

Chapter Three - The Black Market

Caroline knew she had made many mistakes: taking the swing shift at the factory, not asking someone to walk home with her, trying to run from those muggers, running home instead of to a public area, not calling the police before they had a chance to cut her internet line. Perhaps her worst mistake had been to think she could wear the old plate mail armor her uncle had left her. The hinges on the door were about to give way, there was no time to change any of it, she could only stand her ground and fight.

Any second they would come pouring in, and she might have the advantage for a few seconds while they were surprised by the armor. Maybe she could hit one or two of them with her kitchen knife in that time. She would be lucky if the knife blade didn't snap the first time she hit someone with it. If she couldn't hurt them within a few breaths they would find the plates hanging loose and stab her in the holes. If her helmet got hit it would twist and she would be blind.

Even the banging on the door was drowned out by her panicked breath echoing in the helmet. She could smell her breath and the acidic odor of the metal. She could feel hot tears on her cheeks as she wept in fear...

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Legality types are as follows:

Permit: It is legal for ordinary people to have and use this item so long as they have some sort of permit, prescription or other proof of permission to have the item. Examples: prescription drugs (must have a prescription), software suites (must be registered with the software company as a valid user), pepper-spray (must have a certificate of training in the safe use of pepper spray).

Licensed: Only a small group of professionals licensed by the city, state or federal government are allowed to possess, carry and use such items. Examples: pharmsynths (only certain emergency medical personnel operating in situations where access to pharmaceuticals is limited are able to use these), mental installers (only licensed hospitals and doctor's offices can own mental installers, and they are commonly audited to make sure they are using them legally), firearms (only the National Guard can bring firearms in to the city, only in a state of emergency, and only if those firearms have security chips that only allow those guardspeople to fire them).

Forbidden: These are items which there is almost no legal way to own, possess or carry. Examples: illegal street drugs with no prescription use (unless being held by cops as evidence in a criminal trial), bioengineered diseases (unless kept in Centers for Disease Control labs for study), nuclear weapons (unless kept by the US military).

Example: Tom is caught with a Blood Plug. Blood Plugs have a legality of Permit (\$500 fine). Unless he can provide a prescription or show that he is an ambulance driver or some other licensed medical practitioner, he might be sentenced to pay up to \$500, depending on what kind of mood the judge is in. If Tom can't pay, he'll probably have to spend some time in the city jail. On the other hand, if Tom was caught with the bioengineered disease Harmon, which has a legality of Forbidden (Life Without Possibility of Parole), his only hope is to beg for clemency if he ever wants to see the outside of a prison again.

Introduction

This chapter is a compendium of things that are, or might at some point, be available on the legitimate and black markets. Although player may use this section for equipping PCs during character creation, it is also meant as a reference for, among other things, what a villain might spend money on. The presence of something in this chapter does not imply that PCs can buy it, should; buy it, or have any ethical excuse for buying it.

Legality Ratings

The prices listed in this chapter represent the black market price for items. Most items, if bought through legitimate items, would be 2 to 10 times more expensive. It is illegal to possess any stolen merchandise. The prosecutor does not need to prove that a person knew an item was stolen, only that the item was stolen. Some items listed in this section are illegal for ordinary people to possess whether or not they can be proven to be stolen.

The legality of an item is listed as the type of legality (under what circumstances it is legal to have the item) followed by the maximum penalty for possessing the item.

Value Buy- Look for this symbol to find items that are an excellent value for street people PCs.



DATA

Applications

Applications are computer procard.

AI Firewall- This program monitors all network traffic coming in and out of a computer and blocks anything it thinks is suspicious. It notifies the user whenever it cuts off access and the user can override the decision. In hacking terms (see p.61) the program adds +10 strength to a firewall. Interface: Graphical. UF 2. Uses Power 4. Size 5 ZB. Costs \$50.

AI Secretary- This program acts as a personal assistant, making appointments, keeping calendars, storing and organizing files and answering the phone to take messages. The secretary has a configurable human voice and appearance. The secretary has some language recognition (can understand simple plain-text questions and commands). It has routines for intelligent net research (it can do research on the net to find answers to questions). Typical commands that a secretary program could follow:

- "Get me any files I have on that RNN deal from last summer."

- "Call SRC, schedule an appointment with one of their account execs ASAP. Bump any non-critical appointments if necessary."

- "Carla's coming over for dinner next Thursday at eight. Call me and remind me to come straight home so I can clean up."

- "Go on-line and find out what the best price is on canned tuna fish by the crate."

- "Go on-line and find me a short definition of 'post-modern art'."

Interface: Text/Speech. Size 50 ZB. UF 0. Uses Power 5. Costs \$200.

CAD Suite- Allows users to design any sort of manufactured item and test it in a virtual environment. Can be used to design anything from a screw to a skyscraper. Interface: VR. UF 2. Size 20 ZB. Uses Power 4. Costs \$200.

Application Features

Interface: How the program is accessed.

Text/Speech: The program takes commands and responds in simple text. If hooked up to hardware with speakers and built in voice recognition, users can operate this software purely by voice.

Graphical: The PC sees a graphical environment in which icons representing program functions are moved and manipulated via a pointing device. Some text input (typing or voice recognition) is used but it is minimal.

VR: The program has a full Virtual Reality interface. The program's controls are represented as a 3D environment in which objects can be grabbed and manipulated.

Size: How much memory a program takes up on a computer's hard drive when installed.

UF: User Friendliness – how much skill is needed to use the program.

UF 0: Anyone can use the program without any special skills, knowledge of training.

UF 1: Users must either read the reference manual packaged with the software or must have one skill level in an applicable skill in order to use this program.

UF 2: Users must have at least 1 skill level in Operating Systems and 1 skill level in an applicable skill to use the program.

Uses Power: How much computer power (a feature of computer hardware) the program requires and eats up while running. A computer can run multiple programs at once so long as it has enough power (e.g. a power 5 computer can run a power 5 program or a power 3 and power 2 program.) A few programs use variable power: they can work at any power level, but work better the more power is put in to them.

Pirating Data

The following costs are the costs that people typically pay a Black Market trader for a program, an information file or the code which will be installed in someone's head as a mental program. Instead of paying a black market trader to procure the data, people with good internet skills can attempt to find free copies. The Software Pirating skill is the best skill to use for this purpose. Internet Browsing can also be used, but at higher difficulty. Also, members of the groups Technophiles, Crackers and Arcadians tend to share pirated data. So, for any piece of data, there is a chance that a member of these groups will have easy access to it. Since, on the black market, the rarer an item is the more it costs, difficulty for finding a piece of data is listed according to its black market value:

Black Market Value of Data	Software Pirating	Net Browsing	Technophile	Cracker	Arcadian
	skill roll difficulty		chance of availability		
\$5	10	20	95%	99%	75%
\$20	13	35	90%	95%	65%
\$80	17	30	75%	90%	50%
\$200	20	35	50%	85%	25%
\$600	23	40	25%	75%	10%
\$1000	17	45	15	50%	7%
\$1500	30	50	7%	30%	5%
\$2000	33	55	5%	25%	1%
\$2500	37	60	2%	10%	1%
\$3000	40	65	1%	5%	1%

Code Breaker (Latest)- This is the latest and hottest code breaker to hit the market, with techniques for dealing with the latest encryption schemes. Has a code breaking power of 2 (see Cryptography, p.65). It will quickly go out of date, becoming Code Breaker (Older) within 4 months. Interface: VR. Size 10 ZB. UF 1. Uses Variable Power. Costs \$1,000.

Code Breaker (Military)- This code breaker was designed by secret corporate labs working on commissions for the worlds' superpowers. The greatest minds in encryption spent years creating these schemes and subsequently had their memories of that time wiped. Every existing copies of these code breakers are hotcoded (see p.195) to make them uncopyable. Thus the number of copies of these code breakers in the world is permanently fixed. The code breaking schemes are so novel and don't exist anywhere else and so the program only loses 0.5 power per year. The software is permanently locked in a small box the size and shape of a brick which plugs in to a computer via a normal I/O Jack. The box has a 7 year uranium battery and if that ever fails the code is lost forever. Weighs 5 lbs. Code Breaking Power: 3. Interface: VR. Size 0 ZB. UF 2. Uses Variable Power. Legality: Licensed (10 yrs. Prison). Costs \$10,000.

Code Breaker (Older)- This code breaking program is several months out of date and thus has a hard time dealing with the latest encryption schemes. Code Breaking Power: 1. Interface: VR. Size 10 ZB. UF 1. Uses Variable Power. Costs \$100.

Cryptography Lab- This software suite allows those versed in the mathematics of cryptography to analyze encryption and decryption schemes and to create new schemes. Interface: Graphical. Size 40 ZB. UF 2. Uses 2 Power. Costs \$75.

Data Salvage and Repair Suite- Attempts to retrieve and reconstitute as much data as possible from damaged or wiped memory sources. Useful for forensics (e.g. looking for deleted files) or trying to salvage data after a hacker or virus attack. Interface: Text/Speech. Size 1 ZB. UF 1. Uses 1 Power. Costs \$5.

Denial of Service Program- This tiny program floods a target system with false requests, the goal being to slow or block any legitimate traffic coming to and from that system. For most systems, 1 instance of the program is enough to make the target spend 1 power dealing with fake requests. E.G. 5 copies of this program running on 5 systems can bring a 5 power computer to a halt. Interface: Text/Speech. Size 1 ZB. UF 0. Uses 2 Power. Legality: Permit (\$500 fine). Costs \$20.

DNA Analysis Suite- A selection of advanced software for analyzing genes or whole genomes. Users can do things like simulate what an adult human might look like based on their DNA, find and analyze genetic modifications, and see the effects of genetic engineering on a simulated cell. Interface: Graphical. Size: 5 ZB. UF 2. Uses 10 Power. Costs \$500.

Encryption Software Suite (Advanced)- Uses the newest and best encryption techniques (the same ones banks use

for electronic money transfers) and gives the user several options for configuration of the encryption scheme (allows for encryption to be aided with a skill roll, see p.65). Creates one-key codes at 50 strength (normal) 55 strength (evolving) and public-key codes at 40 strength (normal) 45 (evolving). The user must subscribe to a service that provides weekly updates in order to keep the encryption methods up to date (or encryption strength will degrade by -5 ever month). Interface: Text/Speech. Size: 50 ZB. UF 2. Uses 2 Power. Costs \$200 +\$15/week for updates.

Encryption Software Suite (Basic)- One of many packages that allow users to encrypt files, messages or data streams. Each encryption creates a key (a string of several thousand characters) which can be stored on the computer or in some sort of data storage (e.g. a Data Key, p.83). The software can create a one-key code with a strength of 30 and a public-key code with a strength of 20. Interface: Text/Speech. Size: 15 ZB. UF: 1. User Power: 1. Costs \$20 +\$5/week for updates.

Face Recognition Software- Can search through thousands of pictures per minute or analyze video streams looking for one or more faces. Interface: Graphical. Size: 3 ZB. UF 0. Uses 1 Power per video stream. Costs \$10.

Language Translator Program- This program automatically determines the language of text or audio and provides translation to and from the owner's language. Comes with the 20 most common languages (including English, Spanish, French, Kalor and Arabic). Additional language matrices available as 1 ZB files. Interface: Text/Speech. Size 30 ZB. UF 0. Uses 2 Power. Costs \$75 +\$5 per language file.

Linguistics Suite- Analyzes large samples of spoken or written languages. Uses AI routines to identify language grouping and influences and even to create translation matrices for unrecorded languages. Interface: Text/Speech. Size 100ZB. UF 2. Uses 5 Power. Costs \$200.

Media Editing Suite- Software for editing and manipulating pictures, video and sound. Interface: Graphical. Size: 10 ZB. UF 1. Uses 2 Power. Costs \$100.

Media Forensics Suite- Created for forensic scientists to extrapolate information from media evidence. Has tools to do anything from isolating background noise in a recording, to enhancing blurry images in a photo, to searching for invisible signs of forgery in a video, to determining what kind of camera was used to take a picture. Interface: Graphical. Size: 10 ZB. UF 2. Uses 3 Power. Costs \$250.

Music Program- Compose and record completely realistic sounding music using simulated musicians and singers. Also has AI musicians who can accompany live music. Interface: Graphical. Size: 5 ZB. UF 1. Uses 2 Power. Costs \$150.

Office Suite- All the software needed to create, organize and share multimedia documents, presentations, calendars, databases, forms and spreadsheets. Interface: Graphical. Size: 15 ZB. UF 0. Uses 2 Power. Costs \$50.

Port Scanner- This program scans through every possible address on a network. For every response it tries to map what type of computer it will find. Note that a well-configured firewall will block a port scanner and alert network security immediately. Interface: Text/Speech. Size: 1 ZB. UF 2. Uses 2 Power. Legality: Permit (\$500). Costs \$5.

Programmer's Suite- A selection of programming tools (documentation, pre-generated code snippets, translators, emulators and debuggers) that allows users to create computer programs quickly and reliably. Gives +4 to programming skills rolls and doubles the speed of programming. Interface: Graphical. Size: 2 ZB. UF 1. Uses 1 Power. Costs \$300.

Puppet Program- This software captures someone's image and voice and creates a virtual "puppet" that looks and sounds like the person and will do anything the user commands. The puppet is controlled by a controller in a VR interface whose every word, movement and expression is mimicked. Interface: VR. Size: 7 ZB. UF 1. Uses 5 Power. Costs \$200.

Reverse Engineer- This program analyzes the code of other programs to try to help the user determine how it was made (e.g. using which programming language and programming tools). The program will decompile source-code and create program diagrams (the first step to figuring out what the code does and how to change it). Interface: Graphical. Size: 3 ZB. UF 1. Uses 2 Power. Costs \$100.

Script Kiddie Suite- When directed at a particular network, these programs look for any known holes in the firewalls. Most skilled hackers do not use this sort of software (other than to distract network security while they make a real attempt to get in). The program can find holes in a firewall (see p.63) at 10 + 1d20. Interface: Text/Speech. Size: 5 ZB. UF 1. Uses 1 Power. Legality: Permit (\$500). Costs \$20.

Security Package- Although all modern operating systems come with built-in security, many users prefer to supplement this with third party security packages which include virus checkers, firewalls and account administration programs. In its default configuration, the program creates a 20 strength firewall (see p.63). These programs are typically used by people who have no computer security skills (people with security skills can do a better job configuring their firewalls without using a program). Interface: Text/Speech. Size: 5 ZB. UF 0. Uses 1 Power. Costs \$100.

Subliminal Analyzer- This program surreptitiously inserts itself in to a VR interface or videophone stream. It flashes subliminal images at the target and gauges the psychological reaction by measuring things like voice stress, breath rate and pupil dilation. When used in full immersion VR it is about half as accurate as the Subliminal Analyzer Goggles and when used in a videophone stream it is about one quarter as accurate. Interface: Text/Speech. Size: 2 ZB. UF 0. Uses 2 Power. Costs \$75.

Trojan (Logic Bomb)- This Trojan, once it is run, waits until a pre-set time and then runs some command or commands programmed in by the hacker. The command(s) can be anything from changing a file, to sending an email, to wiping the entire hard drive. Interface: Text/Speech. Size: Negligible. UF 1. Uses Negligible Power. Legality: Permit (\$500). Costs \$10.

Trojan (Spy)- If a hacker can run this software on a system or trick a user in to running it, the software "disappears" and runs silently on the system. The program records everything that users do on the system (including what passwords and encryption keys they enter) and sends back discrete reports to its master. Takes a moderate Operating Systems skill roll to discover and another to disable the Trojan. Interface: Text/Speech. Size: Negligible. UF 1. Uses Negligible Power. Legality: Permit (\$500). Costs \$10.

Virtual Machine- This software creates a simulated computer inside the user's own computer. The user can control every aspect of this virtual machine. A virtual machine could be used to run another operating system (to use software that couldn't normally be used on that computer), to analyze how a program works, or even to practice breaking an operating system using the System Crashing skill. The virtual machine runs at -2 power. Example: A power 10 computer running GuildOS could run a virtual OpenCert machine as if it were a power 8 machine. Interface: Text/Speech. Size: 50 ZB. UF 1. Uses 2 Power. Costs \$100

Visual Arts Suite- Software for creating 3D or 2D art, illustrations or logos. Interface: Graphical. Size: 3 ZB. UF 1. Uses 1 Power. Costs \$10.

Voice Recognition Software- Can search through audio or video recordings or streams for a specific person's voice print or for specific keywords. Can listen to 1 hour worth or pre-recorded sound in 5 minutes, or can listen to up to 10 live audio streams at once. For instance, a computer running this software could be hooked up to a radio scanner, could monitor 10 audio bugs and will trigger an alarm any time it hears the word "bomb." Interface: Text/Speech. Size: 2 ZB. UF 0. Uses 3 Power. Costs \$10.

VR Editing Suite- Tools for designing static or interactive VR simulations. Also includes tools for modeling VR constructs from real people, places, animals and objects captured on still images or video. The suite can create self executing VR "games" (although nothing near the complexity and realism of the huge VR worlds that most VR addicts inhabit). Interface: VR. Size: 50 ZB. UF 2. Uses 7 Power. Costs \$400.

VR Training Programs- These small simulations put the user in a VR world where they can practice some skill or task to perfection. There are training programs for everything from karate to cake baking. Every 4 hours spent using one of these programs reduces the skill cost to buy a skill by 2 (minimum 2). Each different skill and each different level within that skill requires its own unique module. Interface: VR. Size: 10 ZB. UF 0. Uses 5 Power. Module costs are:

	Level 1 or 2	Level 3 or 4	Level 5
Athletics (ATHL)	\$200	\$300	\$400
Bio/Med (BIO)	\$250	\$350	\$500
Combat (CMBT)	\$650	\$800	\$1000
Military (MIL)	\$650	\$800	\$1000
Tech (TECH)	\$150	\$300	\$450
Thief/Espionage (THIE)	\$350	\$500	\$650
Sociological (SOC)	\$90	\$120	\$250

Information

These are pieces of data which contain stored human knowledge for humans to reference. Most information comes in the form of text and pictures and can be printed in a paper volume, stored on a computer or even implanted in one's brain as a mental program.

Books- These are reference materials that can be used to supplement a pre-existing skill (Ref), substitute for having a skill (Intro) or both (Intro/Ref). See the section on Using Skills (p.59) for more info. Books can be bought either as paper volumes, computer programs or mental programs. Paper books come in 1 or more hard-bound paperback volumes (½ lb. each). Computer programs require 1 Power to run and take up a 1 ZB of storage space. Mental programs use up MMUs as listed below, and require an additional installation cost.

