available to her. The device obviously still has many fatal bugs in it, and while three more such devices are in existence in the vaults of FREELancers headquarters, their use can only be permitted by Underhill.

Personal Notes: Crystal Young was a millionaire by the age of 21, through a variety of deals on the Chicago Board of Trade that established her as a cutthroat businesswoman and canny manipulator of people and prices. Young used that power in supporting the campaign of Mayor Hubbard, and it was through her that Young first learned the details of the FREELancers operation.

Young was intensely interested in the FREELancers, because the discoveries they made now would probably be the products of the future, and with her political connections, she saw her corporation, YoungLife, Inc, benefitting from the inventions. For this reason, she helped the group with both money and political pull, and, in particular, played up to the ego of Dr. Random.

Young was both intrigued and repelled by the skill-transfer mechanisms of the download device, worn by Jefferson Scott. When it became known that Random was working on a safer, lower-key version of the device, Young decided that she would have it. She offered to sponsor Rhand's activities in exchange for the right to choose the first subject for testing. She chose herself, over the objections of Hubbard, Underhill, and Rhand himself.

Young found the device worked perfectly initially, allowing her advanced skills she did not possess originally. She immediately insisted on acting as a full agent to test the apparatus, and, in short order, offended most of the active agents in the field, in particular Download, whom she claimed she would replace.

Young quickly became addicted to the abilities of the deadline device, an addiction as deep and deadly as any drug habit. When asked, she refused to return the device, and when tests revealed a weakening in the device's optical links, she refused both further testing and fled with the device. A lawsuit by Rhand and the FREELancers to recover the device has bogged down in court, with the opening arguments set to begin in autumn 2002.

The device has had a marked effect on Crystal Young's personality, making her more cruel than before, and installing in her a strong sense of paranoia. She is deeply afraid that the FREELancers will stop at nothing to regain their toy, and to that end, she has acted on several occasions to destroy the group politically, financially, and personally. Her new range of abilities has led her into more and more illegal avenues, bringing her further in conflict with the FREELancers team. Still, her money, and the large corporate forces that she can muster, protect her from a direct attack. A standing order for teams is that if Young is spotted, she is to be taken and the device reclaimed.

Deadline, in the meantime, has assigned her own scientists to duplicate the device (difficult since she will not let it be taken from her or disassembled), and to produce new and more powerful skill disks, getting into skill levels 3 and 4. Underhill refers to her as "Our pet Frankenstein" — the monster that FREELancers created but could not, in the end, control.

Appearance: Crystal Young is a beautiful woman, her light brown skin the color of cafe au lait. She is as elegant in a business suit as in an evening gown, and wears the latest fashions at charity functions that her corporation organizes. She sees Chicago society as her colony, and herself as its queen bee. She is never without the deadliner, however, and dresses to accent its soft blue housing that stretches from her left eye back to her left ear.

Mayor Dorothy Hubbard

STR	INT	REF	WIL	CON	MOV	DEX
35	42	50	51	45	39	46

Sex	Female
Race	Black
Nationality	United States
Height	5'9"
Weight	176 pounds
Eyes	Brown
Hair	Cinnamon brown

Tags: Hard-driving politico

Personal Notes: Dorothy Hubbard is a two-term mayor of the city of Chicago, first elected in 1994. Popular among a broad spectrum of voters, she is the leader of the regionalism movement, a trend in which areas of the United States have formed more powerful political and economic blocs. She is one of the founding mayors of the Great Lakes Authority, a pan-political organization which includes most of the "Rust Belt" cities from Milwaukee to Pittsburgh, including Cleveland, Detroit, Buffalo, Toledo, and Indianapolis in the U.S., and Windsor and Toronto in Canada. In 1996, she offered the FREELancers tax incentives and donated an abandoned hotel fronting the rising Lake Michigan to them so the organization would move its headquarters to Chicago. In doing so, she provided her city and the GLA with its own espionage and anti-terrorist organization, increasing the region's independence in national politics.

Mayor Hubbard is a cagey veteran of the council wars and is adept at handling the various factions in both the city and the GLA. She portrays a populist, open administrator in public, but is hard as nails behind the scenes. She expects great things from the FREELancers organization, and offers city services to help. An entrenched bureaucracy tends to be irritated by the FREELancers' good political stock, but is wise enough politically to give them what they want.

GENEcology (Group)

GENEcology (pronounced Jean-Ee-cology) is a radical ecological terrorist organization based in the western United States, with cells across the world. Their aim is the ultimate downfall of oppressive and world-damaging technology. They are not above using that technology to bring about its own downfall, so that the GENEcology groups tend to be armed with the latest modern weaponry.

GENEcology members tend to be young, fanatical, and intelligent, another problem, as they use home labs to create a wide variety of destructive devices. The most recent is a self-powered impact grenade that tracks on the human voice, ignoring all other sensory input.

Typical GENEcologist

STR	INT	REF	WIL	CON	MOV	DEX
30	40	55	50	40	35	45

GENEcologists tend to be armed with rubber bullets, beanbag guns, and other less lethal devices. They also have at their disposal a number of deadly toxins and diseases stolen from labs over the years.

The Web (Group)

The Web in the late 1990s is a diverse organization with a number of self-proclaimed leaders. Action by Orion agents such as Sebastian Cord has resulted in a dismantling of much of the core Web operations, leaving scattered regional operations. Any one of these regional operations, however, is more than a match for most other espionage organizations.

In the United States, two rival directorships, known as WEBONE and WEBTWO, are competing for control of the remaining resources of the group. WEBONE consists primarily of older agents and managers, and is referred to as the "Old Guard." Their actions tend to be along traditional Web lines — trading in secrets, drugs, and weapons, and the like.

WEBTWO broke off from its parent organization in 1997, and is reputed to have a young, trendy directorship pioneering new methods of operations. These include research into the "super-agents," the field pioneered by FREELancers. WEBTWO deals in the traditional areas as well, but is more involved with designer drugs, computer crimes, and exotic weaponry.

The most deadly creation of WEBTWO is the "zombie box," a device grafted to the spinal column of active agents. When activated by signal, the zombie box fries out the higher brain functions, reducing the individual's ability to pass on information, and converts the individual into a kill-crazy warrior (much like the Berserker metability). The zombied agent will continue to attack until slain. The zombie box may be removed through minor surgery.

Orion Foundation (Group)

The Orion Foundation in the late 1990s has also suffered from the destruction of the core of Web activities. Like a great hero without a great villain, the Orion group has passed into a decline, concentrating on more pedestrian espionage activities.

This may be changing. Five of the 12 Section Directors are under 40 and believe that the organization must change to meet modern problems or become a dinosaur, identified with '80s espionage as the CIA was with the '60s and the FBI with the '30s and '40s. In 1999, Section Control moves from the relatively conservative Nairobi office to the more progressive Mexico City office. The Section Director of Mexico City, Orion's newest, is recommending sweeping reforms, including the re-absorption of marginal organizations cut years earlier, including the FREELancers.