Skill	Type	Cost	Paper Vols	Mental Program	
				MMUs	Installation Cost
Acupuncture	Ref	\$10	1	4	\$80
Anonymity	Intro	\$20	1	4	\$80
Biological Weapons	Intro	\$30	1	4	\$80
Bomb Disarming	Intro/Ref	\$30	1	4	\$80
Chemical Analysis	Ref	\$15	1	4	\$80
Copy Protection	Ref	\$25	1	4	\$80
Corporations	Intro/Ref	\$30	3	12	\$240
Denial of Service	Intro	\$25	1	4	\$80
Diagnosis	Intro/Ref	\$20	2	8	\$160
Forensic Pathology	Ref	\$15	1	4	\$80
Forgery	Ref	\$30	1	4	\$80
Gun Repair	Intro	\$15	1	4	\$80
Herbal Medicine	Intro/Ref	\$15	1	4	\$80
History: City	Intro/Ref	\$10	1	4	\$80
Information Smuggling	Intro	\$20	1	4	\$80
Law: Basic	Intro/Ref	\$25	2	8	\$160
Law: Criminal	Ref	\$30	3	12	\$240
Legends	Intro/Ref	\$25	3	12	\$240
Linework	Ref	\$15	1	4	\$80
Microelectronics	Ref	\$20	2	8	\$160
Money	Intro	\$10	1	4	\$80
Network Protocols	Ref	\$20	2	8	\$160
Network Security	Ref	\$25	1	4	\$80
Operating Systems	Ref	\$25	2	8	\$160
Pharmacology	Ref	\$35	3	12	\$240
Plastic Surgery	Ref	\$20	1	4	\$80
Poisons	Intro/Ref	\$25	1	4	\$80
Production Chemistry	Ref	\$30	3	12	\$240
Programming: Application	Ref	\$10	1	4	\$80
Programming: Virus	Ref	\$25	1	4	\$80
Programming: VR	Ref	\$25	2	8	\$160
Psychopharmacology	Ref	\$15	1	4	\$80
Social Work	Intro/Ref	\$10	1	4	\$80
Surgery	Ref	\$25	2	8	\$160
System Crashing	Intro	\$30	1	4	\$80
Veterinary Medicine	Intro/Ref	\$25	2	8	\$160

City Map- A street map of the city with notes on landmarks and places of interest. Costs \$2.

Super City Map- A 3D street map with blueprints taken from the Dept. of Urban Planning, as well as known owners of various buildings and tons of demographic information per city block (crime rate, power consumption, reported TB cases, etc.). Costs \$200.

Operating Systems

Non-Tech characters can skip this section: if you buy a computer it comes with some version of OpenMicro (if it is a handheld) or OpenCert (if it is a laptop or desktop) installed on it. These are probably the only operating systems you ever have or ever will use.

An operating system is a computer program. It is the program that comes on automatically whenever a computer is turned on. The operating system connects to various hardware devices (monitors, keyboards, speakers, microphones, mental stimulators, net connections, etc.) and allows the user to interact with the machine. The operating system lets users run and control various applications.

Techie characters can choose the operating system of their computer devices. Different operating systems have different advantages and disadvantages. Although most programs come in forms compatible with every major operating system, some programs were originally written for a certain operating system and any other version is just a cheap copy. For example: all the professional media editing programs were designed in Amicus and later ported to other operating systems. The Amicus versions are still the best, and so Amicus users who own a Media Editing Suite get +4 to skill rolls using this program.

The different operating systems available are:

OpenFree- Open was the first major operating system created after the end of the Freedom Wars. Based on the most popular pre-Freedom War operating system (which passed in to the public domain). It was updated and repackaged by a group of programmers paid by the restoration committee and released free to the public. Now that the restoration committee is gone, programmers around the world use their spare time to create new updates to OpenFree. Since there is no central authority deciding which updates are best or which are necessary, running an OpenFree system that works well can be very hit-or-miss.

All the Open operating systems are highly graphical and user friendly, making them the easiest to use of any operating systems. Program controls are a variety of 3D objects which can be picked up, spun around, fit in with other components. The operating system has built in interactive help. While this is very nice for basic level users, it eats up a lot of computing resources. Open does so much at once that it tends to crash a lot.

Pros: Easy to use. Free.

Cons: Not very powerful. Doesn't always work with all modern software. Users typically spend a lot of time searching for patches and components.

Control Type: Graphical/VR

Costs \$0.

OpenCert- Several corporations cooperate on a UN mandated "Open Standards and Certification Committee." This committee decides on standards for commercial versions of the Open operating system. This means that each corporation can write and sell their own version of Open, but each is certified so that a program written in one will work on all of them. Getting certification costs millions but corporations who make versions of OpenCert make their money back. The OpenCert versions compete

with each other, each one claims to work better or have better features (in reality they are mostly the same). Corporations that manufacture and sell computers typically ship those computers with their version of OpenCert on them. OpenCert installations have many important copy protection features to make sure that their users pay for them, and hackers around the world fight a constant battle to find ways to break these features.

Like OpenFree, OpenCert is a huge memory hog. Unlike OpenFree, millions of corporate programmers keep the OpenCert code reliable and secure.

Pros: Easy to use. Compatible with all Open software. Many features.

Cons: Memory and power hog. Expensive.

Control Type: Graphical/VR

Costs \$100 (comes free with any laptop or desktop computer).

OpenMicro- This is a scaled down version of Open for use on handheld computers (palmtops, watches, glasses). It is simpler and has less features so it can run on a much less powerful computer. Like OpenCert, it is made according to standards so that any software written for use with OpenMico can work on any handheld.

Pros: Works on handheld computers.

Cons: Not as many features, can't run large applications.

Control Type: Graphical/Text/Speech

Costs \$50 (comes free with any handheld computer).

Amicus- Amicus was created in-house for a VR Programming company before the Freedom Wars and fell in to the public domain after the Freedom Wars. Amicus is simple, powerful, has a quick and aesthetically pleasing interface, and is the operating system of choice for graphic designers, electronic musicians and VR programmers. All of the really sophisticated software packages for sound, graphics and VR are created for use on Amicus. Amicus is not very flexible and although it can be used for non-design purposes, it is not as good as other operating systems.

Pros: +4 to graphics, sound and VR rolls. Quick and precise interface.

Cons: Costly, non-graphic/sound/VR programs harder to find.

Control Type: Graphical

Costs \$75.

Mainframe 10- This operating system is designed specifically for use on large servers and corporate mainframes. The purpose of this operating system is to run server software applications smoothly and reliably

with easy recovery from backups in the case of a problem. Mainframe is seldom used on desktop computers. Since the OS is not designed to be used often, it has a very basic interface (though it is very precise).

Pros: Runs servers reliably and powerfully (+10 difficulty to crash a computer, +10 to Operating Systems rolls to repair a computer). Frees up system resources (+20 ZB, +2 power if running this instead of OpenCert).

Cons: Requires at least 1 level in Operating Systems (specializing in Mainframe 10) to use.

Control Type: Text/Speech

Costs \$150.

GuildOS- This is the official operating system created by the Hacker's Guild. The Guild creates new updates every year and releases them for free. The GuildOS operating system has special built-in features, most of which were added in order to create a community of criminal computer hackers and to resist several attempts to wipe out the operating system:

-Built in 30 strength one-key encryption which can encrypt all the files on the hard drive (user must have a data key to access the computer).

-An emulator that can run OpenCert programs (at -2 power).

-Ability to mimic OpenCert (a person booting up the machine and casually examining it will think it's a normal OpenCert machine with nothing special on it).

-Decentralized anonymous file sharing. Each instance of GuildOS that is connected to the network creates a file sharing node. Each node anonymizes other nodes (so nobody can track down the actual source of a file or piece of info). Users must share data in order to get data.

-Decentralized knowledge tree where GuildOS users put information about every imaginable technical question. Like the file sharing, users must give in order to get and the originator of knowledge can be anonymous.

-Thousands of on-line chat rooms where hackers chat anonymously about any given topic.

Pros: Free. Frees up system resources (+20 ZB, +2 power if running this instead of OpenCert). Requires a Hard Operating Systems roll to install GuildOS. Built in encryption and emulation. Built in file sharing, chat and knowledge tree (+15 to Data Pirating and Internet Browsing rolls). Users can easily control every aspect of the operating system (gives +10 to Anonymity, Copy Protection, Jellynailing and Operating Systems rolls).

Cons: Illegal. No safety controls (one mis-typed command can destroy the OS). Requires at least one level in Operating Systems (specializing in GuildOS) to run.

Control Type: Text/Speech

Legality: Forbidden (\$500 fine)

Costs \$0.

INFO TECH

Info Tech Features

Battery Life: All portable devices come with built in rechargeable batteries. Batteries can be recharged at any AC outlet and typically take less than 10 minutes to fully charge.

Input: Whatever devices are built in to the hardware to allow it to take commands from a user. Additional input options can be purchased and attached to the device.

Output: The device's built in to hardware to allow it to display information to the user. The most common output devices are visual displays (LCD screens) and speakers.

Power: Any device capable of running applications has a power rating. Applications use up a certain amount of power while running. For example: a laptop with 7 power could run a program that uses 3 power and a program that uses 4 power simultaneously, but could not run a program that uses 8 power.

Memory: Any device capable of storing data or applications has the amount it can store (in ZBs) listed.

Phone Addresses

There are no more "phone numbers" since all phones are simple computers that send and receive sound data over the internet. Instead of a number, the user has an address assigned by their internet service provider. For instance, Kim Ibn'Fazar, who gets her internet through NYR-LAN, might have a phone address of KIFazar@Manhattan.NYR-LAN.com.us. It is only rarely that people have to remember an address because most phones can access public and personal address books.

Cellphone (Used)- An old cellphone, barely compatible with modern networks. It can only do voice, there is a lot of packet loss (static), it is incapable of encryption, it hardly works at all inside buildings, and batteries only last for about 2 hours worth of talking. Costs \$15 +\$5/week for a cellular account (see p.97).

Cellular Modem- This small device, which can plug in to the access port on any modern computer, allows the computer to access the internet through any of the city's cellular networks. Will create a medium speed connection (good enough for everything but full-immersion VR). Costs \$50 +\$5/week for a cellular account (see p.97).

Data Card- This is the modern equivalent of a data disk. It is the size and shape of a business card, designed to fit in to a wallet. It can be bent, scratched or written on without destroying the data inside. Memory: 2 ZB. Costs \$5.

Data Key- Small key shaped object, holds up to 1 ZB of data and can be plugged in to a standard I/O Jack for most computers. Data keys are typically used to hold encryption keys. Costs \$5.

Data Key (Security)- Like the data key, but data is held in hotcoded form (any attempt to take apart the key to get out the memory chip will destroy the data). The key only makes the data available if the owner's thumb is pressed to the key and a secret code word is whispered in to it. If the wrong code word is used three times, the data on the key deletes itself. Many paranoid people have permanently lost access to everything on their hard drives because they lost the key, broke the key, lost a thumb or forgot the password. The higher quality banks issue these keys to their customers instead of ATM cards. Costs \$75.

Data Recorder- This very simple device has data jack inputs and records everything that comes in through the inputs. Up to 10 days worth of live streams from just about any input device can be recorded and retrieved later. Battery Life: 10 days. Costs \$100.

Desktop (Homemade)- This computer is made entirely from parts scavenged from the trash. Because some of the parts are old and on the edge of going bad, every week there is a 1 in 20 chance of the computer breaking. Input: Keyboard, Voice. Output: Monitor, Speakers. Power: 7. Memory: 30 ZB. Weighs 20 lbs. Costs \$100.

Desktop (New)- A new, high-end computer. Input: Keyboard, Voice. Output: Monitor, Speakers. Power: 15. Memory: 60 ZB. Weighs 15 lbs. Costs \$3,000.

Desktop (Used)- A used computer that was new about 5 years ago. Input: Keyboard, Voice. Output: Monitor, Speakers. Power: 6. Memory: 25 ZB. Weighs 20 lbs. Costs \$200.

Language Translator- About the size and shape of a wallet, this computer contains voice recognition and translation software for 20 common languages (including English, Spanish, French, Kalor and Arabic - the most common languages spoken in the city) with a data card slot for adding in other languages. It automatically determines what languages are being spoken and translates between them. Batteries last 8 hours. Costs \$200 +\$10 per language card.

Laptop (New)- A new, high-end laptop. Input: Keyboard, Voice. Output: Monitor, Speakers. Power 12. Memory 40 ZB. Weighs 4 lbs. Costs \$4,000.


Laptop (Used)- An old used laptop. Input: Keyboard, Voice. Output: Monitor, Speakers. Power 5. Memory 20 ZB. Weighs 6 lbs. Costs \$400.

Line Tap (Fiber-Optic)- A small device for tapping in to fiber-optic lines without interrupting them. Costs \$45.

Line Tap (Direct)- A set of devices that looking like nail-clippers with wires attached to them. When they are clamped on to a wire they push metallic contacts in to the core of the wire, allowing the user to splice in to communication lines without interrupting them. Costs \$10.

Line Tap (Inversion)- Superconducting pads that can be placed on a wall. It uses electromagnets and electromagnetic sensors to tap in to the data lines inside the wall without actually touching them. Costs \$150.

Mental Stimulator (Basic)- A small arch which the top of the head is inserted in, small enough to be strapped to a bed or the head of an easy-chair. This device uses Radiochemical Neural Stimulation (p.208) to allow a computer to directly interact with the user's motor and sensory areas. Users must wear a small dermal patch which puts the necessary chemicals in to their bloodstream. Typically, this machine is used to put the users in to a full-immersion VR simulation. The device is not precise enough to create a "photorealistic" simulation (there is a noticeable blurriness in a simulation which distinguishes it from real-life). The device is also physically incapable of shooting radio-beams in to many areas of the brain (it's not possible to do things like activate pleasure centers or stop the heart). VR Fantasy companies rent these devices to their regular subscribers, and those found on the black market have typically been stolen from subscribers during house burglaries. Weighs 35 lbs. Costs \$300.

Pager-  A tiny hunk of old technology that can clip on a belt. Passively receives unencrypted radio signals, can receive phone addresses, text or short (up to 30 second) voice messages. Battery Life: 48 hours. Costs \$20 +\$1/wk. for service.

Palmtop (Combo)- This palmtop computer is packed with every available feature (All the features of Language Translator, Palmtop: Wayfinder, Palmtop: Communicator, Video Camera: Cheap and Radio Scanner). Battery Life: 36 hours. Power 3. Memory: 10 ZB. Weighs .5 lbs. Costs \$400 +\$5/week for cellular service.

Palmtop (Communicator)- A small palmtop computer with a built-in cellular modem so the owner can make phone calls or surf the internet from anywhere there is cellular service. Battery Life: 24 hours. Power 3. Memory: 7 ZB. Weighs .5 lbs. Costs \$100 +\$5/week for cellular service.

Palmtop (Linework)- This palmtop is designed for network hardware techs who need to be able to tap in to LANs and diagnose problems. Comes with built all three types of Line Taps built in and preloaded Sniffer software. Battery Life: 24 hours. Power: 2. Memory: 5 ZB. Weighs .7 lbs. Costs \$200.

Palmtop (Organizer)- The size and shape of a wallet. This small computer is used for taking notes, keeping addresses and calendars and storing reference materials. Input: Touch sensitive screen, voice input, digital camera. Output: Small color LCD, sound. Can synchronize with other computers within 10 ft. Battery Life: 24 hours. Power 2. Memory 5 ZB. Weighs .5 lbs. Costs \$25.

Palmtop (Wayfinder)- A small computerized device the size of a wallet with a built in GPS and street maps for the entire world. The device shows the user where he or she is on a map and can give spoken directions to get to any street address. Battery Life: 24 hours. Power 2. Memory 3 ZB. Weighs .5 lbs. Costs \$50.

Printer- An old peripheral device which prints full color text and images on pieces of paper. Costs \$20 +\$10 for a 1000 page ink cartridge.

Repeater- Small bell shaped handheld device, can adhere to almost any surface. Amplifies and relays radio and cellphone signals. The repeater is used to get signal to cellular or radio based devices in places like underground tunnels, the center of a large building, etc. Battery Life: 24 hours. Weighs 1 lb. Costs \$100.

UPS (Small)- About the size and shape of a shoebox, this device plugs in to a wall and keeps a battery charged. In the event of a loss of power, this battery can power one normal electronic device (e.g. a computer) for 1 hour. Weighs 10 lbs. Costs \$50.

See Also

Cellular Service (p.97)
Paycomputer (p.98)
Payvidphone (p.98)
Time on a Code Breaker (p.99)
Time on a Supercomputer (p.99)



Chemical

Chemical Features

Administered: How the drug is taken. Note that intravenous injections take a skill roll (using the skill Needles or most Bio/Med skills).

Effects: What the effects are of one dose of the drug. The effects are grouped by how long they last. Effects that can be saved against have the difficulty to save listed after them. E.g. "+7 STH, Vomiting (10), Unconsciousness (20) for 2 hours" means that for two hours the user gets +7 STH, must save vs. vomiting at 10 difficulty and vs. unconsciousness at 20 difficulty. Unless stated otherwise, users only have to make one save vs. each drug effect during the entire period of effects.

Withdrawal Effects: What effects the user experiences when the chemical starts to exit the user's system (unless stated otherwise, this is when all the Effects cease). The amount of time that Withdrawal Effects lasts is listed.

Tolerance: How much more of the chemical a user must use after having taken many doses. E.g. "+10% for every month of daily use (max. +50%)." means that for each month of daily use, the user must take an aggregate 10% more to get the same effects, with a maximum possible tolerance of +50%.

Addiction: When there is a possibility that a drug may be psychologically and/or physiologically addictive, the difficulties are listed here. Users must save vs. addiction based on the listed difficulties with +1 difficulty for each consecutive dose. The difficulty to resist drug cravings and any special circumstances which will trigger cravings is listed. E.g. Psychological Addiction Difficulty 15 means that if a PC uses 7 doses in a row he or she must make a roll of WIL + 1d20 vs. 22 or become psychologically addicted to the drug. See p.58 for the complete rules of addiction.

Long Term Effects: These are the additional effects on a user who uses the drug a lot over a long period of time. Length, frequency and effects are listed. E.g. the effects of using the drug 10 times within 24 hours might be listed, or the effects of using a drug daily for one year might be listed.

Long Term Withdrawal Effects: These are the additional effects of withdrawal on a user who has been using the drug a lot over a long period of time.

Interactions: If there are any potential changes of effect when this chemical is taken along with other chemicals, they are listed here.

Overdose: Each chemical may have several overdose ratings. "Overdose (2x)" may list the effects of taking two doses at once, "Overdose (4x)" may list the effect of four doses.

Alcohol- One of the oldest medicinal and recreational drugs. In ancient times, weak alcoholic beverages were the only liquids people could drink without fear of bacterial and parasitic infections. Today, alcohol is the number one recreational drug and number one drug of abuse. Liquor stores are among the most profitable businesses in the city. In its purest form alcohol can be burned and it can be used as a disinfectant.

Administered: Orally as a liquid (can also be snorted or taken as an enema).

Effects: +4 to save vs. fear, +2 to save vs. pain, clumsiness (-2 AGY), slower reactions (-2 to INL rolls based on speed of thought), pleasant buzz for 4 hours.

Withdrawal Effects: The next day, sensitivity to stimuli (-10 to save vs. pain/dose), nausea (10 difficulty/dose), headache (10 difficulty/dose) for 6 hours.

Tolerance: +1% for every dose (max. +500%). Note that tolerance disappears when liver damage sets in (see Long Term Effects).

Addiction: Physiological Addiction Difficulty 15, Psychological Addiction Difficulty 15, Craving Difficulty 15 (cravings triggered by anxiety).

Long Term Effects: For every two years of daily use: brain damage (-1 INL, -1 AWR), permanent Retrograde Amnesia and Anterograde Amnesia (at 2 cumulative difficulty), liver damage (-1 to save vs. drug/poison effects).

Long Term Withdrawal: After 1 month or more of daily use the user experiences delirium tremens: Hallucinations (30), Delusions (30), Panic (20), confusion (-10 INL), Insomnia (30), fever, sweating, Seizures (10), dizziness (-10 to save vs. loss of balance), Cardiac Arrest (10).

Overdose (2x): Vomiting (20), +10 to save vs. fear, +6 to save vs. pain, clumsiness (-10 AGY), confusion (-10 INL), loss of inhibitions for 5 hours.

Overdose (4x): Vomiting (30), Coma (20), Seizures (20) for 6 hours.

Overdose (8x): Coma (30), Seizures (30) for 6 hours. Liver damage (permanent -4 to save vs. drug/poison effects).

Costs \$1/dose for pruno (home-brewed alcohol made from canned fruit, bitter tasting, found in prisons and some wino encampments).

Costs \$1/dose for fortified wine or beer (wine or beer with extra alcohol added, this is the most common drink of winos because it provides the most alcohol per dollar).

Costs \$2/dose for canned beer, beer on tap, or a shot of liquor (at a bar or convenience store).

Costs \$5/dose for good quality beer, wine or other alcoholic beverage.

Costs \$15/dose for very high quality alcoholic beverage.

Costs \$10/dose for absinthe (an illegal alcoholic drink that also had mild psychedelic properties comparable to herbal psychedelic, p.89).

Amnesiant

Administered: Intravenously

Effects: Retrograde Amnesia (40), -4 INL, -2 AGY, blurred vision (-4 to vision based AWR rolls) for 4 hours.

Withdrawal Effects: Dry throat, Headache (20) for 1 day.

Overdose Effects (2x): -6 INL, -4 AGY, Seizures (20).

Overdose Effects (4x): Unconsciousness (30), Seizures (30), permanent brain damage (-4 INL, loss of memories and skills).

Long Term Effects: For every 5 doses: Brain damage (permanent -1 INL).

Amphetamines- A prescription drug and drug of abuse since the 1930s.

Administered: Orally as pills (also sniffed, smoked and injected).

Effects: Excitement, pleasure, +10 to save vs. loss of consciousness for 5 hours.

Withdrawal Effects: Dysphoria (10), anxiety (-4 to save vs. fear), Insomnia (20) for 24 hours.

Addiction: Physiological Addiction Difficulty 10, Psychological Addiction Difficulty 5, Craving Difficulty 20.

Long Term Effects: After 4 doses in 24 hours: Hallucinations (20 +10/additional dose), Delusions (20 +10/additional dose). After 1 month of daily use: ulcers, malnutrition (-1 BLD, -1 BDY).

Long Term Withdrawal Effects: After 4 doses in 24 hours: Dysphoria (20), Anxiety (-8 to save vs. fear), Insomnia (30), Trembling (-5 AGY) for 24 hours.

Overdose (2x): Normal Effects plus Difficulty Breathing/Irregular Heartbeat (-10 END) for 5 hours.

Overdose (4x): Seizures (20), Coma (20) for 5 hours.

Legality: Permit (2 yrs. prison)

Costs \$5/dose.

Antibiotics

Administered: Orally as pills

Effects: +8 to save vs. disease progression for bacterial, fungal and parasitic infections.

Overdose Effects (4x): Nausea (20).

Long Term Effects: For every use, 2% chance of developing antibiotic resistant strain. For every course of antibiotics which is not completed the chance increases to 10%.

Costs \$50 for a full 2 week course (\$500 during a bacterial plague outbreak).

Anti-Nauseant

Administered: Intramuscular Injection

Effects: +15 to save vs. nausea for 4 hours

Costs \$10/dose.

Anti-Psychotic- A cocktail of drugs meant to treat hallucinations, delusions, bizarre thinking and inappropriate emotions that can be brought on by schizophrenia, a severe manic episode, stimulant drug induced psychosis or severe psychological trauma.

Administered: Orally as pills or intra-muscular injection.

Effects: +10 to save vs. hallucinations/delusions, mild sedation, Dysphoria (10). Lasts 24 hours.

Long Term Effects: Because the pills have an anhedonic (loss of ability to feel pleasure) effect, regular users must make weekly WIL rolls (10 difficulty) to continue taking the drug willingly.

Overdose (2x): -5 AWR, -5 INL, +20 to save vs. hallucinations/delusions, Dysphoria (20) for 24 hours.

Overdose (4x): Tardive Dyskinesia (permanent -4 AGY due to brain damage), Stupor (20) for 24 hours.

Costs \$10/dose.

Anti-Shock- A drug that helps keep the body from going in to shock after a physical trauma or systemic infection.

Normal Dose: +10 to save vs. trauma or anaphylactic shock for 2 hours.

Costs \$15/dose.

Anti-Viral- A cocktail of drugs that interferes with the reproduction of viruses.

Administration: Orally as pills.

Effects: +7 to save vs. disease progression from viral diseases.

Long Term Effects: For every use, 2% chance of developing anti-viral resistant strain.

Costs \$35 got a full 7 day course.

Saving Vs. Drug Effects

When a chemical lists an effect with a difficulty next to it, users must save vs. that effect. E.G. if a certain dose of a drug causes Seizures (20) the user must save vs. seizures at difficulty 20 or suffer seizures. What follows are the attributes used to save and the effects of a failed save:

Anaphylactic Shock (END): END = 0, all other attributes halved. 1 BLD damage per minute.

Anterograde Amnesia (INL): Cannot remember anything about his or her past.

Cardiac Arrest (END): 1 BLD damage per round.

Coma (END): Unconscious and unable to waken. With a failure of 10+ the user suffers cardiac arrest.

Delusions (WIL): Believes without reservation some thought or idea (e.g. I am impervious to bullets).

Dysphoria (WIL): Overwhelmed by unhappiness/depression and unable to initiate any activity.

Euphoria (WIL): Overwhelmed by pleasure and unable to initiate any activity.

Hallucinations (WIL): Senses things which he or she is unable to distinguish from real sensations.

Headache (WIL): -1 penalty to all rolls per point of failure.

Insomnia (WIL): Sleep deprivation damage (see p.56) as 1 night without sleep.

Obfuscating Hallucinations (WIL): Unable to see, hear or feel real stimuli because of hallucinations.

Panic (WIL): Does anything to escape danger. With failure of 10+ the user makes random counterproductive actions.

Paralysis (WIL): Unable to move. With a failure of 10+ user is unable to breathe.

Pulmonary Arrest (END): 1 END damage per round, then 1 BLD damage per round.

Retrograde Amnesia (INL): Will not later remember anything that happened during intoxication.

Seizures (WIL): Loses consciousness for 1d6 minutes, loses all pooled END. With a failure of 5+ there is possible of physical injury. With failure of 10+ there is brain damage (-1 INL, AWR or AGY).

Stupor (WIL): Unable to think, remember, concentrate or make decisions (INL = 0, WIL = 0).

Sudden Amnesia (WIL): Forgets where he or she is and what's going on, takes 1d6 rounds to remember.

Unconsciousness (END/WIL): Unless specified otherwise, lasts 1 round per point of failure.

Vomiting (WIL): -20 to all other actions while vomiting.

Anxiolytic- These pills are designed to help people with panic disorders by reducing anxiety and stress.

Administration: Orally as pills.

Effects: +5 to save vs. fear for 24 hours.

Tolerance: +10% for every month of daily use (max. +50%).

Addiction: Psychological Addiction Difficulty 0, Craving Difficulty 15 (cravings triggered by fear or worry).

Long Term Withdrawal Effects: After 1 month of daily use: -10 to save vs. fear.

Overdose (2x): +10 to save vs. fear, -3 AGY, -2 INL, -2 AWR, -5 to save vs. unconsciousness for 24 hours.

Overdose (4x): Unconsciousness (30), Coma (10) for 24 hours.

Legality: Permit (2 yrs. prison)

Costs \$7/dose.

Awake Inhaler

Administration: Inhaled orally.

Effects: +15 to save vs. unconsciousness/coma (if patient is already unconscious he or she can make a save to wake up), nervousness (-7 to save vs. fear), shaking (-4 AGY), difficulty paying attention (-7 to most INL based skill rolls) for 10 minutes.

Withdrawal Effects: Tiredness (-4 END) for 2 hours.

Overdose (2x): Difficulty breathing (-10 END), muscle cramps (-10 AGY), Hallucinations (10) for 15 minutes.

Overdose (4x): Cardiac Arrest (30), Seizures (30) for 20 minutes.

Legality: Permit (2 yrs. prison)

Costs \$100 for a 10 dose inhaler.

Blood Plugs- A metal vial with a strong, thick needle. The blood plugs contains a variety of stimulants, sugars and oxygenated chemicals.

Administration: Injection directly in to the heart (requires skill roll).

Effects: +3 BLD, +2 END, +7 to save vs. unconsciousness for 1 hour.

Overdose (2x): No additional effects.

Bought From: Pharmacy (with Prescription), Black Market Traders, Needle Punks, Black Meds.

Legality: Permit (\$500 fine)

Costs \$75

Bright- This drug increases the sensitivity of sensory neurons and stimulates the parts of the brain that interprets sensory stimuli. Unpleasant sensations become more unpleasant, pleasant sensations become more pleasant and all sensations become much more acute.

Administration: Orally as pills.

Effects: +5 AWR, -7 to save vs. pain/nausea, sensitivity to loud sounds, bright lights, strong smells, etc. for 2 hours.

Overdose (2x): Painful hypersensitivity (must save vs. pain for any sensory stimuli), hallucinations (30) that things are vibrating for 2 hours.

Overdose (4x): Seizures (30) for 2 hours.

Long Term Withdrawal Effects: After 4 consecutive doses: -4 AWR for 24 hours.

Tolerance: +10% for every week of daily use (max. +400%).

Interactions: Doubles the effects of hallucinogens.

Legality: Licensed (4 yrs. prison)

Costs \$15/dose

Caffeine

Administration: Orally

Effects: +4 to save vs. unconsciousness for 2 hours.

Tolerance: +10% for every year of regular use, max +100

Addiction: Physiological addiction difficulty 1, craving difficulty 5 (cravings triggered by sleep deprivation).

Long Term Withdrawal Effects: -4 to save vs. unconsciousness, Headache (10) for 2 days.

Overdose (2x) +7 to save vs. unconsciousness.

Overdose (4x): Shaking/cramps (-4 AGY).

Costs \$0.75/dose for a large cup of coffee (a cup of hot coffee in a paper cup is also a good way to warm up your hands after a long cold night on the streets).

Costs \$1.50/dose for an espresso shot.

Costs \$0.50/dose for a caffeine pill (usually used by stressed out corporate employees whose stomachs are too sensitive for coffee).

Costs \$0.25/dose for a teabag full of green tea and guarana (herbs with as much caffeine and caffeine-like chemicals as coffee).

Costs \$1.00/dose for a large caffeinated soda from a convenience store.

Chomper- The first drug created by the Drug Lords. Chomper is no longer aggressively marketed. Most Chomper addicts are now dead or have become Hungry (see p.153).

Administration: Intravenous injection.

Effects: Pleasurable mood swings, anxiety reduction (-7 to save vs. fear), grinding of teeth for 6 hours.

Withdrawal Effects: After 16 hrs. without using the drug: shortness of breath (-5 END), Panic (20), vertigo (-10 to save vs. loss of balance), Headache (20) for 4 days.

Addiction: Physiological Addiction Difficulty 30, Craving Difficulty 30.

Long Term Effects: Hair/teeth loss (-5 to seduction rolls), liver damage (-1 to save vs. poison/drug effects per month of daily use), anemia (-1 BLD/year of daily use).

Overdose (2x): Endocrine collapse (certain parts of the endocrine system necrotize, death within 4 hours unless given an experimental endocrine control implant).

Legality: Forbidden (4 yrs. prison)

Costs \$5/dose from Drug Lords.

Costs \$20/dose from Black Market Traders and Goods.

Cigarettes- Cigarettes contain nicotine which has a mild calming effect (although the effect is mostly from breathing deeply, not from smoking) and is a weak anti-psychotic (which is why so many schizophrenics self-medicate by smoking). Cigarettes can be used in self-defense by burning opponents (hard blinding, hard pain/stun). Cigarettes have the following drug profile:

Effects: +2 to save vs. fear, +2 to save vs. hallucinations/delusions for 1 hour.

Tolerance: +10% for every month of regular use (max +200%).

Addiction: Physiological Addiction Difficulty 0, Craving Difficulty 20 (cravings triggered by stress or any activity which was previously always followed by a cigarette).

Long Term Effects: Emphysema (-1 END/2 yrs. Smoking), increased risk of cancer and stroke.

Long Term Withdrawal Effects: -4 to save vs. fear, -4 to save vs. hallucinations/delusions, headache (20), food cravings.

Overdose (2x): Nausea (20) for 1 hour.

Costs \$3/12 doses for roll-your-own (usually smoked by homeless people because it is the cheapest and requires the smoker to have a lot of free time).

Costs \$5/12 doses for generic pack (usually smoked by wells and people on minimum wage because they are the cheapest ready-to-smoke cigarettes).

Costs \$7/12 doses for reservation cigarettes (usually smoked by traditionalists or the paradoxical health-conscious smoker because they are pure tobacco with no additives, genetic modifications or pesticides).

Costs \$7/12 doses for clove cigarettes (usually smoked by Indies because they are trendy and don't smell as objectionable as most other cigarettes).

Compliance Drops- Usually used to drug someone before a kidnapping, rape or robbery. Also used as a "truth serum."

Administration: Orally as tasteless liquid.

Effects: Confusion (-10 AWR, -10 INL), Sudden Amnesia (20), anxiety (-10 to save vs. fear), timidness (-10 WIL, must make INL or WIL rolls to avoid following any order), physical weakness (-10 STH, -10 SPD, -5 AGY), Anterograde Amnesia (20) for 4 hours.

Withdrawal Effects: Headache (20), blurry vision (-10 to AWR based rolls), dizziness (-10 to save vs. loss of balance) for 24 hours.

Overdose (2x): Unconsciousness (40), Coma (30), Pulmonary Arrest (20) for 4 hours.

Legality: Forbidden (4 yrs. prison)

Costs \$20/dose.

Contraceptive Pills- Available for men or women. One pill lasts 30 days. Costs \$25/dose.

Escape- Originally designed as a psychiatric drug for short-term treatment of emotional trauma, now a major street drug. Escape addiction is a little like suicide: all the bad things in the abuser's life cease to matter, but so do the good things. Abusers sleep-walk thought life, driven by the habit of self-preservation but not caring about anything. Because of their inability to feel pleasure, the Hungry are immune to most addictions, but not to Escape addiction.

Administration: Orally as pills or smoked as powder.

Effects: Depersonalization (feeling that everything one experiences is happening to somebody else, +15 to save vs. anger/fear/pain/euphoria/dysphoria), -5 WIL for 24 hours.

Withdrawal Effects: None.

Long Term Effects: Steady, slow loss of personality and ability to sleep, poor vision (-1 to vision based AWR rolls per year of use).

Addiction: Psychological Addiction Difficulty 20, Craving Difficulty 20.

Overdose (2x): Catatonia (20), coughing blood (2 BLD damage).

Overdose (4x): Catatonia (40), coughing blood (8 BLD damage).

Legality: Licensed (4 yrs. prison)

Costs \$20/dose.

General Anesthetic- Used to make a patient unconscious and unresponsive to pain during surgery. Requires a medical skill roll to apply the right dosage (see underdose and overdose).

Administration: Intravenously.

Effects: Unconsciousness (50), immunity to pain,

Anterograde Amnesia of events immediately preceding administration, for 1 hour.

Overdose (1.25x): Cardiac Arrest (30), Pulmonary Attack (30).

Underdose (0.75x): Stupor (40), extreme pain may cause the body to go in to shock.

Long Term Effects: Mild brain damage: -1 INL for every 10 uses.

Costs \$50/dose.

Glucose- Blood sugar. It is injected when a patient is in danger of going in to convulsions from diabetic insulin shock or in danger of metabolic collapse in patients with mitochondrial vampirism. Costs \$5/dose in a pre-loaded syringe.

God Killer- Displaced crack cocaine in 2061 as the #1 illegal drug in the city and was only recently displaced by the "new generation" drugs. There are still a huge number of god killer addicts in the city, and most violent burglaries, muggings and robberies are committed by people under the influence of god killer who are stealing to feed their god killer habit. God killer causes an intensely pleasurable stimulant rush and an equally pleasurable feeling of megalomania and invulnerability (see p.188 for more).

Administration: Smoked.

Effects: Intense pleasure and excitement, +15 to save vs. pain/fear/unconsciousness, Delusions (30) (delusions are of grandeur, megalomania, solipsism, invulnerability) for 3 hours.

Overdose (2x): Psychotic rage (30), +4 STH, +4 INCY, immunity to pain, Cardiac Arrest (10).

Overdose (4x): Cardiac Arrest (30), psychotic rage (40).