Millenniests (Group)

The close of a century often brings about a re-evaluation of a society. There are those who believe that the end of century construes the end of the world, and during the '70s and '80s, a number of theories abounded about 1999 being the last year of life on earth.

The Millenniests are a group that has forged that belief into radical action. Formally called the Millennium Trust Organization, they are incorporated as a non-profit philosophical society unaffiliated with any college, university, or faith. Their argument is that unless the world starts being run by Millennial thought, the end of the world is coming within two years. They are willing to encourage that decay if it means the advancement of their cause.

Code Name: Professor Rho (Rodney A. Temmerman)

STR	INT	REF	WIL	CON	MOV	DEX
32	44	74	76	49	37	58

Sex	Male
Race	White
Nationality	United States

Height	5'0"
Weight	120 pounds
Eyes	Blue
Hair	White (prominent bald spot)

Psychology: Cruelty (High), Loyalty (None), Passion (High), Piety (Some), Sanity (Low), Selfishness (None)

Tags: Mad scientist

Personal Notes: Professor R.A. Timmerman was a borderline parapsychologist whose greatest claim to fame was, in the 1970s and '80s, to be one of those leading scientists quoted in supermarket tabloids (as in "LEADING SCIENTIST PROVE: BIGFOOT IS IMMORTAL SPACE-GOD"). His superiors had quite enough of this, and gave Timmerman his walking papers.

Timmerman formed his own organization, RHO, and set himself up as its leader. In the years since then, Professor Rho has been more and more involved in high technology and meta-human crimes. He has sought to recruit his own teams of metable agents for use with criminal teams. He has more than once offered superhuman enhancers which have proved to be failures, but have interesting mechanics. Rho is believed to be a Savant or to have access to Savant metables.

Most important espionage agents write off Professor Rho as a madman, a throwback to the mad scientists of the old movies. Underhill and the FREELancers recognize him as a threat who only needs to succeed once to become dangerous.

Crime Families (Group)

Organized crime continues to be a dominant force in urban life in the 1990s, with established groups moving into mainstream activities, while new groups, drawing from racial and nationalistic bases among the urban poor, are seeking to grab new parts of the operation.

Chicago and the GLA remain a hot spot of gangland activity, made worse as the aging leaders of the old order come into conflict with the rising hotheads: gangsters who learned their fighting in far-off countries and their politics in street gangs. As of 1998, there is no *capo* controlling the entire operation, only a wide band of individuals ruling by power, money, or charisma. They include:

Family Nuygen: One of the more powerful crime families of the early '90s, it lost its charismatic family head in a recent explosion (see Tandem) and is currently in disarray as two brothers battle for control of the organization. The group concentrates on smuggling and gambling.

Family Blood: A "pseudo-family" of seven former youth gangs, this contentious group seeks to corner both drugs and munitions trading in the GLA. They are receiving their greatest resistance from other youth gangs in other cities. The family is also called the "Central American Pipeline," due to the flow of weapons and drugs from the south.

Family Hastings: One of the Old Guard families, it robs people with pens as opposed to pistols. It has tried to situate itself as moderator between warring clans in order to emerge as the leader.

Family Andoc: Primarily Asian-based, it has broken up into a number of national subgroups that would fight each other were it not for Sun Andoc, the leader of the family. Family Andoc specializes in industrial sabotage and epionage, and has connections with the Japanese mega-corporations.

Family Shea: Another of the Old Guard families, Shea has invested heavily in WEBTWO's designer drugs, seeking to beat their competition out of the markets.

Family Silver: A enigmatic group of Canadians who seem to be a holding company operated by a larger crime group, this organization regularly gets hold of devices unavailable to the other families. Member-poor but technology-rich, they seek to expand their hold over the GLA from their Toronto base.

The FREELancers are held on retainer by the City of Chicago and the GLA, and as such, are often called on to deal with situations which require special abilities, powers, or individuals who can step outside the lines of standard law-enforcement agencies.

United Weapons, Inc. (Group)

UWI is a holding company, which in the 1990s bought up a large number of independent firearms, military, and research groups, forming what has been termed the "Death Corporation." While the organization portrays itself as a legitimate organization incorporated in the Grand Caymans, it is known on the street as being a widespread purveyor of weapons and experimental technology, not all of it its own.

UWI's representative in the GLA area is Leonard Kern, a rotund, pleasant man who makes sure that his prints are never on any of the weapons that are captured. Kern's bosses, and for whom they ultimately work, is a mystery. It has been hazarded that UWI is a front for a crime family, a foreign power, or a fragment of Web. The truth is as yet unrevealed.

Code Name: Cliche (Cliche, born from Ozzie Harriet)

STR	INT	REF	WIL	CON	MOV	DEX
102	58	39	60	67	84	50

Sex	Male
Race	Mixed (⅞ white, ⅛ American Indian)
Nationality	United States
Height	6'2"
Weight	250 pounds
Eyes	Green
Hair	Brown

Psychology: Cruelty (None), Loyalty (None), Passion (High), Piety (Some), Sanity (Low), Selfishness (Some)

Tags: Truly wants to be a super villain

Advantages: Athletic Ability (2), Fearlessness (2), Toughness (2)

Disadvantages: Ego Signature (2), Greed (3), Enemy (1 — Captain Ares)

Skills: Basic Tool Use (1), Basic Firearms (1), Basic Melee (1), Boxing (3), Oriental Martial Arts (2), Wrestling (2), Disguise (2), Stealth (2), Acrobatics (3), Climbing (2), Stage Magic (2), Basic Liberal Arts (1), Basic Science (1), History/Polysci (2), Law (2).

Metability: Cliche has manifested a number of metabilities, though never more than one at a time. It is thought that Cliche has a random metability power much like Dr. Random has his "Rolling Savant Syndrome." Indeed, Cliche has often shown Savant-like behavior in building incredibly complex death machines, only to later be unable to figure out how he did it.

In game terms, Cliche will have at any time one of the listed metabilities (or a new one), as needed for play. These last about a week, and tend not to repeat. Cliche seems to have an excellent handle on these abilities, though the entire process seems to have resulted in some personality changes and mental damage.

Personal Notes: Records show that Cliche was originally named Ozzie Harriet, and was an associate at the prestigious law firm of Batton, Downs and Hatches in Hanover, Conn. Soon after the first public appearance of Captain Ares, Harriet quit the firm, changed his name, and emerged as the colorful Cliche, archenemy of Captain Ares.

The nature of the change is unknown, so that every time Cliche appears, he has a new self-proclaimed "origin" of his powers. Everything he had said previously was mere deception. Cliche capers, giggles, and schemes like someone who fell out of a '60s comic book. It is believed that his present abilities surfaced at that time, with the strain forcing Cliche to look for a suitable model to understand the changes. He found that model in a super-villain identity.

Cliche has fought Captain Ares 10 times, defeating him twice. The continual change in powers makes Cliche interested in going up against the Captain time and again, with new abilities, new powers, and of course, a new costume. Cliche has fought the FREELancers independently when he could not reach the Captain.