Long Term Effects: Emphysema (-1 END/yr. of use), increased risk of cancer, brain damage (-1 INL and -1 AWR per 2 yrs. of use).

Withdrawal Effects: Anxiety (-7 to save vs. fear) for 24 hours.

Long Term Withdrawal Effects: After daily use for 1 month: Panic (30).

Tolerance: +10% per month of regular use (max +50%).

Addiction: Psychological Addiction Difficulty 20, Craving Difficulty 30 (cravings triggered by feelings of helplessness or low self esteem).

Legality: Forbidden (4 yrs. prison)

Costs \$7/dose from the Drug Lords.

Costs \$10/dose from Black Market traders, Goods.

Hallucinogen- For the most part this is a recreational drug (though there are those that use hallucinogens for religious, psychic, psychological, artistic or philosophical purposes).

Administration: Orally as pills.

Effects: Hallucinations (20), +4 AWR, +2 INL for 5 hours.

Long Term Effects: For every 10 uses, permanent -1 to save vs. Hallucinations/Delusions.

Overdose (2x): Obfuscating Hallucinations (20), Delusions (20), Panic (10).

Overdose (4x): Obfuscating Hallucinations (40), Delusions (40), Panic (20).

Legality: Forbidden (2 yrs. prison)

Costs \$10/dose

Herbal Abortifacient- A matchbox full of ground herbs is swallowed whole. 75% chance of causing an abortion during early pregnancy. The mixture causes Vomiting (30), fever, weakness (-1 BLD, -10 END), Cardiac Arrest (10) for 1 day. Costs \$10/dose.

Herbal Aphrodisiac- A packet of herbs, to be made in to tea, which contains mild stimulants, mild euphorants, inhibition reducers and herbs that increase the flow of blood to the extremities. It does not cause love and only increases sexual desire if there was some amount of sexual desire to start with. Gives +4 to seduction rolls against the drinker. Costs \$3/dose.

Herbal Cleanser- A packet of herbs which, when drunk as tea, causes the drinker to run a mild fever, sweat a lot and urinate a lot. Increases the speed that toxins are flushed out of the body. Costs \$4/dose.

Herbal Emetic- A packet of dried, chopped leaves and roots. When swallowed whole, they cause immediate vomiting (30 difficulty to save). Costs \$1/dose.

Herbal Psychedelic- This collection of herbs has many of the same effects of a hallucinogen but with no actual hallucinations. The user experiences mild euphoria (+2 to save vs. pain/fear), increased psychic senses and attention to details (+4 to psychic and fine detail AWR rolls, -4 to other AWR rolls), unusual and creative thoughts (+4 to creative skills rolls) and difficulty keeping attention on one line of thought (-4 to most INL based skill rolls) and susceptibility to other hallucinogens (-8 to save vs. hallucinations and delusions) for 3 hours. Costs \$5/dose.

Herbal Sedative/Painkiller- A paper packet of herbs grown in vacant lots by Black Meds. The herbs are made in to a tea, which tastes strongly of peppermint and other bitter herbs. Includes valerian, poppy, skullcap and chamomile. Prescribed for sleeplessness (+4 to save vs. insomnia), anxiety (+4 to save vs. fear) and pain (+4 to save vs. pain). Mildly addictive (0 addiction difficulty, 10 craving difficulty). Costs \$1/dose.

Herbal Stimulant- A small packet of herbs to be made in to tea. The main stimulant chemicals are caffeine and ephedra (a chemical related to amphetamines, although much weaker). The tea is often prescribed for symptom relief for flues and colds, to help a person stay awake, or occasionally to combat mild depression. Gives +4 to save vs. unconsciousness/dysphoria and +1 END for 4 hours. Costs \$1.

Herbal Vermifuge- A large packet of herbs, makes a cloudy bitter tea. When drunk the tea helps to flush parasites out of the digestive system (+4 to save vs. disease progression for parasites). Costs \$3/dose.

Herbal War Drugs- This is one of the most exotic herbal preparations the Black Meds sell. This preparation is only found in the city (it is a unique mix of herbal traditions, including Zulu, Cree and others). The perpetrations comes in two parts: a small packet of herbs is chewed like chewing tobacco, and rags which have been dipped in herbal extracts are wrapped around the legs and dampened with alcohol. The combination makes the user feel excited, stronger, braver and slightly numb. Gives +1 STH, +1 END, +4 to save vs. unconsciousness, -4 to save vs. hallucinations/delusions, +4 to save vs. pain/fear for 4 hours. The next day the user suffers from -4 END. Costs \$10/dose.

Herbal Withdrawal Tea- A small packet of herbs, to be made in to tea, contains herbs which help lessen the effects of withdrawal from common drugs. Contains mild sedatives, euphorants and painkillers (the idea is to sleep through as much of withdrawal as possible). Gives +4 to save vs. drug cravings. Costs \$2/dose.

Herbal Wound Cleanser- A bleached sock stuffed with herbs, should be dampened and put over a wound to decrease the chance of infection. +4 to save vs. disease contraction from injuries. Costs \$5/dose.

Hummingbird- This drug semi-permanently increases the user's metabolism so that they are in a constant energetic state (except when taking short naps).

Administration: Orally as pills.

Effects: Feeling of stimulation and energy, +1 INL, +2 END, +4 to save vs. unconsciousness, +4 to save vs. hypothermia.

Long Term Effects: After taking 30 doses in 2 months: +4 END, +2 STH, +2 SPD, +8 to save vs. hypothermia, double damage from starvation. Effects disappear within 1 month after discontinuing use of Hummingbird.

Overdose (4x): Vomiting (10).

Legality: Forbidden (4 yrs. prison)

Costs \$20/dose.

Ipecac- Causes immediate vomiting when swallowed. Costs \$5/dose.

Local Anesthetic- Used for numbing body parts.

Administration: Injected in to tissues.

Effects: Insensitivity to pain in given area for 1 hour.

Overdose Effects (2x): Dizziness (-10 to save vs. loss of balance), Light-headedness (-4 INL), Vomiting (10) for 1 hour.

Costs \$5/dose.

Love Drops- Some people use this drug consensually to enhance their experiences. Others illicitly slip it in to drinks to increase the chances of compliance to sexual advances. Note that, in the culture of the streets, drugging someone without their knowledge is a crime worthy of death.

Administered: Orally as a clear, tasteless liquid.

Effects: Feelings of love, empathy, sexual desire, loss of inhibitions, -2 WIL, -2 AWR, -2 INL, +10 to seduction rolls for 4 hours.

Withdrawal Effects: Headache (10), tiredness (-4 END) for 24 hours.

Addiction: Psychological Addiction Difficulty 2, Craving Difficulty 20.

Overdose (2x): Hallucinations (20), shortness of breath (-10 END), Cardiac Arrest (10) for 2 hours.

Legality: Forbidden (4 yrs. prison)

Costs \$15/dose.

Mauler- A major drug of abuse, one of the new-generation drugs created by the Drug Lords, marketed aggressively (by holding people down and forcing them to take it) and sold almost exclusively by the Drug Lords. Mauler is best known for its long term addicts, who spend most of their days roaming the streets in packs in an irrational, animal-like state. It is sold as small squares of paper with complex symbols on them (designed to make counterfeiting the drug harder).

Administration: Paper held under tongue.

Withdrawal Effects: Burning-itching sensation on skin (save vs. distracting pain, 20 difficulty).

Addiction: Physiological Addiction Difficulty 30, Craving Difficulty 30.

Long Term Effects: Steady loss of ability for rational thought. For every month of regular use user suffers -1 INL. By 2 years the user is mostly irrational, operates via habit and instinct.

Long Term Withdrawal Effects: After daily use for at least 1 week: Burning-itching (must save vs. pain at 40 difficulty or the user will do serious damage to himself or herself by scratching).

Overdose (2x): Loss of blood pressure (-10 END, -5 INL, -5 AGY, -5 STH, -5 SPD), loss of body heat (-15 to save vs. hypothermia).

Overdose (4x): Coma (30), loss of body heat (-30 to save vs. hypothermia).

Legality: Forbidden (4 yrs. prison)

Costs \$5/dose from the Drug Lords.

Costs \$20/dose from Black Market Traders, Goods.

Maxin- The most powerful smart drug to date. Although its effects are generally unpleasant, some people became psychologically addicted to it because they dislike feeling "stupid" then they are not on the drug.

Administration: Inhaler.

Effects: +6 INL, +1 WIL, +1 AWR, excitation (+4 to save vs. unconsciousness), irritability (-4 to save vs. fear/anger/pain/nausea) for 2 hours.

Overdose (4x): Cardiac Arrest (20), Stroke (20).

Overdose (8x): Cardiac Arrest (40), Stroke (40).

Long Term Effects: Weakened bones (-1 BDY/yr. of daily use).

Addiction: Psychological Addiction Difficulty 5, Craving Difficulty 20. Cravings triggered by any activity which requires high INL.

Withdrawal Effects: Pleasant sedation (-8 to save vs. unconsciousness).

Long Term Withdrawal: User is plagued by constant feelings of being mentally impaired.

Interactions: Mixing with other smart drugs will overstimulate the brain and decrease INL.

Legality: Forbidden (4 yrs. prison)

Costs \$50 for 10 dose inhaler.

Minty Eye Drops- An import from Japan, a tiny plastic bottle containing saline with mint and herbal extracts that are absorbed in to the bloodstream and make the user feel enlivened and alert. Gives +2 AWR, +2 END, +4 to save vs. unconsciousness for 15 minutes. Costs \$10 for 12 doses.

Non-Opiate Painkillers- These pain-killers are not as powerful as opiate painkillers, but they are non-addictive and have fewer side-effects and are thus available over-the-counter.

Administration: Orally as pills.

Effects: +4 to save vs. pain.

Interactions: Can cause liver damage when combined with alcohol.

Overdose (2x): Nausea (20).

Costs \$0.25/dose.

Opiates- Used as a painkiller and a drug of abuse. Despite improvements in pharmaceutical technology, Opiates are still the best pharmaceutical way to relieve pain.

Administration: Orally as pills (some abusers snort or inject it).

Effects: +10 to save vs. pain, +5 to save vs. fear, -3 INL, -3 AGY, euphoria (10) for 6 hours.

Withdrawal Effects: Difficulty sleeping, -4 to save vs. pain/fear.

Tolerance: +10% per week of daily use (max +200%).

Long Term Effects: After daily use for a month: weakened immune system (-4 to save vs. disease contraction and progression).

Long Term Withdrawal Effects: After daily use for a month: cramps (roll vs. distracting pain), Insomnia (30), flu-like symptoms, diarrhea for 7 days.

Addiction: Physiological Addiction Difficulty 5, Psychological Addiction Difficulty 1, Craving Difficulty 20.

Overdose (2x): +16 to save vs. pain, +7 to save vs. fear, -5 INL, -5 AGY, euphoria (20), unconsciousness (20) for 6 hours.

Overdose (4x): Cardiac Arrest (10), fluid in lungs (-10 END).

Overdose (8x): Cardiac Arrest (30), Pulmonary Arrest (30).

Legality: Permit (2 yrs. prison)

Costs \$4/dose.

Sedative- A generic sedative used to treat panic, psychosis, rage and insomnia.

Administration: Intramuscular injection.

Effects: +7 to save vs. fear/anger, +3 to save vs. pain, drowsiness (-7 to save vs. unconsciousness, +7 to save vs. insomnia), +4 to save vs. hallucinations/delusions.

Tolerance: +10% for each month of daily use (max. +50%).

Addiction: Physiological Addiction Difficulty 0, Psychological Addiction Difficulty 0, Craving Difficulty 15.

Long Term Withdrawal Effects: After 1 week of daily use: Insomnia (20), Panic (10).

Overdose (2x): Unconsciousness (30), -4 INL, +10 to save vs. fear/anger.

Overdose (4x): Coma (30).

Overdose (8x): Cardiac Arrest (40).

Legality: Permit (2 yrs. prison)

Costs \$3/dose.

Sibosin- This new drug eliminates the need for sleep without the stimulation and addictive potential of amphetamines. It has been made illegal because of instances of permanent inability to sleep (commonly followed by mental illness and suicide). It is illegal and is used by the street family the Insomniacs to give them increased psychic powers.

Administration: Orally as a little yellow pill with a terrible bitter aftertaste.

Effects: Inability to sleep, no damage from sleep deprivation, inability to become inured to details (must make saves vs. continual annoyances), +5 to psychic WIL rolls for 48 hours. Each time the drug is used there is a 1 in 20 chance of the effects becoming permanent (see p.123 for discussion of what happens next).

Long Term Effects: Any person who uses the drug for multiple days in a row gets +7 to psychic WIL rolls and must make WIL rolls to avoid mutilating their own bodies (at a difficulty of 10 per day, max. 30).

Overdose (2x): Same as normal effects, but increased (1 in 6) chance of permanent effects.

Legality: Forbidden (4 yrs. prison)

Costs \$10/dose for Insomniacs (who get special volume-discounts), \$40/dose for anyone else.

Slave- The newest drug from the Drug Lords and a major bid to replace God Killer. Slave is probably the most addictive drug ever created (hence its street name).

Administration: Smoked (white pellets in a glass pipe).

Effects: Mellow excitement (user feels giddy but doesn't want to do anything), +7 to save vs. fear, -7 to save vs. hallucinations/delusions for 4 hours.

Withdrawal Effects: What users call "the uglies": everything the user experiences, remembers or thinks about seems unbearably awful. Loss of willpower (-5 WIL). Lasts 1 week.

Addiction: Psychological Addiction Difficulty 40, Craving Difficulty 35.

Long Term Effects: Weight Loss (-1/2 BDY, -1/2 BLD per year of regular use), pale skin, liver damage (-1 to save vs. poison/drug effects per year of regular use).

Overdose (2x): Diarrhea, Vomiting (30).

Overdose (4x): Brain swelling (if untreated will progress to seizures, brain damage and death).

Legality: Forbidden (4 yrs. prison)

Costs \$4/dose from the Drug Lords.

Costs \$10/dose from Black Market Traders, Goods.

Smart Drugs- A combination of sugars, vitamins and drugs that increase brain activity.

Administration: Orally as pills or sugary drinks.

Effects: +4 INL, +7 to save vs. unconsciousness.

Overdose (2x): +4 INL, +7 to save vs. unconsciousness, trembling (-2 AGY).

Legality: Permit (2 yrs. prison)

Costs \$4/dose.

Soma- A collection of herbs and mushrooms which, in ancient India, was made in to a tea for use as a pro-psyche hallucinogenic sacrament. It was rediscovered in 2075 and is gaining popularity on the black market. Soma makes a milky-greenish tea which tastes bitter and awful to those who have not "gained a taste for it" yet. In the city, the Tea Drinkers control most of the sources of soma for the city, so it is expensive to buy from anyone other than them.

Effects: Hallucinations (10), +4 to AWR based psychic rolls, +2 to WIL based psychic rolls, -2 to most INL based skill rolls for 4 hours.

Long Term Effects: After 1 year of daily use, gives semi-permanent +4 to AWR based psychic rolls, +2 to WIL based psychic rolls.

Overdose (2x): Obfuscating hallucinations and delusions (mostly of leaving the body and flying, bizarre patterns, of meeting mythical and archetypal figures and of transcending time and space) at 30 difficulty to save, +6 to AWR based psychic rolls, +4 to WIL based psychic rolls, -4 to INL based skill rolls for 5 hours.

Overdose (4x): Vomiting (20), dizziness (-10 to save vs. loss of balance), Obfuscating Hallucinations (40), Delusions (40), Panic (30), Euphoria (30) for 6 hours.

Legality: Forbidden (4 yrs. prison)

Costs \$10/dose from a Tea Drinker.

Costs \$20/dose from a Black Market Trader.

Synth Blood- A self-warming pack of synthetic blood with an attached IV, used to replace blood in the field and often stolen from the backs of ambulances. Must be administered intravenously. Returns up to 4 BLD or INCY. Weighs 2 lbs. Costs \$100.

Thor-O-Zine- Invented in the city and considered the best cocktail of war drugs available anywhere.

Hyperstimulates the nervous system while reducing the ability to feel pain. Users feel something much like a small dose of God Killer: the feeling of invulnerability and great power, especially physical power.

Administered: Intravenously in the tongue.

Effects: Cramping of the tongue and jaw muscles (causing difficulty speaking), +10 to save vs. fear, +7 to save vs. unconsciousness, +7 to save vs. pain, +3 AGY, +2 INL, +4 STH, +3 END, +2 SPD, +2 INCY for 30 min.

Withdrawal Effects: Weakness (-2 STH, -2 END), -7 to save vs. unconsciousness.

Addiction: Physiological Addiction Difficulty 2, Psychological Addiction Difficulty 2, Craving Difficulty 20.

Overdose (2x): Muscle Cramps (-7 AGY), Seizures (20), +6 STH, +4 END, +4 INCY.

Legality: Forbidden (4 yrs. prison)

Costs \$50/dose.

Trace- One of the drugs created and marketed by the Drug Lords. Because only certain pushers are allowed to sell Trace and because Trace addicts have a distinctive look, addicts the Drug Lords want to "keep an eye on" are put on Trace (hence the name).

Administration: Intravenous injection.

Effects: Sedation (-7 to save vs. unconsciousness), Euphoria (10) for 4 hours.

Withdrawal Effects: Headaches (40), poor hearing and vision (-7 AWR) for 48 hours.

Addiction: Physiological Addiction Difficulty 30, Craving Difficulty 30.

Long Term Effects: Weakened immune system (-1 to save vs. disease contraction/progression per 3 months daily use), arthritis (-1 AGY per year of daily use), skin turns reddish.

Overdose (2x): Paralysis (20), difficulty breathing (-10 END)

Overdose (4x): Paralysis (40), Pulmonary Arrest (20).

Legality: Forbidden (4 yrs. prison)

Costs \$4/dose from the Drug Lords.

Costs \$10/dose from Black Market Traders, Goods.

Zombine- This 'war drug' is a cocktail of different drugs, mostly illegal street drugs. It was previously the most popular war drug cocktail in the city before the Needle Punks crated Thor-O-Zine. It is valued for its ability to make users immune to pain and able to exert more physically, yet it has a short period of effectiveness and a crippling withdrawal.

Administration: Smoked as powdery white clumps.

Effects: Rapid heartbeat, +12 to save vs. pain, dissociation (+7 to save vs. fear/euphoria/ dysphoria), -4 to save vs. anger, increased vigor (+3 STH, +4 END, +4 INCY) for 15 minutes.