Cliche is both powerful and generally harmless. His family fortune is set up in a trust which pays for his excesses, and when captured, he can easily prove insanity. FREELancers standard operating procedure is to capture him with a minimum amount of property damage and return him to custody.

An Administrator who wishes to run *Top Secret/SI*™ adventures in the near future age of the FREELancers has several options for beginning a campaign.

1) **Existing characters.** On pages 56-77 are the attributes, skills, backgrounds, and life histories of the most talented current FREELancer agents. These character may be turned over to the players, who run them as PCs.

2) **New characters in existing framework.** The players create their own player characters, either "normal" or "metable," to join the FREELancers. The detailed characters can be NPCs. If Chicago is not your cup of tea, then your group of characters may be a branch office or franchise group of the agency, set in the city of your choice, with whatever modifications you desire.

3) **Creating your own future.** The rules presented within for new skills, metabilities, and technology do not have to be confined to a near future campaign. As an Administrator, you can build your own future, using those pieces within this book that amuse you, and leaving aside those you don't like.

In running the FREELancers future, many things are the same as today: Ten years makes a difference but does not transform the world into something completely alien. A lot of old structures, like nation-states and world powers, are on their last legs. A lot of new structures are rising to take their place, such as corporate powers, personal computers, metabilities, and cyborging.

One thing to keep in mind is the flavor the FREELancers future. It is not a "dark future" filled with punks and broken bottles and pollution. It *is* a challenging future, a time when the old guard is on its way out and new ideas are replacing it. Everyone is holding their breath, waiting for the millennium in two years. It is a time when individuals and their efforts will have an effect on the fate of the world. Individuals such as the FREELancers.

To that end, adventures should have long-term effects. In the mini-scenarios which follow, whether the characters succeed or not will determine part of the future. Sometimes it will be nothing more than whether a new model of GEV comes out in 2000 or 2002. At other times, it might make the difference between a city's life or death. This is a future that the Player Characters can influence, and is also a future in which Player Characters must answer for their actions.

Mini-scenario 1 – Gun-running

Summary: FREELancers break up a delivery between United Weapons and one of the families. A short adventure.

The briefing: A call goes out throughout the FREELancers grapevine: a briefing will be held at 1500 hours, four to eight agents are required, attendance is optional. Any player characters who show up will be assigned to the team, backed up by more powerful agents if they are new to the game.

Attending the briefing are Contact and Matrix. (Underhill is not present.) Contact lays out the problem, Matrix puts in her two cents worth on technical matters.

Computer scans of calls have indicated that one of the crime families, probably Nuygen, has reserved a warehouse on Fourth and Wacker for this evening. This is for probable delivery of contraband, weapons, or drugs. Your mission is to stake out the area, and if illegal activities are involved, make arrests.

Further discussions reveal that the job is a request from Chicago Police Department and was given to the FREELancers team so as not to disturb the placement of one of their deep agents in the crime families. The warehouse is the property of Mofoco, a holding company used to launder Nuygen money. Delivery is expected between midnight and 1 a.m. Property damage is to be held to a minimum. Weapons should be standard issue — pistol, taser, or beanbag gun. One person on the team may have a backpack laser if so desired.

Other gear is a matter of negotiation. Heavy artillery is banned — this is a small mission, and the MAPS will not be there. If the situation becomes critical, Agent Prime and a team of 10 combat ops in riot gear, will be ready to move in.

The setup: The Mofoco warehouse is a three-story warehouse near the Loop in a poor area of town. Use the warehouse map provided in the boxed set, with the machinery representing large boxes of machine parts. Vacant lots abut the factory on two sides, with streets to the south and east. The warehouse is two stories of solid bricks with broken windows on the third floor overlooking the vault. The roof is broken by two skylights, running north-south.

A similar warehouse (owned by Ameripub Steel) is across the street to the east. Across the street to the south is an abandoned gas station. Diagonally is a Bob's Buffalo Burger Shoppe, a tacky greasy spoon. The warehouses are the tallest buildings in two blocks.

Let the agents determine their stakeout location. Across the street at the Buffalo Burger, on the other warehouse, on the warehouse itself, hanging from the roof to look in the windows, and even breaking in in advance are all acceptable.

If the agents attempt to enter the building, they will find a security system on the doors, windows, and skylights. (-15% to attempts to deactivate. Failure indicates a loud ringing and an automatic call to the cops; it will take 10 minutes for a squad car to arrive.) The building also has two security guards in the pay of Mofoco (Gus and Louie). Their office is in the reception area.

Gus and Louie (Security Guards)

STR	INT	REF	WIL	CON	MOV	DEX
35	35	30	30	40	35	33

Both are armed with pistols and beanbag guns. Standard procedure for suspected prowlers is to have one guard investigate while the other phones the police for a squad-car pass. Both Gus and Louie are retired and do not know that Mofoco is connected to the Nuygens.

If an alarm is tripped, or Gus and Louie detect intruders, Gus will make a phone call to a bar on the Southside, and the deal will be off. The mission is a failure. (Alternatively, they could set it up for another evening a few days later.)

About 11 p.m., a gray Ford van pulls up and seven guys pile out. They bang on the door and are let into the warehouse. The guys are dressed in gang colors, led by a man in a pin-striped suit. Pin-stripe hands Gus an envelope. Gus and Louie cross the street to the Buffalo Burger and stay there until the deal is transacted. The gray van pulls away and parks down the street.

At 12:15, a panel truck pulls up and honks. The gang members open the shipping bay and the truck backs in. The truck has two men in it. The driver stays in the truck and keeps the engine running. The other man in the truck gets out, and talks to Pin-stripe. The door is closed.

Between 12:15 and 12:30, 20 cases are unloaded from the truck. Another 40 cases are in the truck. Pin-stripe signs a receipt on a clipboard. The door opens, and the truck leaves.

At 12:45, another panel truck, from Bidman's Bakery, pulls up, honks, and is admitted. Cases are loaded into the truck. Gang members get into the truck, with Pin-stripe in the front. The truck leaves the warehouse, drives three blocks to another, heavily fortified (no windows, security - 50, five well-armed guards) warehouse, and is unloaded. Gang members are paid and leave on foot.

All this occurs if no PC agents act during this time. Agents can break in at any time here.

What is happening: Family Nuygen is not responsible for the purchase: The buyers are members of Family Blood. Each of the 20 cases contains 20 Wallaby wrist rockets from a shipment that disappeared on the docks of San Francisco two weeks ago. Computer records show that the shipment is still there. The seller is an independent operator, seeking to unload the weapons. (So much for accurate briefing information).

The bakery truck, owned by a Blood company, will only arrive at the warehouse if given the all-clear from the gray van.

If the agents attack while the Blood are unloading the cases, they will scatter among the crates and draw their weapons. The driver of the weapons truck will drive through the door to escape. The driver of the bakery truck will stay and help his fellow gang members.