Overdose (2x): Cardiac Arrest (10), paralyzing dissociation (30, like euphoria or dysphoria except instead of feeling good or bad the user just doesn't care), +20 to save vs. pain, increased vigor (+4 STH, +4 END, +5 INCY) for Lasts 20 minutes.

Overdose (4x): Cardiac Arrest (30), paralyzing dissociation (30), muscle cramps (-10 AGY) for 30 minutes.

Withdrawal: Headache (20), weak and aching muscles (-2 STH, -2 END), Blurred vision (-10 to vision based AWR rolls), muscle tremors (-2 AGY) for 4 hours.

Addiction: Physiological Addiction Difficulty 4, Craving Difficulty 15.

Legality: Forbidden (4 yrs. prison)


Costs \$40/dose.

Non-Chemical

Auto-Blood Test- Shaped like a flat pen with an LCD test readout on the side. Draws blood from a fingertip and tests for glucose level, 75 common drugs, 90 common toxins, disease indicators, 50 common diseases and other blood factors (oxygenation, red blood cell count, white blood cell count, electrolyte balance, etc.) Gives +7 to medical diagnosis skill rolls. They are supposed to be one-use only, though some wise old Black Meds have figured out how to open them up, clean them out and re-use them. Costs \$3/ea. or 50 for \$100.

Autosyringe- Small electronic device, loads vials of liquid and injects a pre-set amount. It senses arteries and injects in to them automatically (no skill roll required for intravenous injection). It is so quick it is usually painless (moderate AWR check to even feel the prick). Automatically disinfects itself after each use. Costs \$75.

Carry Board- A lightweight board with handles for immobilizing and carrying wounded patients. Weighs 5 lbs. Costs \$150.

First Aid Kit (Black Med)-  Made entirely from scavenged materials, typically comes in an old plastic case. Contains bleached rags, carpet needles, nylon thread, a sports-bottle of distilled water, a scalpel (made of a shard of razor blade melted in to a toothbrush handle), tweezers, duct tape, a vial of rubbing alcohol, a small flashlight, short metal rods (for splints), 1 dose Herbal Wound Cleanser, 2 doses Herbal Sedative/Painkiller, 1 dose Herbal Stimulant, 1 dose Herbal Febrifuge, 1 dose Herbal Emetic. Lets PCs use the Emergency Medicine skill at -7. Weighs 6 lbs. Costs \$60.

First Aid Kit (EMT)- A large plastic box which opens to reveal many shelves (like a tackle box) containing various tools that a trained Emergency Medical Technician might find of use. Includes everything in First Aid Kit (Semiprofessional) as well as: industrial scissors (for cutting off clothes), tracheotomy kit, intubation tube, intubation air pump with small oxygen bottle, body stats monitor (monitors breath, body temp, EKG, blood oxygenation), stomach pump, liquid stitches, sterilization spray, defibrillator, neck brace, cling film, blood oxygenator, 5 Auto Blood Tests, camera probe, handheld suction device, 4 units of Synth Blood, Anti-Toxin Kit, Plastic Restraints, 4 doses Anti-Shock, 2 Blood Plugs, 2 doses Glucose. Weighs 25 lbs. Costs \$250.

First Aid Kit (Minor)- A tiny kit designed for use by people with no medical training to deal with minor (non life-threatening) injuries. A small pocket-sized plastic box contains aspirin, bandages, gauze, disinfectant wipes. Costs \$10.

First Aid Kit (Semiprofessional)- This kit is designed for people who have taken a first aid course and want a kit to keep in their home, office or vehicle but will, in all likelihood, never use it. This is a briefcase sized metal

box containing bandages, gauze, medical tape, butterfly bandages, disinfectant wipes, disinfectant spray, heat pack, cold pack, gloves, CPR mouth-guard, eyewash, scissors, tweezers, anti-shock pills, ipecac, non-opiate painkillers. The kit has no equipment for surgical procedures. PCs with emergency medicine can perform easy (10 difficulty) tasks with this kit. Weighs 12 lbs. Costs \$75.

Instacast- A foil packet containing a thick flexible bandage. When wrapped tightly around an injury it hardens within 5 minutes in to a thick cast (PR 4 bladed 5 blunt). Weighs 2 lbs. Costs \$50.

Liquid Stitches- Designed for first aid kits, this is a tiny tube filled with a pharmaceutical skin glue. A wound should be cleaned and closed as cleanly as possible, then the tube run over the wound. The tube applies the glue and seals it by blowing heated air on to it. When the cap is replaced it sterilizes the tip with a burst of steam so it is ready to be used again. The glue allows oxygen in and flakes off naturally after a couple of weeks. The only downside is that if foreign particles are trapped inside the wound by the glue, they will almost certainly cause an infection (unless the glue is removed and the wound cleaned). Returns up to ½ a point of lost BLD per bladed weapon injury. Costs \$35.

Sterilization Spray- A tiny aerosol canister, contains powerful antiseptic chemicals which will kill most bacteria and virii on the surface of items. The antiseptic chemicals evaporate or break down in to component parts in seconds. The spray can even be used safely on food (although it leaves the surface of food tasting bitter). If sprayed on skin it will cause irritation and if sprayed in eyes or inhaled can cause burning pain (distracting pain at 20 difficulty to save). Although it is painful, it can be sprayed in to wounds to help prevent infection. One canister has enough spray to cover 30 square feet. Weighs 0.5 lbs. Costs \$50.

Sterilizer- This battery-powered device can sterilize surgical tools and syringes in 15 seconds. Weighs 0.5 lbs. Costs \$100.

Surgical Kit- A nylon pouch with a shoulder strap. When unzipped and laid open there are surgical tools and supplies (each in a sterile wrapping). Has tools which can be used as 2 bladed weapons. Allows PCs to use the Surgery skill at -7. Weighs 5 lbs. Costs \$75.

Syringe- Requires a skill roll to hit a blood vessel. Costs \$1/ea. or \$10 for 25.

See Also

Blood Test, p.97
Seed Pack, p.100
Weapons: Chemical, p.102

PROTECTION

Protection Features

Heat Factor: This is a simultaneous bonus to save vs. hypothermia and penalty to save vs. heat stroke.

AGY Penalty: The penalty to all AGY rolls while wearing this item.


AR: Armor Rating, this is the amount of the body that the armor covers and the amount of success that an enemy must make on a strike to hit some hole in the armor. See p.56 for more.

- AR 20: Full body protection with no weak spots.
- AR 15: Full body protection with some weak spots.
- AR 12: Face completely exposed.
- AR 10: Head completely exposed.
- AR 7: Head, neck, hands, feet completely exposed.
- AR 5: Only body, thighs, upper arms covered.
- AR 4: Only torso and hips covered.
- AR 3: Only torso covered.

PR: Protection Rating, how much of each type of damage the armor protects from. If an armor protects from 6 bladed damage, then a strike that does 10 bladed damage that hit the armor would only do 4 bladed damage to the wearer.

Anti-Psychic Cap- A flexible plastic cap filled with a thin layer of a gelatin known to interfere with psychic manipulation. The wearer and any psychic targeting the wearer gets +10 difficulty to psychic skill rolls. Costs \$250.

Biohazard Suit (Basic)- A thick rubber airtight body suit with excellent air filtration. So long as the suit is removed properly, it protects completely from all diseases and most toxins. Sweat in the suit puddles in the feet. AGY penalty: -1 (-4 to fine motor skills because of thick gloves). Heat factor: +10. AR 20, PR 1 bladed. Costs \$200.

Cloak (Fighter)-  Homeless fighters designed this cloak to keep them warm but let them be ready to fight at a moment's notice. This cloak goes over the shoulders, wraps around the wearer and fastens with velcro. As a fighter draws a weapon, the cloak is torn open and falls to the floor. The cloak has rocks sewn in to the hem, so the fighter can grab it and swing it at enemies (to entangle weapons), to blind opponents (by covering thier heads), or swung as a strike (1 blunt damage, range 3). Heat Factor: +6. Costs \$20.

Cloak- A long cloak with a hood and internal pockets. This was common wear for psychics in the 40s and 50s and is still sometimes associated with psychics today. Heat Factor +6. Costs \$10.

Condoms- 4 for \$1

Dust Mask- A cloth face mask that protects from particulates in the air. They must be disposed of or they get clogged up and smelly. Costs \$0.25.

Ear Plugs- A molding foam protects the ears from loud sounds. Costs \$2.

Fingerless Gloves- Used by people who want to keep their hands as warm as possible while leaving their fingers free for anything that requires fine manipulation (picking locks, typing, rolling cigarettes). Costs \$2.

Fire Blanket- A reflective, heat-resistant blanket that can be quickly unfolded and wrapped over the body to survive a fire. Can also be used to hide from infrared sensors. PR 10 burn damage. Costs \$40.

Gasmask- Protects from almost all inhalation based chemical and biological attacks. Costs \$50.

Historical Reproduction Chainmail- Long shirt made of metal rings with metal plates over arms and legs. Weighs 30 lbs. AGY penalty: -2. Heat Factor: +4. AR 6, PR 3 bladed 2 blunt. Costs \$350.

Insect Repellent- A spray containing multiple chemical signals that repel common pests (especially fleas and mosquitoes, a major plague vector). Lasts 8 hours. Enough for 20 applications. Costs \$5.

Kevlar Vest- This antique (30 to 100 yr. old) vest predates secondary nanotech. It provides good protection from normal (non-armor piercing) bullets, but it is heavy and doesn't cover the whole body. AGY Penalty: -2. Heat Factor: +8. AR 5, PR 6 bladed, 1 blunt. Weighs 15 lbs. Costs \$200.

Latex Gloves- Cheap, thin, disposable. Costs \$1/pair or \$10 for 20.


Modern Chainmail- Cheaper than nanotech armor, yet still light and flexible. This suit of clothing (long sleeved shirt and pants) is made up of interlaced rings of thick grey high-strength plastic. Weighs 10 lbs. Heat factor: +2. AR 7, PR 3 bladed 1 blunt. Costs \$500.

Motorcycle Outfit- A black leather jacket, chaps, boots and a motorcycle helmet. Heat factor: +7. With helmet: AR 10 PR 3 bladed 1 blunt 5 knockout 5 skid 2 fall. Without the helmet: AR 7 PR 3 bladed 1 blunt 4 skid 2 fall. Costs \$150.

Outfit (Clubwear)- New, trendy clothing, in some particular style, appropriate for a dinner party or going out to a club. Gives +2 to seduction rolls. Costs \$75.

Outfit (Fetish)- An outfit designed to appeal to people of a particular minority sexual aesthetic. Gives +8 to seduction rolls towards those people. Costs \$100.

Outfit (Formal)- A formal outfit, including a tie, that might be appropriate for a business meeting. It is the right size, but not tailored. Costs \$100.

Outfit (Grunge)-  An outfit of clothing, including shoes and a hat, bought from thrift stores and homeless scroungers, appropriate to the current weather. It is made to be comfortable, durable and warm, not to be stylish (many holes and stains). Costs \$5.

Outfit (Jogging)- Sneakers and grey sweats. Costs \$5.

Outfit (Military Surplus)- A full outfit, including boots and a hat, from military surplus stores. Mostly olive green and cammo. Gives +4 to prowling in greenery. Costs \$25.


Outfit (Raincoat)- A thin plastic raincoat, with hood, which can be folded up small enough to fit in a pocket. Heat Factor: +2. Costs \$5.

Outfit (Scrubs)- Cheap disposable clothing as a doctor or nurse might wear. Does not include shoes. Costs \$5.

Outfit (Uniform)- A uniform as a security guard or fast food worker might be required to buy. When bought in thrift stores, they usually still have the patches from their companies on them.

Costs \$10 for service industry.

Costs \$25 for security.

Phonebook Armor-  Layers of magazines, phonebooks and other salvaged paper products are strapped together with duct-tape in to a suit. The suit covers the torso, hips and thighs. It is usually hidden under clothing (it provides the best protection when an enemy isn't expecting the person to be wearing armor). The suit is moderately flexible while giving good protection from blunt and bladed damage. AGY Penalty: -2. Heat Factor: +5. AR 5 PR 2 blunt and 2 bladed. Costs \$10.

Phonebook Armor (Glass)- Like phonebook armor except that sharp pieces of glass are glued in to the armor. This type of armor is most effective when hidden under frumpy and ill-fitting clothing, where the glass isn't seen. If an opponent punches the wearer there is a 1 in 4 chance of being hit with glass, if the opponent grabs or tackles the wearer it is almost certain the opponent will be cut. Being cut with glass does ½ bladed damage and people not expecting to be cut must make a save vs. shocking pain. Costs \$30.

Protective Gloves- These look and feel like normal leather gloves, but inside them is a layer of secondary nanotech fibers which protect the hands from any cutting damage, even from very fine needles. PR 6 bladed 3 burn. Costs \$95.

Prowling Suit- A dull black body suit with gloves, shoes (selected for their quietness), and a face mask. Gives +8 to prowling in darkness. Costs \$50.

Ski Goggles- Dark glasses that completely enclose the eyes, giving total protection from eye attacks (PR 1 blunt 2 bladed) and reducing the effectiveness of blinding lights by half. Costs \$5.

Spiked Armor- Black leather jacket and pants with sharp spikes all over them. Gloves have spikes on the knuckles (+1 bladed damage to punch). Anyone trying to hit, tackle or grab the wearer will probably take damage (½ bladed). Heat Factor: +5. AR 10 PR 1 blunt 2 bladed. Costs \$95.

Spiked Armor (Poison)- Black leather jacket, pants and a mask covered with spikes. Inside the suit is a network of puncture-resistant tubes that carry poison (from a canister on the belt) to the tip of each spike. When activated, a tiny droplet of poison appears on the end of each spike almost instantly. Any time the armor is punctured and bladed damage done to the wearer, there is a 1 in 20 chance the users will take ½ dose of poison from a severed line. A canister of poison the equivalent of Black Market Knife Poison (p.102) costs \$50, the equivalent of Drake Pain Juice costs \$30. Heat Factor: +6. AR 12, PR 1 blunt 2 bladed. Costs \$500.



Sunglasses (Cheap)- Thrift store or convenience store dark glasses with black plastic frames. Reduces effectiveness of blinding lights by half. Costs \$0.50.

Sunglasses (Electronic)- Designer frames and shatterproof, glare resistant lenses covered with a coating that reacts to electricity by becoming darker. A tiny (invisible) photocell senses bright lights and darkens the glasses accordingly. AR 5 for eye attacks, PR 4 bladed 2 blunt. Blinding lights are incapable of effecting the wearer. Costs \$30 (+\$75 for prescription lenses).

Sunscreen- Odorless, waterproof, SPF 100. Enough for 20 applications. Costs \$5.

Trash Armor- Plate armor made by homeless craftspeople out of whatever pieces of metal or plastic they could scrounge up, drill holes through, and attach to a denim bodysuit with fishing line. Weighs 70 lbs. AGY Penalty: -4. Heat factor: +10. AR 8, PR 5 bladed 4 blunt 3 burn. Costs \$150.

Trash Suit- Pieces of actual trash sewn to a body suit, covering every part of the body, so that the wearer can walk around normally, but if the wearer drops and curls up in a ball he or she looks like a heap of trash. Good for

defeating human-recognition alarm systems. Weighs 15 lbs. AGY Penalty: -3. SPD Penalty: -3. AWR Penalty: -3. Heat factor: +5. AR 5, PR ½ bladed, ½ blunt. Costs \$50.

Trenchcoat- A thick, ankle-length coat; waterproof, with large internal pockets. Costs \$35.

Uniform- An actual uniform, purchased from the black market, of a police or national guard officer. Legality: Licensed (\$500 fine). Costs \$100.

Wetsuit- Designed to keep people warm in cold water. Heat Factor: +10. AR 7, PR 1 bladed 3 skidding. Costs \$100.

Winter Coat- A thick, waterproof coat with a hood that goes down to mid-thigh. Heat factor: +7. Costs \$10.

See Also

Steel Toed Boots, p.107


Weapons: Self-Defence, p.105

SENSORY

Audio Bug- A tiny electronic device, about the size and shape of a pen cap, that broadcasts unencrypted audio up to 100 ft. Battery life: 48 hours. Costs \$50.

Binoculars- Old-style non-electronic binoculars. Can fold up to fit in a pocket. Costs \$7.

Bug Sweeper- A tiny keychain device that, when on, emits a tone when it is near a radio transmitter of any kind. The stronger the transmission, the louder it gets. Costs \$30.

Digital Camera (Cheap)-  About the size of a lighter. Optical viewfinder, auto focus, weak flash, can take up to 100 pictures before the internal memory becomes full. By holding the shutter, it is possible to take a jerky silent movie of a scene. Will output to any computer. Costs \$5.

Directional Microphone- A handheld device with a parabolic cup and a very sensitive sound sensor, used for eavesdropping in a particular direction. Can hear whispers at up to 150 ft. Costs \$75.

Hearing Aid- A tiny device that fits almost invisibly in one ear. Senses and amplifies sounds to a desired level. Uses smart amplification (so that quiet sounds are amplified more, loud sounds less). A person with normal hearing can hear people whispering 20 ft. away. Costs \$45.

Microscope- Small, handheld device, the size and shape of a pack of cigarettes. Magnifies any object it is placed over up to 1000X. Costs \$20.

Motion Alarm- A black box the size and shape of a pager. Can be stuck to most walls and ceilings. It scans a wide cone for movement and will either sound a loud alarm or cause a keychain to vibrate. Batteries Life: 48 hours. Costs \$15.


Nightvision Goggles (Cheap)- Old, thick, heavy, blinded by bright lights, with a 2 hour battery life and a monochrome black and green display. Weighs 2 lbs. Costs \$25.

Psychic Tracking Bug- A small plastic disk about the size of a silver dollar. When a glass capsule inside it broken, a chemical reaction starts that creates psychic energy, enough for those with psychic senses to track the location of the bug. The chemical reaction lasts 16 hours. Since it is non-metal, non-electronic and does not use radio waves, normal bug sweepers can't find it. Costs \$150.

Radiation Detector- Watch sized device, detects radiation, tells its type, intensity and the directions it is coming from. Costs \$100.

Radio- Small electronic device about the size and shape of a pack of cigarettes. Typically bought from a thrift store or salvaged from the trash, this lets users listen to the few analog (non-internet) radio stations, most of which are run by teenage music-philers out of their bedrooms. Costs \$2.

Radio Scanner- A small handheld device that can tune in to and listen to analog or encrypted digital communications on any radio frequency (including cellular). Simple encryption sequences can be programmed in. Batteries Life: 16 hours. Costs \$20.

Security Camera (Cheap)-  About the size and shape of a stubby marker, this camera is cheap and easily concealable. It transmits images unencrypted via radio to a radius of 50 ft. Video is grainy, black and white, with no sound. Bright lights or darkness blinds the camera. Battery Life: 48 hours. Costs \$20.

Security Camera (Fake)- An empty shell with a glowing red light that looks like a security camera. Takes an easy Photography or Alarm Systems skill roll to tell otherwise. Costs \$50.

Sound Recorder- A device about the size and shape of a pen that can record and play back up to 24 hours worth of audio and can transfer the recordings to a computer. Costs \$7.

Tracking Bug- About the size and shape of a pen cap, sends out regular pulses that can be easily used to triangulate the position of the bug (with an advanced Radio Scanner) up to 10 miles away. Battery Life: 3 days. Costs \$50.

Videocamera (Cheap)- About the size and shape of a small drink bottle, the camera saves digital movie files on internal memory, which can then be transferred to a computer or reviewed from the viewfinder. Takes about 16 hours of video. Costs \$40.

Voice Stress Analyzer- This small keychain sized device listens to all speech with high quality sensors and vibrates when it detects inaudible cracks in the voice which are indicative of someone trying to consciously control their voice tone (which could indicate acting, nervousness, impersonation or lying). The analyzer vibrates harder the more stress it senses. It can be used with phone conversations, but is much less accurate. Costs \$50.

See Also

Auto-Blood Test p.92
Bright p.87
Flare, p.100
Flashlight (All), p.100
Line Tap: Inversion, p.83

SERVANTS

These are human bodies, animals and robots that people purchase for use as servants.

Biological

Biological servants come from two primary sources. The first is animal breeders and trainers (most of whom are homeless) who train an animal for a specific purpose and then sell it. The second is animal bodies that are grown to maturity in vats with no formation of neural networks (in other words, no consciousness or personality). The grown body is given a mental program, a sort of artificial intelligence that allows it to perform the basic functions of life and follow the commands of its owner.

Biological Servant Features

Attributes: These are the typical attributes for an animal of this type. Only certain attributes are listed here (attributes like INL, CHM and WIL are non-existent or inconsequential).

Natural Abilities: Any special natural abilities of an animal, like a prehensile tail or natural armor.

Senses: Different AWR scores are listed for each important sensory modality (e.g. an animal might have 20 AWR when it comes to hearing, but only 3 when it comes to sight).

Attacks: The basic attacks of an animal are listed here. The attributes used and difficulties of various actions and reactions are different from that of humans, so a simple attribute-free difficulty is listed here (e.g. strike at 1d20 vs. 2).

Feeding Costs: This is the weekly cost to keep the animal alive (not including medical care).

Training/Mental Programs: Each type of training or mental program an animal might have is listed here. Each has its own unique price. Each has a number of commands that the animal can be expected to know. The gist of the commands is given, but the commands themselves are not necessarily spoken words (they may be unique passwords, or whistles, or communicated by pulling on a rein).

Dog- A large dog of indeterminate breed. The dog is the most commonly used servant in the city, both trained and with mental programs, and more commercial mental programs have been written for the dog than any other animal.

Attributes: END 10, SPD 15, BDY 2, BLD 2, INCY 3.

Senses: Sight AWR 5, Smell AWR 17, Hearing AWR 15.

Attacks: Bite at 1d20 vs. 6 (2 bladed damage), Vital Strike Bite at 1d20 vs. 12 (4 bladed damage)

Feeding Costs \$7/wk.

Trained, Attack: Knows 'stay', 'attack', 'heel', 'stop', 'grab' (a grab attack). Costs \$150.

Trained, Guard: Knows 'stay', 'he/she's okay', 'heel', 'quiet', 'attack'. Will bark if strangers come by, will attack if strangers get too close. Costs \$100.

Trained, Bloodhound: Knows 'smell', 'track', 'point', 'heel' and 'stay'. Costs \$300.

Trained, Assistant: Knows 'fetch' (with point), 'heel', 'stay', 'get help.' The dog can also guide visually impaired people around obstacles. Costs \$150. Trained, Dogfighting: Knows 'kill' (Vital Strike against other dogs at 1d20 vs. 6), 'watch out' (Jump Out at 1d20 vs. 5), 'stop' (stop fighting), 'finish him' (attack on the throat of an incapacitated opponent), 'stay', 'heel'. Costs \$300.

Mental Program, Leash: Acts like a normal dog, can even be trained, but a mental program running in its brain responds to the commands (as codewords): sleep (dog falls asleep), like (dog likes intensely whoever it is looking at when the word is said), hate, stay (dog can not leave a 10 ft. radius). Costs \$175.

Untrained: A young dog with no particular training. Costs \$75.

Housecat

Attributes: END 5, SPD 13, BDY 1, BLD 3, INCY 3.

Senses: Sight AWR 10 (no darkness penalty), Smell AWR 15, Hearing AWR 15.

Attacks: Clawing (a pain/stun attack) at 1d20 vs. 3.

Feeding Costs \$3/wk.

Training, Pest Killer: Will prowl around its home area killing mice, pigeons, birds. Costs \$5.

Pigeon- An intelligent scavenger bird, one of the most numerous birds in the city.

Attributes: END 3, SPD 10, BDY 0, BLD 1, INCY 1.

Senses: Sight AWR 17, Hearing AWR 15.

Feeding Costs \$1/wk.

Mental Program, Spy: Acts like a normal pigeon, but unable to leave the area it is placed in. Records anything it sees and hears (data retrieved through a jack hidden under the feathers) up to 1 hour of sound and video. Knows 'heel', 'stay', 'sleep.' Costs \$150.

Training, Homing: When released it returns to its home coop (often with a message attached). Costs \$20.

SERVICES

After Battle Bath- A tradition among unborn street fighters: after a battle they reward themselves (or are rewarded by family elders) by paying someone to draw them a hot bath (either with pirated hot water or water heated over a fire) which is filled with herbs that relieve pain, help disinfect cuts and relax the bather (they also smell pleasant). Gives +4 to save vs. disease contraction from cuts and scrapes. Costs \$7.

Animal Boarding- For anything up to a large dog size (bigger animals must be taken to stables outside the city) costs \$3/day.

Apartment (Tenement)- A cramped one-room apartment in a very old tenement building. Steam heating (no AC). See p.174 for more. Costs \$350/mo.

Background Check (Credit)- A quick credit report (takes less than a minute) shows info pertaining to the financial solvency or insolvency of a person. The more info given (legal name, pseudonyms, current and previous addresses) the more accurate the returned info. Costs \$25/ea. Or \$20/wk. for unlimited checks.

Band Account (Offshore)- This bank account requires no official identification, thus it is perfect for unborn and fugitives who want to make non-cash money transactions. Costs \$3/wk.

Blood Test- Available at any medical clinic. Gives a rundown of poisons, drugs, pollutants and indicators of disease, explained by a nurse. Takes about 10 minutes. Costs \$25.

Bloodhound Powder- Given a sample of a person's DNA, black market traders with bloodhound powder machines can manufacture a small vial of powder. When the buyer snorts the powder, he or she can suddenly smell the target and anything the target has touched. The user can smell the target at 50 ft. (with no wind) or anything the person has touched at 5 ft. Costs \$150.

Bus Ride- A bus leaving from the bus terminal in Brooklyn costs: \$30 (within 100 miles), \$50 (anywhere in the Eastern half of the US) or \$100 (anywhere in the Western half of the US, or in Mexico or Canada).

Car Rental- A licensed driver can rent a gasoline powered car (equivalent to Car: Used) with an alarm system and \$5,000 liability insurance for \$25/day.

Cellular Connection (Basic, Hacked)- A Cracker programs a cellphone or cellular modem to access someone else's cellular service. Each week that the cellphone is used there is a 1 in 20 chance that the piracy will be discovered and action taken (in most cases, service will simply be shut off, though occasionally private security is sent to find the pirate and deliver him or her to the police). Legality: Forbidden (\$500 fine). Costs \$20.

Cellular Connection (Basic, Legal)- Allows cellphones and cellular modems to access the internet. Unlimited usage for \$5/wk.

Cellular Connection (Broadband, Hacked)- Like a basic hacked cellular connection, a Cracker reprograms a broadband cellular modem with someone else's account. Each week the connection is used, there is a 1 in 10 chance of the cellular company finding the piracy. Legality: Forbidden (\$500 fine). Costs \$30.

Cellular Connection (Priority, Hacked)- This cellular account is reserved for corporate and government officials. The idea is that these accounts have special priority over all accounts, so that in an emergency when all available cellular transponders are busy, the cellular phone or modem can automatically get through. Every time the account is used, there is a 1 in 20 chance of the intrusion being detected and appropriate measures being taken by the federal government. (Note: A cellphone can be programmed to switch back and forth between using two different accounts). Legality: Licensed (2 yrs. prison). Costs \$100.

Data Storage- This is the cost to store data on some internet server so that it can be accessed from anywhere on the internet by anyone who has the PC's password. Costs \$1 per 5 ZB per week.

Daycare (Unborn)- A reputable homeless person who will watch a child for a day. Only street people know who are the "sure thing" unborn caregivers (those who would never exploit or abuse a kid and who would fight tooth and nail to protect a kid under their care). It takes decades to build up this kind of rep, and many street person PCs may have been watched at some point in their past by a reputable caregiver. Costs \$7/day for street people or \$25/day for wells and indies.

Denial of Service- A handful of young city Crackers are paid to hammer some network node with false requests and other attacks in order to effectively block this node's internet access. Costs \$20/hr.

Drink (Alcoholic)- One shot, a small mixed drink, or a pint of beer from a bar or restaurant or bottled from a liquor or grocery store. Equals one dose of alcohol (see p.85). Costs \$2.

Drink (Non-Alcoholic)- Purified water, juice or soda at a vending machine or restaurant. Costs \$0.50.

Gasoline- There are two recharge stations in the city that sell gasoline (at Houston and Broadway, Downtown and by the on ramp to the George Washington Bridge in Inwood). It can also be purchased in 5 gallon containers from many black market traders. Being doused and set on fire does 8 burn damage per round. Costs \$7/gallon.

Hotel (Homeless)- This is the cost to stay for the evening in a private room in an abandoned building that is maintained by homeless people. The room has candles for lighting, a trash furnace for heat, a bucket of (relatively) clean water, a pile of blankets on the floor for a bed, and a bucket with an air-tight lid for a toilet. The rooms typically only lock from the inside. If the PC has no way of gauging the honesty of the homeless innkeeper, there is about a 1 in 6 chance of staying at a place where the owners will attempt to rob the guest. Common scams include: entering through a secret door while the guest is sleeping, using a wire hook to snag possessions from a hole in the ceiling, dropping large rocks on the guest from a hole in the ceiling, poisoning the drinking water, etc. Costs \$3/night for street people, \$10/night for Wells and Indies.

Meal (Fast-Food)- Full meal from a cheap fast food place or a vending machine. Costs \$4.

Medical Care (Ambulance)- An ambulance will stabilize the patient and transport him or her to the appropriate medical facility. Because there is a shortage of ambulances, ambulances arrive in 1d6 x 1d6 x 1d6 minutes. Costs \$50/hr.

Medical Care (Black Med)- Medical care or services from a member of the Black Med street family. See P.112 for more.

Average Price Charged by Black Meds			
	Street People	Wells	Indies
Simple consult	\$1	\$10	\$20
Treating a small infection or wound	\$2	\$15	\$30
Large infection or wound	\$5	\$20	\$40
Installing a cybernetic implant	\$10	\$50	\$75
Treatment of a deadly, communicable disease	\$30	\$100	\$200
Problem requiring major surgery	\$50	\$200	\$300

Medical Care (Outpatient, Drug Rehab)- The patient goes in to a clinic once a day for a medical checkup, an injection of drugs to help with withdrawal and cravings, and up to 15 minutes of counseling on request. Gives +5 to save vs. cravings. Costs \$50/day.

Mercenary (Addict)- An addict is paid to travel with the employer and help the employer fight enemies. The addict will flee if he or she is wounded or faces a superior military force. Costs \$100/day.

Typical Addict Merc

Level 2 Addict

Attributes- AGY 8, AWR 5, CHM 4, END 6, INL 8, SPD 10, STH 9, WIL 5, BLD 2, BDY 3, INCY 3.

Appearance- A thin homeless person with a slightly wild look in his or her eyes. Wearing torn, greasy rags. Body is covered with sores and/or needle tracts.

Motivations- To make a buck so he or she can buy drugs.

Methods- The addict merc is not particularly brave or skilled. He or she depends upon ambushes or in outnumbering an enemy. They attack whoever their boss says to attack and run when the situation starts looking dangerous.

Special Equipment- Skullcrusher (range 1-2, 3 blunt damage, pierces as 6).

Special Skills- Street Fighting: Armed (1).

Typical Attack- Will do a crippling attack with the skullcrusher (trying to take out a person's knees or elbows) at STH (10) + INL (8) +4 (skill) + 1d20 vs. 30 (or 1d20 vs. 8). As a reaction will do a Jump Out at SPD (10) + AGY (8) + 1d20 vs. 25 (+10 for every additional range level) or 1d20 vs. 7.

Mercenary (Dioxyl-Drake)- A young Drake from the family that creates and uses the psychic-disrupting Dioxyl Ash. The Drake will only fight psychics. The Drake carries two hot dioxyl ash pipes (see p.123) and has at least one level in Street Fighting: Armed or Club. Costs \$300/day.

Mercenary (Drake)- A young Drake, hired as a bodyguard or to fight alongside the employer. Drake elders need to know what cause the young Drake will be fighting for and will not allow the Drakes to become associated with something really reprehensible. The cost also goes up drastically if the Drakes might get in trouble with a powerful group (e.g. the Drug Lords). The young drake has several pieces of throwing glass (FR 1 ft. MR 50 ft. ½ bladed damage) poisoned with Drake Fungus Poison (causes -10 STH, vertigo (must save vs. loss of balance), Vomiting (20) and 1 BLD damage). The Drake typically has at least one level of the skill Knife Throwing. Costs \$250/day.

Mercenary (Insomniac)- A young Insomniac with psychic skills is hired to follow employers in to battle and use psychic skills to debilitate and confuse the enemy. Insomniac elders will not let an Insomniac fight for a completely reprehensible cause. Costs \$250/day.

Net Hosting: Personal- Space on an internet server with enough bandwidth and space host most personal or hobby net sites, including message boards. Costs \$2/wk.

Paycomputer- Running a very limited form of OpenCert, the user can access the internet, run programs or use a datacard. After the session is done, the whole computer is wiped and the OS is re-installed from read-only solid memory (to clean up any changes or damage done to the OS). Input: touch screen, keyboard, voice recognition. Output: screen, speakers. Power: 2. Memory: 5 ZB. Costs \$1/minute.

Typical Insomniac Merc

Level 1 Insomniac

Attributes- AGY 9, AWR 10, CHM 7, END 10, INL 9, SPD 9, STH 9, WIL 15, BLD 4, BDY 4, INCY 4.

Appearance- A young homeless person, wearing very little clothing, with several self-inflicted scars and a weary look in his or her eyes.

Motivations- To make money to support his or her family.

Methods- The Insomniac is not being paid to fight, he or she is being paid to mess up the enemy using psychic skills so that the employer can kill the enemy. If someone tries to come after the Insomniac physically, he or she will run.

Special Equipment- Shield (Hand-Nails) (gives +5 to parry).

Special Skills- Emotion Attack (2) or Hallucination Attack (2) or Pain Attack (2).

Typical Attack- Will make a Pain Attack skill roll to cause the victim to suffer shocking pain at WIL (15) +10 (Sibosin effects) +4 (skill) + 1d20 vs. 20 (or 1d20 +9 vs. 0). The victim can make an opposed save vs. pain (if victim fails by <10, loses next action, if victim fails by 10+, loses next action and reaction). If physically attacked, will parry with the shield at STH (9) +AGY (9) +5 (shield) +1d20 vs. 25 (or 1d20 vs. 2).

Fighting Alongside

Mercenaries like it better when they fight with (rather than at the direction of) an employer. That way they know that the employer is not sending them in to a battle that the employer himself or herself is not willing to risk. When an employer refuses to fight alongside a mercenary, the charge typically doubles.

Payvidphone- Usually found outside minimarts, liquor stores, fast food places, and in the lobbies of office buildings. Costs \$0.25 for a 5 minute call to any voice or vid address in the world.

Prostitution- The cost for sexual services varies considerably based on the skills and physical characteristics of the sex worker, the type of sex acts preformed, the location and duration of those acts. Costs can range from a quarter for a quick sex act in a back alley to five thousand for a weekend with a high-class escort. A 'typical' sex act (see p.146) costs \$10.

Runner- The cost to hire a street person Runner to take a message or package to any part of the city. Costs \$0.10/block for normal speed (delivers within 8 hours) or \$25 for rush (delivery within 30 minutes).

Secretary Subscription- The PC pays a weekly cost for the services of a secretary AI (p.78) on a host server. The secretary is running 24 hours a day and can be accessed from anywhere on the internet. Costs \$5/wk.

Servant (Addict)- This is the cost to hire an addict to follow the employer around and do manual labor, run errands or anything else (save fighting). Note that addicts are usually unreliable and may try to rob employers if they think they can get away with it. Costs \$2/hr.

Servant (Jack)- Jacks are professional beggars who have a reputation for doing anything to make a buck, from singing and dancing, to manual labor, to acting as a tour guide. This is the cost to hire a Jack to do whatever the employer can think of for the Jack to do (save fighting). Costs \$4/hr.

Servant (Skilled Street Person)- A level 1 Black Med, Cracker, Drake, Gambler, Insomniac, Keeper, Runner, Thief or Water Rat is paid to follow the employer around and use their particular skills and knowledge to aid the employer in whatever his or her goals are. The street

person will not fight on behalf of the employer, will not do anything degrading or dangerous, and will not work on behalf of causes that his or her family elders think of as reprehensible. Costs \$10/hr.

Storage (Locker)- Put in money, get a key card. You must pay every 48 hours or the key card will be revoked and the locker will unlock to the world. At any subway station a 1' by 1' by 2' locker is available (with a 1 in 20 chance of it getting broken in to). At SafeLock (a chain with 2 city locations) 2' by 2' by 3' lockers are available in a well-lit climate controlled building with video surveillance and occasional security guard drive-bys. Subway locker costs \$1/48 hours, SafeLock locker costs \$2.50/48 hours.