Blood Gang Members and Truck Drivers

STR	INT	REF	WIL	CON	MOV	DEX
40	50	30	20	50	45	40

The Bloods are armed with three beanbag guns, one taser, and five pistols. Every member carries a knife. The bakery truck driver and his assistant both carry pulsers. Cruel Administrators can have one of the gang members try to use a wrist rocket. He has no skill in this weapon, and will probably blow a hand off.

Pin-stripe (Anthony Jones)

STR	INT	REF	WIL	CON	MOV	DEX
30	40	40	30	40	35	40

Pin-stripe is unarmed, and if the gang is defeated, will either seek to quietly slip out a door or surrender, if confronted. He is a medium-level manager for the Blood organization, and has great confidence in their lawyers.

The upshot: Warning Gus and Louie prematurely will blow the mission, and neither truck will arrive. Stopping the initial weapons truck will result in capturing all the missing Wallabies. Capturing only the second truck will capture a third of the Wallabies and the Blood operatives.

If the players let the weapons truck escape, there will be a marked increase in wrist rockets in use on the streets of Chicago. Give them to toughs and thugs for the next couple of adventures (with proper training). Keep tracking them back to the missing shipment. There will be a second, similar run for Family Shea a week later, and a last run two weeks after that for one of the Nuygen brothers.

If the player agents stop the weapons truck and capture its cargo, the amount of wrist rockets found in the area will be reduced. Thugs will be restricted to less exotic weapons in the next three months of game play. The bureaucracy in the San Francisco docks area will refuse to admit that the Wallabies are missing in the first place, so that the FREELancers have 60 cases of wrist rockets and ammo for use in the future.

Agents who foil the mission will get commendations in their jacket (official file) and a wrist rocket, should they desire it. Those who botch the mission will be dressed down, but no official censure will be given. Those who bring the police down on the agent team, blow up the building (over which the non-involved Nuygens will sue), or kill anyone will be brought up before the review board and possibly suspended.

Mini-scenario 2 – Assassination

Summary: FREELancers are called upon to foil an assassination attempt on the mayor of Chicago.

The briefing: A formal briefing — members chosen (including all agents for the adventure) are instructed to attend a 1000 hours meeting in the dispatch room. Attendance is mandatory. Contact is leading the briefing, but Underhill is present.

Contact lays out photocopies of threatening letters. They are neatly calligraphed death threats addressed to the mayor's office. They charge the mayor with a number of crimes against nature, state that she will die for her sins, and are signed Artemis.

Artemis is a pen name commonly used by the GENEcology movement, more so since a recent *Newsweek* article on the subject. Mayor Hubbard's schedule has been pared down accordingly for the rest of the week (until she leaves for a trade conference in Japan), but one appearance she must make is the dedication of a statue/women's memorial at the Hyacorp Majesty Hotel. (She can't miss it, the press will be there.) The police, while encouraging canceling the dedication, is beefing up security. Over police objections, Hubbard wants the FREELancers there.

The more "human" FREELancers should mix with the crowd, while those who may be more outstanding (Centaur, for example, or Scratchbuilt) can have their mechanisms either stored nearby, or appear on the platform with the mayor.

Underhill speaks up here, and points out that the political goodwill of City Hall is required for continued safe operations in the area. And she notes that Mayor Hubbard has proven to be a longstanding supporter of the team. The nature and type of assassin is unknown, but all precautions are being taken. Underhill makes it clear that if it is a choice between the mayor's life and an agent's life, the mayor must be saved.

The setup: The dedication is at 3 in the afternoon, so the pictures can make the evening news. Use the hotel diagram from the boxed set. The statue, a huge woman holding a globe on her shoulders, is situated in the open-air atrium. On the lobby side of the atrium is a platform (the sofas have been moved back) for the speakers. The mayor, Alderman Troy Heydai, the sculptor, and the representative of the Chicago NOW (National Organization of Women) will be on the platform, along with up to two FREELancers. (Hubbard's bodyguards will be at the sides of the platforms.)

The agents can arrive whenever they see fit to aid the police teams in checking the areas. The police are not overjoyed by the presence of FREELancers, but tolerate them. Everything checks out clean — there are no bombs in the area.

At 2 p.m. the crowd starts gathering: hotel guests, the help that showed up today, passersby, and the press. All the local media are there.

At this point the Administrator can run several red herrings into the play:

- The agents spot a suspicious-looking man in an overcoat, scanning the crowd and moving from place to place. He is an undercover policeman looking for the suspected assassin. If confronted in a natural fashion, he will show his credentials. If grabbed and dragged out, he will wrestle with his assailants and try to arrest them.

- One of the hotel workers is seen carrying a large bundle through the lobby, heading for the rooms. If stopped, the worker will say the bundle proves to be a flower arrangement requested by a honeymooning couple in one of the rooms.

- Now is the perfect time for some old enemy to attack a FREELancer with an Enemy disadvantage. In addition to the threat to that one agent, the confusion will give the assassin the chance to attack the mayor.

- If not a longstanding enemy, Cliche (See page 84.) attacks. Cliche is packing the Toughness — 7 metability, and is wearing a heavily padded outfit that reduces the damage he inflicts by 2 points, and damage done to him by 1 point. (It's sort of a big, fluffy, pillow.) Play him for laughs. He should declare one FREELancers agent as Captain Ares' pal and try to kidnap him. If Captain Ares is not present, he will seek to disrupt the proceedings to issue a public challenge to Captain Ares to fight between games of the twinight double-header at Wrigley Field.

- Guests check into and out of their rooms on the floor next to the lobby. In addition to the honeymooners, there is a minister visiting his relatives, two businessmen from Oklahoma and Kansas, and a cabaret singer in the rooms off the lobby. Any one of these can be the assassin, at the Administrator's choice, or they could all be innocent bystanders.

Unless the above option is used, the presentation begins normally, with speeches all around about the advancement of women in the '90s, the sculptor speaking of the nature of art, etc. During the talks (or the confusion of an Enemy attack), one police officer makes his way around the edge of the crowd with a message in his left hand. He is sweating profusely. If stopped, he will insist that he has to deliver the message in person to the mayor. If still refused, he will try to evade capture, drawing a handgun and shooting at the mayor.

What is happening: The "police officer" is an imposter, the GENEcologist who sent the letters. In his hand is another of the threatening letters, condemning the mayor for not stopping the construction of the Tillman Nuclear Plant.

Police Officer/GENEcologist

STR	INT	REF	WIL	CON	MOV	DEX
50	40	60	40	40	30	50

Skills: Pistol (4), Social Chameleon (3)

The GENEcologist's pistol is a CO2 gun loaded with a paint cartridge, and his intention is to hit the mayor with the red paint to symbolize the blood spilled by nuclear weapons. He intends to show that the vaunted technologies of the police (and the FREELancers) could not save the mayor's life. The paint cartridge inflicts no damage, but will be on TV.

The upshot: If the GENEcologist succeeds in splattering the mayor, the pictures will be on the news reports of every station in Chicago, and probably picked up by the networks as well. The police will issue a statement admitting to missing the opportunity, but attention will focus on the FREELancers, and more than one editorial will question their competence. The team's stock in Chicago will be publicly reduced, and it will be harder to get equipment and favorable treatment from the city. Underhill will be livid, and those involved will be suspended after a fair hearing.