Storage (Shed)- A 5' by 5' by 8' shed in a converted office building. Open 24 hours with on-site security. Sheds open with a password and electronic key. Costs \$20/mo.

Subway Ride- See p.211 for more info. Costs \$1.50 to get in to the system.

Tattoo- Full color tattoo, either done by an artist with a needle or by a computer-controlled laser. Costs \$5/square inch.

Time on a Code Breaker- This is the cost for remote access to a very powerful computer designed especially to break codes. The code breaker is located outside the city, but remote access software lets users have full control as if they were sitting at the computer itself. Time must be booked in advance and reserved time is billed for whether it is used or not. The computer guesses codes at Power 75 and can do other tasks at Power 20. Memory: 500 ZB. Costs \$200/minute.

Time on a Supercomputer- This is the per minute cost to run programs on a supercomputer. Time must be booked in advance and reserved time is billed for whether it is used or not. Computer has Power 50, 5000 ZB memory. Costs \$1,000/minute.

TOOLS

Backpack- Costs \$10.

Bolt Cutters- Long handles allow a lot of pressure to be put on thick, high-strength blades. Designed to cut padlocks, chain-link fences, even some metal bars on windows. Because of its awkward balance it makes a poor weapon (1 bladed or 1 blunt damage, very hard strike, hard entangle) but if a weapon can be caught between the blades, the fighter holding the bolt cutters can use an action to snap it. Weighs 10 lbs. Costs \$50.

Bottled Water- A small plastic bottle of filtered water. Costs \$0.50.

Camping Net- This lightweight net can hold up to 750 lbs. and is large enough to be set up as a comfortable hammock. Weighs 0.5 lbs. Costs \$75.

Camping Tent- A canvas bag holding a folded up waterproof tent. With practice the tent can be setup and taken down in 5 minutes. Tent can hold up to 4 people (although not comfortably). Weighs 15 lbs. Costs \$35.

Carpentry Tools- Includes tools that can be used as ½ bladed poking or 2 blunt weapons (See Improvised Weapons, p.72). Weighs 10 lbs. Costs \$50.

Carving Tools- A small pouch of tools used by artists for carving in wood or stone. Has tools that can be used as 1 bladed poking or 1 bladed slashing weapons. Weighs 4 lbs. Costs \$40.

Chemical Synthesis Equipment (Simple)- Made from scavenged household items and a few special-ordered parts, this collection of heaters, condensers, flasks, filters, drips, separators, etc. fills several cardboard boxes and can be setup by someone with the Chemical Synthesis skill to manufacture simple chemicals (including most drugs). Costs \$200.

Climbing Rope- High quality rope that a mountain climber or spelunker might use. Has a burn and cut-proof nylon sheath (takes 3 bladed or 5 burn damage to cut the rope). Can hold 500 lbs. Has moderate bounce. Weighs 1 lb./10 ft. Costs \$1/ft.

Burglary Tools

An old law makes it a misdemeanor (\$500 fine or 30 days in jail) to carry "burglary tools". Burglary tools are anything a prosecutor can convince a judge was being carried for use in a burglary, even something as simple as a screwdriver. Overworked judges at the criminal courts building are willing to take the prosecutor's word that someone is a 'known burglar' and thus any tool they were carrying must have been a burglary tool.

Computer Repair Tools (Portable)- Small tool kit with a few commonly needed parts. Allows use of the Microelectronics skill to repair computers or computerized devices. Has tools which can be used as ½ bladed poking weapons. Weighs 0.5 lbs. Costs \$25.

Computer Repair Tools (Shop)- A large box of tools with many spare parts. Has tools which can be used as 1 bladed poking or 1 blunt damage weapons. Gives +4 to Microelectronics repair rolls. Weighs 45 lbs. Costs \$200.

Crowbar- Metal bar for prying things open. Can be used as 2 blunt 1 bladed weapon (range 1). Weighs 5 lbs. Costs \$45.

Dock Rope- Thick old rope, usually hemp, salvaged from old docks (usually by Water Rats). It is starting to decompose but is still strong and durable enough for many purposes. Can hold up to 250 lbs. Takes 2 bladed or 3 burn damage to cut the rope. Weight 1 lb./5 ft. Costs \$1/5ft.

Duct Tape- 50 ft. roll. Costs \$2.

Emergency Cooling Pack- When capsules inside this small gel-filled pouch are broken it becomes ice cold and stays cold for up to 4 hours. Can only be used once. Gives +5 to save vs. heat exhaustion. Weighs 1 lb. Costs \$5.

Emergency Heat Pack- When capsules inside this small gel-filled pouch are broken it becomes very warm and stays warm for up to 4 hours. Can only be used once. Gives +7 to save vs. hypothermia. Weighs 1 lb. Costs \$5.

Fishing Line- A 100 ft. spool of nylon line. Takes hard (30) strength feat to break. Can hold up to 100 lbs. Weighs ½ lb. Costs \$15.

Flare- Burns with a bright red or green light for 1 hour, illuminating up to 20 ft. Can be held in the hand. Does 2 burn damage when used as a weapon. Costs \$5.

Flare (Underwater)- Like the flare, but it is designed to work underwater. Costs \$15.

Flashlight (Keychain)- A tiny flashlight with an ultra-bright LED. Can illuminate up to 10 ft. Battery lasts 1 hr. Costs \$3.

Flashlight (Small)- A small rechargeable flashlight that fits in the palm of the hand (and can clip on to the handlebars of a bike). Batteries last 2 hours. Can illuminate up to 50 ft. Weighs 0.5 lbs. Costs \$2.

Handcuffs- 20 difficulty to pick. Takes 50 difficulty STH feat to break. Costs \$20.

Hip Flask- Costs \$25.

Instrument (Acoustic)- An old beat-up non-electronic instrument, the type homeless people often play for spare change in their off-hours. Guitar, bongos, harmonica, sitar, saxophone, etc. Costs \$20.

Lighter (Disposable)- Plastic butane lighter, can burn for up to 10 minutes straight (prone to melting or exploding if left on too long). Costs \$0.50.

Lighter (Electronic)- Rechargeable, high-powered infrared heaters focused on a point, can easily ignite wet wood in high wind. Costs \$10.

Lock Picks (Homemade)- A short rake and tension bar made from street sweeper bristles and other odd bits of metal. Lets a user perform Lock Picking at -4. Costs \$5.

Lock Picks (Professional)- A tiny leather pouch with well crafted tools for picking just about any kind of mechanical lock. Lets a user perform Lock Picking at no minuses. Costs \$50.

Makeup Kit- A small kit that can fit in a purse, with everything needed for most styles of makeup. Weighs 0.5 lbs. Costs \$40.

Nutrient Bar- Lasts up to 5 years unrefrigerated. Contains protein, sugar, carbohydrates and vitamins. Most people could survive on four of these per day if they had to. Costs \$2.

Padlock (Cheap)- 20 difficulty to pick, takes 6 bladed or 6 blunt damage to break. Costs \$5.

Padlock (Expensive)- 40 difficulty to pick, takes 15 bladed or 15 blunt damage to break. Takes a hard strength feat to open it with a bolt cutter (and will ruin the bolt cutters). Costs \$80.

Pheromones- Made either for men or women, these chemically engineered pheromones have no consciously perceivable scent (except perhaps to Sexologists or Animalists) but they tend to trigger a strong sexual attraction in any person attracted to the wearer's gender who comes within 5 ft. +8 to seduction rolls. Lasts 4 hours. Costs \$20/dose.

Plastic Restraints- Thick plastic restraints that can be quickly closed around wrists and ankles, can only be released by cutting them. Takes 40 difficulty STH feat to break. Costs \$2/ea. or 20 for \$20.

Plumbing Repair Tools (Portable)- A small box with tools for repairing plumbing problems. Has tools which can be used as ½ bladed poking or 2 blunt weapons. Weighs 7 lbs. Costs \$40.

Rope Saw- A flexible saw-on-a-chain that rolls up in to a tiny package (can easily fit in a pocket). Used mainly by campers. Weighs 0.5 lbs. Can be used as a 1 bladed improvised slashing weapon. Costs \$25.

Seed Pack- Suitable for planting in a garden. Common plants are \$3, rare plants are \$15, illegal plants (e.g. marijuana, peyote, opium poppies) are \$25. Double the cost for live plants (easier to grow than seeds, +5 on gardening rolls). Double the cost for plants genetically engineered to grow outside in the city (frost resistant, pollution resistant, low light).

Spray Paint- A normal can of spray paint. Can be used as a blinding weapon. Costs \$10.

Steel Thermos- Can be used as a blunt weapon (range 1, 1 blunt damage). Weighs 1 lb. empty, 4 lbs. full. Costs \$35.

Torture Kit- A small leather pouch filled with tools scavenged from other purposes (medical tools, repair tools, cleaning instruments). The tools are specially selected to look as wicked and horrible as possible. Allows a PC to use the Torture skill with no minuses. Contains tools which can be used as 1 bladed damage slashing weapons. Costs \$250.

Vehicle Repair Tools (Portable)- A box of tools with many spare parts. Allows someone to use the Mechanics skill to repair vehicles at -7. Has tools which can be used as 1 bladed poking or 1 blunt damage weapons. Weighs 5 lbs. Costs \$50.

Water Purifying Canteen- A small canteen with a built in water-purifier. Costs \$70.

Wristwatch- A cheap digital watch on a plastic band. Receives date and time from official broadcasts. Has an alarm. Waterproof to 35 ft. Costs \$1.

See Also

Biotech: Non-Chemical, p.92
Chain, p.106
Crate Cutter, p.106
Fire Axe, p.151
Line Tap: All, p.106
Machete, p.106
Pickaxe, p.106
Repeater, p.84
Rope and Grapple, p.101
Sledgehammer, p.107

TRANSPORT

Transport Features

Power: If a battery based vehicle, lists the battery life. If gasoline powered, lists miles per gallon.

Speed: Lists the vehicle's maximum speed (on the same scale as the attribute SPD).

Acceleration: How much speed a vehicle can pick up in a round. If a vehicle has acceleration 5 and speed 20 then it can reach its max. speed in 4 rounds.

Maneuverability: The maneuverability rating is added to any maneuvers attempted in the vehicle. See p.60 for more.

Damage Capacity: How much damage a vehicle can take before it stops working.

Available Upgrades: The cost for each upgrade that can be added on to a vehicle. See the Full Version of the game for details about these upgrades.

Bicycle- An old bicycle, probably stolen.

Speed: Rider's SPD x 2

Maneuverability: +4

Damage Capacity: 4 blunt or 4 bladed.

Costs \$75.

Car (Used)- An old pre-war automobile, of the type that litter the streets of the city (except running).

Power: 30 miles/gallon gasoline.

Speed: 70


Acceleration: 15

Maneuverability: +4

Damage Capacity: 7 bladed or 8 blunt.

Available Upgrades: Air Filters \$100, Air-Bags \$150, Autodrive \$350, Bullet Proofing \$1,000, Defroster \$75, Fire Suppression \$100, Floodlight \$75, GPS \$20, Intelligent Suspension \$200, Live Tires \$1,500, Mirrored Windows \$75, Nightvision Windshield \$100, Noise Dampeners \$150, PA \$75, Ram Spikes \$150, Telepresence \$200, Theft Alarm \$75, Theft Alarm (Aggressive) \$150, Winch and Cable \$180.

Costs \$1,000.

Diving Bell-  An old wooden, metal or plastic barrel or trash can, outfitted with a window, internal handles and detachable bags of rocks on the bottom. The bell has the same buoyancy as water, so it can be pulled along with a diver as a portable oxygen station (about 45 minutes worth of oxygen). The diver holds on to the handles, breathes the air in the bell, their legs dangle in the water. Costs \$35.

Electric Bicycle- An old used bicycle outfitted with a small electric motor. The user can pedal or use the motor.

Power: Battery charge lasts 15 miles

Speed: Rider's SPD x 2 or 10 (motor)

Acceleration: 2 (motor)

Maneuverability: +4

Damage Capacity: 4 blunt or 4 bladed.

Costs \$150.

Inflatable Raft- A small canvas satchel containing a self-inflating raft that can hold up to 6 people. Costs \$75.

Rope and Grapple- 30 ft. of climbing rope on a sturdy metal hook. Gives +8 to Climbing rolls. Costs \$75.

Skateboard- A small low-tech skateboard.

Speed: Rider's SPD.

Maneuverability: -4

Damage Capacity: 6 bladed or 6 blunt.

Costs \$15.

Wheelchair- A simple non-electronic wheelchair. PCs can move in the wheelchair at half their STH. \$100

See Also

Bus Ride, p.97
Car Rental, p.97
Gasoline, p.97
Subway Ride, p.99

WEAPONS

Chemical

Black Market Food Poison- A vial of clear liquid bought from a black market trader for putting in a person's food or drink. The liquid is some toxic chemical, typically a pesticide, herbicide, cleaning product or industrial solvent. They are seldom truly tasteless (takes around 20 difficulty AWR roll for an unsuspecting person to detect them, more or less depending upon how bland the food or drink is). Because each vial is made from different toxins, the effects are random and death is not certain. Effects are as follows (roll percentile for each batch):

01-50%: Within 1 minute of ingestion: burning sensation in mouth and throat, Vomiting (30), diarrhea, stomach cramps (20 difficulty distracting pain), weakness and light-headedness (-5 STH, END, INL) for 24 hours.

41-55%: Within 30 minutes after ingestion: headache, Vomiting (10), chills for 2 hours. Within 1 week after ingestion: Seizures (20), Cardiac Arrest (20), memory loss for 1 week, permanent neurological damage (-10 AGY, -5 INL, -5 AWR).

56-85%: Within 15 minutes: Headache (20), spasms (-10 AGY), weakness (-7 END, -7 STH) and sensitivity to bright lights for 48 hours. Within 1 hour: Paralysis (20), Pulmonary Arrest (30).

86-00%: Within 5 minutes: painful cramping and muscle constriction, starting with the face and moving throughout the body, causing distracting pain, loss of AGY, muscle strains and joint dislocation. Complete paralysis within 30 minutes. Pulmonary Arrest (50) within 1 hour.

Costs \$30/dose.

Black Market Knife Poison- A small packet of bitter-smelling gummy substance designed to be put on knife blades, arrow heads, darts, shivs or any other weapon which will pierce skin. Different toxins are used (including snake venom, chemical solvents, pesticides, plant toxins). Because they use different recipes, the effects and deadliness of these poisons are unreliable. Effects are as follows (roll percentile):

01-15%: Within 1 round of being stabbed: Paralysis (20). Within 2 rounds: Paralysis (30), Pulmonary Arrest (30). Within 3 rounds: Paralysis (50), pulmonary Arrest (50).

16-30%: Within 5 rounds of being stabbed: inability of blood to coagulate (any bladed injury causes ½ BLD damage per round) for 8 hours.

31-70%: Within 1 round: 1 BLD damage per round for 6 rounds. Excessive thirst, Vomiting (20), Anaphylactic Shock (20), numbness (+7 to save vs. pain, -7 to touch based AWR rolls), blurry vision (-7 to actions/reactions and AWR based rolls) for 24 hours.

71-00%: Within 1 round: severe shortness of breath (-10 END), lightheadedness (-5 INL, -5 AGY), vertigo (must make easy (10) saves vs. loss of balance) for 10 rounds.

Costs \$75/dose.

Chlorine Cocktail- This is typically two glass bottles duct-taped together. They contain common cleaning agents which, when mixed together, produce copious amounts of chlorine gas. The Cocktail is typically smashed against a wall or ground inside an enclosed area. When chlorine gas gets in the eyes it causes blindness (-7 to actions/reactions), pain (moderate (20) distracting pain) and eyes take weeks to heal. When inhaled, causes burning sensation in nose and throat (moderate (20) distracting pain), coughing and

corrosive burns to the lungs (4 END damage for each round exposed to the gas). One Cocktail can fill a 400 ft² room with gas in a matter of seconds. Costs \$50.

Dagger (Freedom Army)- This dagger was created decades ago by Freedom Army scientists for assassination of enemy leaders. There are a number of them left in the city. The dagger is thin and tapered, made of a teflon coated alloy designed to pierce armor. Inlaid in to the blade are a number of thin black strips containing a powerful paralytic anesthetic agent. Upon being stabbed, the black strips dissolve and the drug enters the blood stream. The anesthetic acts so quickly that some victims don't even realize they've been stabbed. A second later, the paralytic hits the heart and lungs and the person dies of lack of oxygen. The dagger can be used about 10 times before the black strips dissolve completely. Comes with a waterproof sheath. Dagger does 2 bladed damage (pierces armor as 6). Easy Vital Strike. No pain/stun or slash. One round after damage is done, complete paralysis (80 difficulty to save). Costs \$750 with ten stabbings left, \$600 with 5 stabbings, \$500 with 2 stabbings, \$300 with no stabbings left.

Drake Blood Poison- This is the only poison that the Drakes will tell people how it is made. They do so to make people fear it and thus to make it a valuable deterrent. The Drakes keep small rusty iron pressure cookers on a constant low heat, incubating the contents in an anaerobic (no oxygen) environment. Blood and feces are the main ingredients in the incubator, and there are several strains of highly toxic organisms have been breeding in the pressure cookers for years.

Appearance: Thick black liquid with a terrible stench. Sold in plastic baggies.

Administration: 2x effects if placed in a wound or on anything that pierces skin (full effects in 4 rounds), 1x effects if ingested (full effects in 5 minutes).

1x Effects: Over-stimulation of skeletal muscles causing rigid posture, a terrible grimace, and cramps (-7 AGY), coughing and vomiting blood (-1 BLD), large boils filled with clear fluids around the area where the poison entered the body, vomiting, diarrhea (thirst damage unless massive amounts of fluid are taken), fever (-10 to save vs. heat exhaustion), Headache (30), must make a save vs. disease progression (20 difficulty) or suffer 1 BLD damage per level of the disease. Symptoms last 48 hours.

2x Effects: High fever causing delirium (-10 AWR, -10 INL, Delusions (20), Hallucinations (20), -15 to save vs. heat exhaustion), throat and tongue swells so that it is difficult to talk, swallow or breathe (-7 END), red rash and boils covering the body, vomiting and diarrhea (thirst damage without intravenous fluids), meningitis (swelling of the tissues surrounding the brain and spinal cord causing headaches, vomiting, stiff neck, joint pain, dislike of bright lights, and seizures), coughing and vomiting blood, 1d20 BLD damage.