If the Mayor is accidentally *hurt*, the media will be calling for the FREELancer's hides, and all support for the team will dry up. Underhill will gladly turn over the agents involved for prosecution. They probably can get off with probation if their intentions were good, but they will catch every donkey-work task the team gets for the next year.

If the GENEcologist is stopped and captured (easily done, since in his mind he has no plan to escape), the FREELancers get a small bump of popularity. Good news does not travel as far, but the local papers note that the team earns its keep. The mayor will be well-disposed to the team, in particular those members who helped.

As a postscript, the Admin can run this scenario again about six months later, with another GEN-Ecologist copycat. The copycat assassin will use real ammunition. This might give agents in the doghouse a chance to regain lost popularity. If Hubbard dies, then FREELancers will no longer be welcome in Chicago, and the next mayor (after a bitter fight in City Council), will be a rabid anti-metable politician who blames the city's ills on Underhill's group).

Mini-scenario 3 – Hijacking

Summary: The FREELancers are involved in a hijacking.

The briefing: Those agents involved in Mini-scenario 1 are called into the briefing room by Contact. The company which declared that the wrist rockets were safely in a San Francisco warehouse is being sued by the Wallaby Corp. Depositions have been requested from the agents involved in the wrist rocket caper, so the agents will be sent to San Francisco, to give the depositions, mixing business with a well-earned vacation.

Contact asks one of the agents to remain after the others leave. To this agent she gives a shielded mini-floppy disk, and instructs the agent that it is to be given to a Mr. Lotus, who runs a camera shop in downtown San Francisco. The password is, "Do you have a 1970 SLR?" and the response should be, "We may have one in the back. It's being repaired."

The setup: The team is flying a Rocky Mountain Air 727 to San Francisco, flight 272. RMA is a new airline, but popular on the West Coast runs. The flight leaves 20 minutes late from O'Hare. Figure out how the agents are going to be able to get their equipment (if any) on board. In the true nature of seat assignments, make sure the agents are all over the plane. Any weapons would be put in storage.

About a half-hour into the flight, the plane is hijacked by Millenniest fanatics. One of the flight attendants is a deep agent, and passes out weapons wrapped in magazines to the other fanatics, two in the front (row 2), and two in the back (row 21).

Millenniest Fanatics

STR	INT	REF	WIL	CON	MOV	DEX
30	40	50	50	35		40

Skills: Pistol (3), Demolitions (1)

The flight attendant has a fragmentation grenade as well. She goes to the flight cabin, while the other four stand guard over the passengers. The passengers are told that if they do not panic, no one will be hurt.

The plane is diverted from its flight plan to San Antonio, where the fanatics demand fuel and $500,000. About eight hours are spent on the ground, and in the end the hijackers settle for just the fuel. The plane then heads for a Central American country (pick one, any one), where they repeat the demand for money from the U.S. government. After another eight hours, a rescue team of U.S. Marines, supported by three suits of MAPS armor, storm the plane, killing the terrorists and five passengers.

This is what will happen if the FREELancers do nothing.

What is happening: This is a straight hijacking. The Millenniests are really Millenniests. They are a little wired by drugs and excitement. Play them as rabid human beings, very sensitive to any threat. They are quite willing to kill everyone on the plane to prove their point that the end of the world is nigh.

The safest time to take control of the plane is in San Antonio, when the plane is on the ground. Puncturing the skin of the plane with gunfire will cause explosive decompression in the air, and most likely, a plane crash. On the ground, it literally prevents the plane from taking off (though it will *not* endear the agents to the airline).

The fanatics have no qualms about taking hostages and shooting prisoners. The flight attendant does have some qualms about dying, and will only pull the pin of the grenade if directly attacked. She can be talked out of using the grenade if all the other fanatics are subdued.

The upshot: If the agents defeat the fanatics without anyone getting hurt, or damaging the plane,

they will be regarded as heroes and get press coverage. If the agents defeat the fanatics but the plane is damaged on the ground, the agents are still heroes, but RMA will *never* let them fly again.

If the plane crashes, there is great loss of life. Best bet is everyone dies and the agents have to do a lot of tap dancing and spending of Fame & Fortune points to avoid dying as well. The results of the crash investigation (one to three months) will determine if the agents are suspended or expelled.

If the Marines have to rescue the agents and the passengers, a cover-up goes into effect to conceal the FREELancers connection. The agents involved will have their actions reviewed and face possible suspension.

The floppy disk? It's a red herring. It contains information from Dr. Random on a hand-held laser-disk imprinter/recorder that Underhill wants a company in Ho Chi Minh City to build.

Mini-scenario 4 – Telepath and Psychopath

Summary: Professor Rho's latest student is a mass-murderer with Telepathic metabilities. It is up to the FREELancers to stop him.

The briefing: There's an immediate, unscheduled meeting early in the morning. The agents are contacted wherever they are (unless they are on a deep cover mission), and are told to go to an address on Greydove Drive in the suburb of Hinsdale. Agents are reminded that Hinsdale is not part of the city of Chicago, and they should be on their best behavior in dealing with the local authorities.

The setup: Use the residence layout from the boxed set. When the FREELancers arrive, the area is already cordoned off by the police. Local police will politely refuse entry unless presented

identification. The police are noticeably edgy around the more metanormal FREELancers.

The official report is "domestic violence," but the house appears to be the scene of a battle. Four bodies are found throughout the house. The dead are:

- A black male teenager whose body is found burned in the living room. Furniture is blackened by heat, and the wallpaper is pealing away from the walls and is scorched. There are no other signs of a fire.

- A white male whose body is found in the kitchen, surrounded by pots, pans, and knives. The body was badly battered and cut. No fingerprints other than the victim's are found on the cookware.

- A white male, whose body is found in the bedroom, frozen. Ice is beginning to melt off the walls.

- A white female teenaager, whose body is found in the garage. It appears that the engine of a car crawled out from under the hood and strangled her with a fan belt.

All victims died under what would best be termed "unusual circumstances." The lieutenant, suspecting super-human activity, called in the FREELancers.

Initial reports turn up the following clues:

- In the unfrozen bedroom, there's a dossier on the FREELancers, including known information on the individuals, base, and weapons systems. A *Chicago Tribune* Sunday feature about a tour Contact allowed through headquarters is in the dossier, and a yellow note stuck on the cover reads, "to: Quintet."

- A computer with an active modem is in the frozen bedroom. The connection had been cut, but a floppy disk was in the drive at the time. A telephone number for a Wisconsin exchange is written by the computer.

- Five sets of prints are found in the house. Four match the victims.

- The house was rented from a couple on a long cruise vacation by a Mr. R.A. Teasedale.

- A second number, for the Hyacorp Majesty Hotel, is written by the phone in the kitchen.

- None of the victims carries identification. A wallet, emptied of money, credit cards, and identification, was found by the body in the kitchen.

Agents can begin their own investigations. The following information is available by morning (or through the action of the agents).

The black teenage male is a youth offender from New York, arrested for robbery, but believed to be involved with a number of mysterious fires. He ran away from his youth home five months ago. His name was Oliver Harrison.

The white male in the kitchen was Sanford Brown, a known telekinetic from Los Alamos, N.M. Sanford was working with a bomb disposal unit, but resigned three weeks ago to "pursue job opportunities in Wisconsin."

The white male in the bedroom was Greg Tover, a former insurance salesman who abandoned his family a year ago and is being sought by authorities. He had no known meta-human powers.

The white female was Aliya Melbourne, another runaway. She had no noted meta-human powers, but school records indicate possible Savantism in mechanics.

The disk in the drive is a downloaded schedule of all FREELancers operations over the next three days, including supposedly secret information.

The number by the computer is for the computer modem of the Rhoman Institute of Whitewater, Wis., the headquarters and front for the evil Professor Rho.

The fifth set of fingerprints belong to a drug-rehabilitation patient from Atlanta named Arnold Handle. Handle was treated for severe substance abuse, but disappeared from the halfway house four weeks ago. He was seen getting into a car with a short elderly white-haired gentleman with a bald spot (the description of Professor Rho).

A call to the Rhoman Institute will get Rho's secretary, who will not give FREELancers any infor-

mation. (She will hang up.) She will tell anyone else that the professor will be speaking to a small parapsychology group at the Hyacorp Majestic the next evening. He'll be staying in the penthouse.

All through the evening and the next day, charges will be rung up on Sanford Brown's credit cards. These charges will be reported immediately if the computer is instructed to do so. Otherwise, the FREELancers will learn about the charges late in the day. The charges include: a CO2 beanbag gun, a baseball bat, sky-diving equipment, lockpicks, a rental car, meals (late dinner in Hinsdale, lunch at the Majestic Coffee Shop), and suitcases.

The salespeople will draw a portrait of a nervous young man with a pasty white face, brown hair and brown eyes, dressed in jeans, a T-shirt which reads, "Shred the Carbons," and a stone-washed denim jacket.

What is happening: Quintet is Professor Rho's latest team of metable agents. Their code names were Frostbite, Nudge (the telekinetic), Mechtech (the mechanical Savant) Pyre, and Telempath. Handle is Telempath, and is responsible for the deaths of the others.

Telempath, not the most stable individual in the first place, has the Telepath metability with a nasty disadvantage: Traumatic Flashbacks. His trauma, however, causes other metable powers to go beserk and out of control, killing the individuals with the powers or those around him. Telempath had such an attack at the safe house, with the result that Pyre fried himself, Nudge battered himself to death with cookware, Frostbite froze in his sleep, and Mechtech turned the car engine on which she was working into a device that killed her.

Telempath (Arnold Handle)

STR	INT	REF	WIL	CON	MOV	DEX
38	59	62	103	67	56	60

Now, Telempath is on the loose, a metable who is a threat to other metables. His ultimate target is the man for whom he blames the deaths of his teammates — Professor Rho.

The team may realize this and face a quandary —

Rho is an opponent, and would sell them out in an instant. His death would not be mourned. On the other hand, the fact the FREELancers could be aware of the threat and not warn him would make the team look bad. Let the team make its choice.

Rho will be suspicious. He'll be out of the hotel all day, returning around 3 in the afternoon. Telempath will make his purchases in the morning, and after buying what he needs, trade the card for some drugs (some more random purchases may provide a red herring). Telempath will break into Rho's penthouse appartment (see map in boxed set) and wait for him to arrive.

When the FREELancers encounter Telempath, he will fly into a traumatic flashback. All with metabilities in the area must make a check against their ½ WIL (¼ WIL if WIL is less than 100), or have the powers amplified and go wild. Effects are left up to the situation, but they should keep the characters busy, threaten their lives (requiring further skill checks and spending of Fame & Fortune Points), and damage the surroundings.

Individuals without metabilities, including Professor Rho, are unaffected by the flashback. For them, Telempath has a baseball bat and a pistol. First and formost he will attack Rho, if present.

Telempath will fight until captured or slain. If the Administrator wishes to keep Telempath around as a regular villain, the mad metable will leap out the window and fall to his apparent death. (But remember, he has the sky-diving equipment.)

The upshot: Telempath is a psychopathic drug-dealing maniac with powers beyond the human norm. Even given the FREELancers tendency to adopt castoffs, he would be more than they could handle. The fact he is responsible for the death of at least four metables and could do it again makes him too dangerous to let him in the group.

Letting Prof Rho die is an option, though it is the one good chance of catching Telempath. If Telempath kills Rho, the metable will escape, lay low for six months, then start trying to bump off metables (including FREELancers) one at a time, stalking them and killing them by their own abilities. If Rho dies, his work will be continued by his aide

and secretary "Rhona" who will be an avowed Enemy of FREELancers.

If Rho lives, he will turn barely hospitable toward the FREELancers.

Mini-scenario 5 – Dusting Gary

Summary: GENECologists are going to detonate a nuke in the old steel town of Gary, Ind. FREELancers must stop it or the tourist industry in Chicago will go to hell.

Briefing: The initial briefing is the same as Mini-scenario 1 — United Weapons is making a drop of contraband weapons at a warehouse for an independent supplier.

The setup: The setup is the same as for Mini-scenario 1; change the area a little. The guards may remain in the warehouse, and the weapons will be stored there. There's no second truck to pick them up.

The main difference is that, when the crew is busted (Have them surrender for a change of pace), the weapons discovered are Soviet ADMs — nuclear weapons used in large-scale demolitions work. There are are six containers for the ADMs on the truck. But there are only five devices.

Successful interrogation of the driver for the independent weapons merchant reveals that the missing weapon was sold to a small construction firm on the North Side. What would a small firm specializing in walk-in closets and hot tubs be doing with a Soviet nuclear earthmover?

What is happening: The small construction firm, Randell Construction, is a front for a rabid GENEcology cell. This particular cell believes that a statement must be made to call attention to the dangers of nuclear radiation. They think "dusting" an American city with a Soviet device will make an effective statement.

The device was dropped off two days before the warehouse was raided. The radicals have primed the bomb with a natural timer — a vial of microbes. When sufficient numbers of the microbes die, the solution will conduct sufficient electricity to trigger the bomb.

The device was then placed in a truck container, along with a shipment of scrap metal, and shipped by Randell Construction to Gary by cargo ship. Its timer is set to go off around 5 p.m. seven days after it's set. By that time, the boat will be at anchor, or the device will be unloaded.

Short Timetable

Day 1: Randell Construction buys the device.
Day 2: Randell Construction modifies the device, and loads it onto a container truck.
Day 3: The truck is loaded onto a cargo ship, the Rainbow Adventurer, bound for Gary. That evening, the warehouse is raided and the other devices are found.
Days 4-6: The Rainbow Adventurer sails to Gary.
Day 7: 5 p.m. Boom.

The independent weapons merchant can provide the information through interrogation as to where the bomb went. If interrogation fails, the FREELancers are contacted by a Mr. Kern, the representative of the United Weapons group. They have an idea to whom the bomb was sold, and would like the FREELancers to stop it, since nuclear explosions in populated areas tend to reduce business.

Randell Construction is a one-shed operation with a large yard filled with scrap, pipe, wood, etc. It is abandoned when the FREELancers arrive there. At the site are:

• Prints of the five main planners of the bombing.

• Maps of Gary, Chicago, and Milwaukee, all with blast markings for different megatonnages.

• Books on terrorists, and the GENEcology philosophy.

• Instructions on making a microbe timer for bombs. Anyone with Biology or Demolitions skill will immediately realize that this is a terribly unstable type of timer.

The five conspirators are:

- Barb and O.J. Randell. They just went on a two-week vacation to Cancun, Mexico, with the intention of fading into the back country and heading south.

- Bob O'Grady, handyman and helper. He is never seen again, and may have been killed by one of the other conspirators (Administrator's choice).

- Melvin "The Mouse" Manheim. He is the criminal contact, the man the independent contacted to sell the weapon. He's still in the Chicago area. If he can be found and made to talk, he knows the entire plan.

- Josh Cassock. He's an ex-Marine who left home after writing a will leaving all he had to his widowed mother. Has had a history of violent support of the GENEcologist movement.

Cassock has gone to Gary to act as the guardian for the deadly cargo. He will be somewhere in the area if the characters reach Gary to defuse the bomb.

The device is in a nondescript container truck, one of about 500 on the Rainbow Adventurer. The container truck will be duly logged by the computer on the Chicago docks, and that can tell what ship picked it up. (None of the conspirators know which ship would carry it — only that the device would be hauled to Gary.) The device is shielded to cut down the chances of locating it by Geiger counter.

The Rainbow Adventurer's captain is colorful and innocent in the matter. The ship is substandard and has not had an operating radio set for the past four months.

If the characters reach the container ship, use the tramp steamer map from the boxed set. Cassock may be on board as a crewman. (Cassock carries a rifle and a knife, and is has level 4 skill in both.)

The device itself is −30 to dismantle, with failure indicating a 60-second period before the bomb goes off (just enough time for a second attempt). Note that Demolitions skill does not have a default value, and if the FREELancers cannot deactivate it, they must dispose of it in some way. (Like getting it out into the middle of Lake Michigan, which will take two hours.)

Whether the bomb goes off is up to the Administrator. It is suggested that the device itself be benign, because the Russians "spike" such devices before transport as a safeguard, and the ADM is still on safety. If this is a case, the device had no chance to explode, and the characters merely recover the bomb before it fell into even worse hands.

If the bomb goes off, the Administrator should be ready for the consequences. The ADM is a ½ kiloton device. It will vaporize those at ground zero, and carve out a five-mile firestorm in the Gary area. The cities of Hammond, East Chicago, and Valparaiso will be on the edge of the affected area, but will be safe. The rest, stretching in a teardrop pointed east, will have hazardous levels of fallout. There will be fallout throughout the Northeast similar to that experienced in Europe after the Chernobyl disaster. If the bomb is exploded in the lake, similar fallout will occur, but the loss of life will be minimal.

This is an ugly situation, but then, nuclear weapons are an ugly proposition. This is a very, very *small* atomic device, and does not even begin to match to payloads in Soviet and U.S. missiles.

The Upshot: If the agents recover the unexploded ADM, the devices will be returned to the Soviets, and the agents will receive notations in their jackets as to their performance under pressure. No mention is made of nuclear weapons, and no information is given to the press.

If the agents fail, and the bomb is a dud, then the agents will receive a one-month suspension, during which they will learn the Demolitions skill.

If the agents fail, and the bomb is live, it is likely that there are no agents, and no evidence to connect the disaster at Gary to the FREELancers organization. Hard and heavy explaining from and spending of *all* Fame & Fortune points by all agents involved *may* result in another check to disarm and/or whether the bomb's detonator is faulty. If you want to blow up Gary, go ahead. Refit will be upset, since that's his hometown.
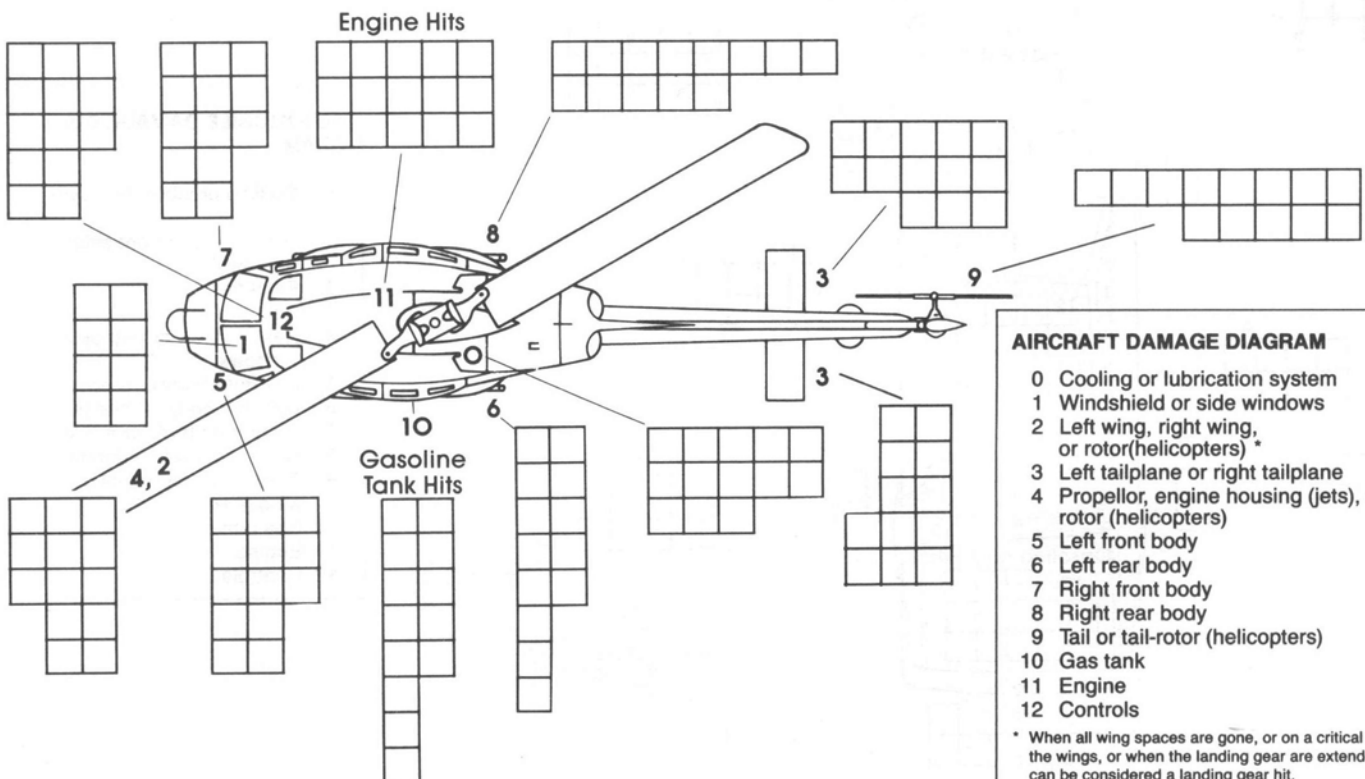
Man-Amplified Power Suits

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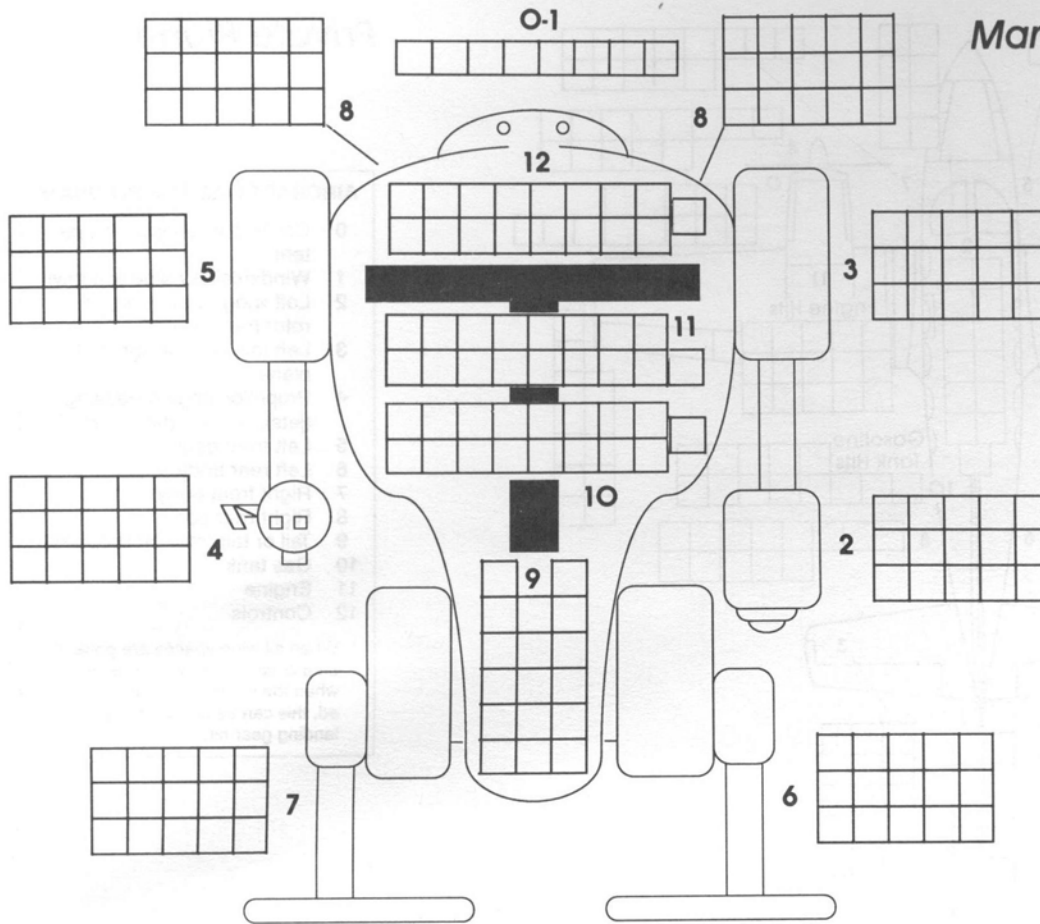
POWER ARMOR DAMAGE DIAGRAM

0-1	Windshields
2	Left Hand
3	Left Arm
4	Right Hand
5	Right Arm
6	Left Leg
7	Right Leg
8	Shoulder-Mount Pods
9	Engines
10	Power Source
11	Controls
12	Fire Control

Helicopter

Engine Hits

7

8

12

11

1

5

3

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4, 2

10

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Gasoline
Tank Hits

AIRCRAFT DAMAGE DIAGRAM

0	Cooling or lubrication system
1	Windshield or side windows
2	Left wing, right wing, or rotor(helicopters) *
3	Left tailplane or right tailplane
4	Propellor, engine housing (jets), or rotor (helicopters)
5	Left front body
6	Left rear body
7	Right front body
8	Right rear body
9	Tail or tail-rotor (helicopters)
10	Gas tank
11	Engine
12	Controls

* When all wing spaces are gone, or on a critical hit to the wings, or when the landing gear are extended, this can be considered a landing gear hit.

Private Plane

Engine Hits

Gasoline Tank Hits

Automobile

Engine Hits

Gasoline Tank Hits

TOP SECRET/S.I.™

Official Game Accessory

F.R.E.E.Lancers™

by Jeff Grubb

BEGIN COMMUNICATION

To: All agents in all bureaus
From: F.R.E.E.Lancers, an independent agency
Re: The Future

Step into the future with the *F.R.E.E.Lancers* sourcebook, a wealth of detailed information for players and Administrators, and a complete roleplaying accessory for the *TOP SECRET/S.I.*™ game.

Welcome to a future of backpack battlefield lasers, wrist-mounted self-propelled rockets, and huge, biped suits of superconductor-laced power armor.

Welcome to a future of terrorists armed with nuclear devices, crime lords pushing pirated software, computer criminals and telepathic gangs.

Welcome to a future of cyborgs, powerful parabilities of the mind and body, computer-controlled cars, gravity-effect vehicles, agents and enemies beyond the ken of normal men.

Welcome to Chicago, 1998, on the eve of the Millenium. Welcome to the future of the *F.R.E.E.Lancers.*

Enter the *TOP SECRET/S.I.*™ game future world of adventure and intrigue. Corporate powers jostle with warring espionage agencies on the streets of a future Chicago, fighting for the greatest power of the future: information. The correct data, the important skills, can make you successful. Or rich. Or dead.

The *F.R.E.E.Lancers* sourcebook creates a futuristic campaign for the *TOP SECRET/S.I.*™ game, including new skills and devices, items on the leading edge of technology and directly from the street. Sections include information on cyborging, power armor, and parabilities, super-human talents now mastered and used in the causes of good and evil.

The *F.R.E.E.Lancers* sourcebook also contains the core of the *F.R.E.E.Lancers* team, to be used as player characters, or NPCs: Refit, the remade man, a patchwork of transplants held together by a nasty temperment; Dervish, the Arabic assassin from a cult of arcane combat; Captain Ares, the well-meaning would-be super-powered hero; and Centaur, the cybernetic mixture of mortal man and equine steel.

These are your allies. They could be your enemies. They are streetwise natives of an alien world, a world only ten years from now.

Do you dare to answer the challenge of the *F.R.E.E.Lancers?*

END COMMUNCIATION