4x Effects: Paralysis (20), Stupor (30), Seizures (30), severe bleeding from all body orifices (-3 BLD), body turns bright red with boils rising immediately, throat swells (tube must be put down the throat or the victim will choke to death), severe meningitis (causing brain damage), 4d6 BLD damage.

Treatment: Intravenous liquids, gastric lavage (cleaning out digestive system with water), immersion in cool water (to keep down fever), broad-spectrum antibiotics, anti-inflammatory drugs and treatment with oxygen can ease the symptoms.

Costs \$40 for 4 doses.

Drake Deliriant Poison- Made from the ground seeds and liquid extracts of weeds growing in vacant dirt lots in Drake territory (fences prevent people from viewing exactly what is growing in these fields, but the poisonous weed Jimsonweed has been positively identified). This poison is used for multiple purposes. Although deadly in high doses, in lower doses it interferes with people's minds, causing delirium and frightening delusions. People poisoned by the drug are often confused, and although the accuracy of anything they say is suspect, they sometimes reveal pieces of information that they would not otherwise reveal.

Appearance: A small square of folded paper containing a sticky, clumpy brown powder, with a consistency much like brown sugar, smelling strongly of weeds and grass.

Administration: The poison can be ingested (1x effects per dose within 3 minutes), inhaled (2x effects within 2 rounds), stuck to a weapon (with honey) that will pierce skin (2x effects within 2 rounds), or dissolved in alcohol and sprayed in someone's face (the poison enters the bloodstream via mucous membranes in the face, 2x effects within 10 rounds).

1x Effects: Blurred vision (-7 vision based AWR rolls), fever (-10 to save vs. heat exhaustion), increased strength (+2 STH, +1 END), confusion (-15 INL), Delusions (bizarre, 30 difficulty to save), Obfuscating Hallucinations (primarily reliving memories from the past as if they were currently happening, 20 difficulty to save), Sudden Amnesia (30), Retrograde Amnesia (20). Symptoms peak within 30 minutes, and slowly drop off, not disappearing completely for 1 week.

2x Effects: Unconsciousness (20), fever (-15 to save vs. heat exhaustion), severe thirst (double damage from thirst), Vomiting (20), Stupor (30), Cardiac Arrest (20), symptoms taper off and disappear in 2 weeks.

4x Effects: Coma (30), Seizures (20), Cardiac Arrest (30). Symptoms disappear in 3 weeks.

Treatment: Sedatives and anticonvulsants can be used to decrease symptoms.

Costs \$30 for 4 doses or \$100 for a plastic spray bottle with 10 doses in it.

Drake Dioxyl Butylene Vinyl Chloride Ash- This is the fresh ash from a special plastic that the Drakes gather and burn. The ash releases random psychic energy, a sort of "static" that can disrupt psychic skills. Dioxyl ash has a half-life of about one hour (every hour after it is burned, its potency is reduced by half).

Appearance: Black paste in an old sardine can.

Administration: Can be wiped on the forehead of a psychic (to disable that psychic) or on the forehead of someone trying to resist a psychic.

1x Effects: -2 to all psychic skill rolls.

2x Effects: -4 to all psychic skill rolls, slight dizziness (-5 to save vs. loss of balance), faintness (-5 to save vs. loss of consciousness).

4x Effects: -8 to all psychic skill rolls, dizziness (-10 to save vs. loss of balance), faintness (-10 to save vs. loss of consciousness).

8x Effects: -15 to all psychic skill rolls, vertigo (must save vs. loss of balance at 20 difficulty), Unconsciousness (20).

Treatment: Effects go away as soon as the ash is washed off.

Costs \$200 for 4 doses.

Drake Fungus Poison- This is the mysterious poison that the Drakes use to make their own bloodstreams and bodily fluids poisonous. Nobody but the Drakes know the fungus it comes from or exactly how it is made. Because it is tasteless and kills without leaving any outward signs of what happened, it is an ideal poison for murder. The Drakes sell their Fungus Poison, but they keep the price high (to dissuade people from buying it in order to analyze it, experiment with it or try to build their own immunity).

Appearance: The poison comes as a clear, sticky, nearly flavorless liquid, sold in pen caps topped with chewing gum. A dose is about one drop.

Administration: The poison can be ingested (1x effects per dose within 2 minutes), absorbed through mucous membranes (e.g. 1x effects within 4 minutes if put in someone's eyes). Weapons that will pierce skin can be coated with the poison. Effects happen within 2 rounds. Typically causes 2x effects if it is a small weapon (razor, piece of glass, knife) or 4x effects if it is a larger weapon (machete, kitchen knife spear).

1x Effects: Weakness and pain in muscles (-5 STH), numbness (-5 to AWR rolls for touch), dizziness (-10 to save vs. loss of balance), faintness (-10 to save vs. unconsciousness) for 5 minutes.

2x Effects: Weakness (-10 STH), thick tongue (difficulty speaking or swallowing), numbness and blurred vision (-7 to AWR rolls), vertigo (must save vs. loss of balance, 20 difficulty), Vomiting (20), and irregular heartbeat (1 BLD damage) for 1 hour.

4x Effects: Paralysis (20), Unconsciousness (20), cyanosis (bluish tone to the skin), Cardiac Arrest (30) for 2 hours.

8x Effects: Paralysis (30), Seizures (30), Unconsciousness (40), Cardiac Arrest (40) for 4 hours.

Treatment: No known treatment besides artificial respiration and heart-rate regulation.

Costs \$50 for 4 doses.

Drake Glass Poison- Drakes can develop very little immunity to this poison and they are in a lot of danger of accidentally poisoning themselves while manufacturing it. Thus, only the most careful Drakes are allowed to create it and the prices are high. Drake Glass Poison is made with ground glass and irritants (such as poison ivy) designed to make a victim scratch whenever they get any on their skin. Scratching is only a vehicle to get the real poison (the source of which is unknown, though many believe it is insect venom) in to the bloodstream. This poison is renowned for its subtlety (you can kill someone by putting it on their doorknob) but it is also easy to defeat (a victim only has to avoid scratching and wash the area).

Appearance: Thick white powder in a small folded square of paper.

Administration: Put on anything that a person will touch. The first effects are itching, and if the victim scratches then microscopic abrasions are opened in the skin that let the poison in to the bloodstream. Depending on how much they scratch and how much of their body came in contact with poison, the victim may suffer 1x to 4x effects within 1 minute after scratching.

1x Effects: Spreading numbness around the area where the poison entered the body (+10 to save vs. pain), paleness, tingling in extremities, weakness (-5 STH), slowed heartbeat (-7 END), chills, Vomiting (10), difficulty breathing and swallowing, Pulmonary Arrest (20). Symptoms last 24 hours.

2x Effects: Loss of blood to extremities (will lose fingers and toes if a vasodialator is not given), extreme weakness and numbness throughout the body (-10 AWR, -10 STH), Vomiting (20), short shallow breaths (-10 END), Pulmonary Arrest (30). Symptoms last 48 hours. Even if the victim survives, there will be permanent neurological damage (-7 to touch based AWR).

4x Effects: Loss of bladder and sphincter control, extreme drop in body temperature (Hypothermia at 30 difficulty to save), paralysis of diaphragm (Pulmonary Arrest at 50 difficulty to save), Cardiac Arrest (30), Coma (40), severe and permanent neurological damage.

Treatment: Vasodialators (to re-open closed blood vessels), artificial respiration and keeping the patient warm will reduce damage from the poison.

Costs \$200 for 4 doses.

Drake Knockout Drops- This is the Drake's most non-lethal product (though they are careful to tell people that there is always a chance of death when using it).

Appearance: A slimy, clear fluid. Sold in pen caps sealed with chewing gum.

Administration: Put in to food or drink. Effects (1x per dose) within 5 minutes after ingestion.

1x Effects: Drowsiness (-10 to save vs. unconsciousness), dizziness (-15 to save vs. loss of balance). Effects last 4 hours.

2x Effects: Unconsciousness (20), Vomiting (20), Pulmonary Arrest (10), vertigo (must save vs. loss of balance, 20 difficulty), Anterograde Amnesia (15). Effects last 8 hours.

4x Effects: Unconsciousness (30), Pulmonary Arrest (30), Seizures (30), Vomiting (30). Effects last 12 hours.

Interactions: The Knockout drops have a synergistic effect with alcohol, doubling the effects of the knockout drops. Highly acidic food and drinks will break down the chemicals, halving the effects.

Treatment: Heavy doses of stimulants will cancel most of the effects.

Costs \$25 for 2 doses.

Drake Suicide Poison- This is the poison that Drakes give to people who ask for something "painless" (which usually means they are going to commit suicide). Note: There are tales of young Drakes taking pity on depressed customers and selling them something other than suicide poison (depending on the story it might be a powerful hallucinogen, an aphrodisiac, or just dirty water). Drake elders deny that any Drake ever sells anything other than what the customer asks for.

Appearance: Milky, reddish liquid in a tiny piece of sponge, wrapped in duct tape.

Administration: Swallowed, effects peak within 10 minutes.

1x Effects: Unconsciousness (20), numbness (+10 to save vs. pain), twitching eyes and lips, slowed breath and

heartbeat (-10 END). If victim goes unconscious, Coma (20) and if victim goes in to a coma, Cardiac Arrest (20).

2x Effects: Numbness and euphoria (+15 to save vs. pain), Unconsciousness (30), Coma (30), Cardiac Arrest (30).

4x Effects: Coma (40), Cardiac Arrest (40).

Treatment: Heavy doses of central nervous system stimulants can prevent heart failure. If no medication is available, anything that can be done to help the victim stay awake will reduce the chance of death.

Costs \$50 for 4 doses.

Drake Pain Juice- A clear viscous fluid, looking much like Drake Fungus Poison. The juice is loaded with concentrated capascins (the stuff in pepper spray) as well as an herbal extract that helps block painkillers (including natural endorphins). If the fluid gets in to any cut, does an aggregate 10 difficulty to save distracting pain (feels like burning). Ingesting the fluid causes mouth pain and vomiting. Getting it in the eyes causes 30 difficulty distracting pain and blinds the victim. Costs \$5/dose.

Poison Ring- This looks like a normal (although gaudy) ring. It has a hidden compartment which can be filled with a powder or liquid poison. When a tiny stopper is removed, the ring only need be tipped over food or drink to drop poison in to it. Costs \$30.

Explosives

Explosives Features

Explosives have a range increment. To determine the damage taken by a victim, count the number of range increments away that person is. For each range increment, reduce the damage by half. So, if an explosion does 20 burn damage, has a range increment of 5 ft. and the victim is 15 ft. away, the victim takes $2 \frac{1}{2}$ burn damage (20, divided by 2 at 5 ft., divided by 2 at 10 ft., divided by 2 at 15 ft.).

Detonator- Penny-sized electronic device for setting off explosive charges. Can be set on a timer or to respond to an encoded radio signal. Cost \$2.

Matchhead Bomb- A small incendiary bomb, about the size of a pack of cards, made mostly from match heads. Usually used for starting fires. Uses a fuse. Does 6 burn damage (range increment 2 ft.). Legality: Licensed (5 yrs. prison). Costs \$80.

Molotov Cocktail- A glass bottle filled with some flammable liquid (typically gasoline). It is used as a quick arson tool (light and throw against the building you want to burn) or as an anti-tank weapon (the idea is to engulf the tank in flames and cause it to overheat). It makes a poor hand-to-hand combat weapon since it can fail to shatter when it hits the victim. Any object hit with a burning Molotov Cocktail (which shatters) takes 5 burn damage per round for 5 rounds (or until the fire is extinguished). Legality: Licensed (5 yrs. prison). Costs \$40.

Pipe Bomb- A homemade bomb made from a length of pipe filled with explosive materials. A fuse is cut to the desired time. Metal shards from the pipe do the majority of the damage. Weighs 1 lb. Does 1d10 bladed damage (pierces armor as double), 4 burn damage, range increment 4 ft. Legality: Licensed (5 yrs. prison). Costs \$250.

Self-Defense

Self-Defense Weapon Features

Pain- Most self-defense weapons do pain to the enemy. Saves vs. pain are made on WIL + 1d20 vs. the difficulty listed. The effects of a failure depends on the type of pain and the amount of failure:

Shocking Pain (failed by 1-9): Loses next action.

Shocking Pain (failed by 10+): Loses next action and reaction.

Distracting Pain: -1 to all rolls for each point the character failed by.

Electricity- When harmful levels of electricity run through a person, four effects happen:

-Paralysis (WIL+END+1d20 vs. 20/point of damage), paralysis only lasts while the electricity is running.

-Unconsciousness (WIL+END+1d20 vs. 10 per point of damage)

-Cardiac Arrest (END+1d20 vs. 5/point of damage)

-Burn Damage: 1 point of burn damage for every 4 points of electrical damage.

Example: *Barry tries to grab a National Guardsperson's shield during a riot. The shield blasts him with 3 points of electrical damage. Barry must save vs. paralysis (difficulty 60), must save vs. unconsciousness (difficulty 30), must save vs. Cardiac Arrest (difficulty 15) and takes no burn damage.*

Barbed Wire Snips- Lengths of old (slightly rusty) barbed wire, harvested and sold by homeless scavengers. Useful for hiding inside anything soft an opponent might grab during combat (like a deadlock). Grabbing barbed wire without expecting it causes Shocking Pain (30). Costs \$10/10 snips.

Blinding Powder- Manufactured by homeless people (Drakes and others) as a cheap substitute for pepper-spray. This powder is made up of sand and caustic chemicals that cause painful burning sensation when thrown in someone's eyes. Powder can be thrown in a range of 5 ft. Very Easy Blinding Strike, but the victim can make a Very Easy Parry by closing his or her eyes. A successful blinding strike partially blinds (-7 to all actions/reactions) and is Distracting Pain (30). Costs \$7 for a bag of 3 handfuls.

Kubotan- These are small metal rods, small enough to fit in pockets, usually with a blunt point at the end. This is a self-defense weapon. Too small to do any real damage with but the blunt point is excellent for causing pain when it is slammed in to a joint or the face. Range: 0. Damage: ½ blunt. Easy pain/stun, easy blinding. Costs \$5.

Pepper Spray- A tiny canister which can be kept in a pocket or even put on a keychain. It has a safety lock. When used, it sprays a blast of capsaicin (the chemical which makes peppers hot) which can blind and incapacitate. One canister has enough for 5 attacks. Very Easy Blinding Strike, but the victim can make a Very Easy Parry by closing his or her eyes. Damage: on a successful blinding strike, victim is partially blinded (-7 to actions/reactions) must save vs. Distracting Pain (30) and if the victim breathes he or she will suffer from severe nose and throat pain, coughing (-10 END) and Vomiting (20). Legality: Permit (\$500). Costs \$20.

Personal Sonic Alarm- A small keychain device that, when activated, emits a piercing and painful wail (distracting pain (20)) that can be heard up to a mile away. Costs \$20.

Shield (Hand)- Pieces of scrap wood lashed together to make a primitive shield. The shield is about 3 ft. in diameter. Gives +5 to parry. PR of 3 bladed 3 blunt (shield can be destroyed completely by 6 damage). Weighs 7 lbs. Costs \$15.

Shield (Hand-Metal)- Like the wood shield but made of scrap metal, making it stronger and lighter. Gives +8 to parry. PR of 5 bladed 4 blunt. Costs \$50.

Shield (Hand-Nails)- Like the wooden shield, except with long nails driven through all around the shield. Gives +5 to parry, +4 to pain/stun attack. PR 3 bladed 3 blunt. Costs \$25.

Taser- Small handheld device with two pointed metal prongs. Can zap a person up to 5 times per battery. Range: 0-1. Damage: 3 electrical. Costs \$150.

Traditional

Traditional Weapon Features

Range: Every weapon has a range within which it will work. See p.68 for more on moving in and out of range. If a weapon has range 1-2, it can be used normally if the opponents are 1 or 2 range levels apart. However, if the opponents are three range levels apart the weapon is too short to hit and if the opponents are 0 range levels apart the opponent is too close to do full damage. Ranges are as follows:

Range 0: Touching (biting, head butts, knives).

Range 1: Arm's Length (punches, kicks, knives)

Range 2: 4 ft. (swords, clubs)

Range 3: 6 ft. (whips, chains, lances)

Some weapons might do different things at different ranges. A lance, for instance, might do bladed damage if used at one range (where the blade can hit the enemy) and blunt damage if used at another range (where the enemy can only be hit by the pole).

Damage: The amount of damage done by the weapon on a normal strike.

Special Actions/Reactions: The design of some weapons makes it easier or harder to do certain actions and reactions. Example: If a sword gives "easy strike" then the holder gets +4 whenever making a strike with it. These actions and reactions are listed with the following nomenclature:

Very Easy: +8 on rolls.

Easy: +4 on rolls.

Hard: -4 on rolls.

Very Hard: -8 on rolls.

Pierces As: When a weapon is good at piercing armor, this is the amount of damage to use when calculating how much damage surpasses armor. Note that the max. damage that can hit the human inside the armor is the normal damage listed.

Baseball Bat- An old wooden or hollow metal bat. Range 1-2. Damage: 3 blunt. Weighs 2 lbs. Costs \$20.

Bear Trap- Spring loaded metal trap with a chain on it. Takes only 10 pounds of pressure to spring the trap. Does 1 bladed damage and traps the leg that set it off. Weighs 35 lbs. Costs \$100.

Blowpipe- A 3 ft. long white PVC tube for blowing darts with. Takes 1 round to load a dart in the tube. FR 2 ft. MR 30 ft. Does 0 bladed damage (pierces as 2). Costs \$25 +\$4/dart.

Boot Blades- Small strong blades that are attached to the toes of boots. Adds 2 bladed damage to a kick. Costs \$20 each +\$15 for spring loaded.

Bow (Archery)- A cheap plastic bow, typically left over from some pre-war gym class. Comes with a leather quiver. Takes 1 action to draw an arrow. FR 5 ft. MR 100 ft. Damage: 2 bladed. Weighs 4 lbs. Costs \$25 +\$5/arrow.

Bow (Compound)- A complicated hunting bow, using high-tech materials to make it lightweight and powerful. FR 7 ft. MR 250 ft. Damage: 3 bladed. Weighs 4 lbs. Costs \$125 +\$7/arrow.

Chain- A length of chain of the right size for combat. Can be used for entangling. Range 2-3. Damage: 3 blunt. Hard strike, hard vital strike. Weighs 10 lbs. Costs \$7.

Chain (Heavy)- This is a length of chain heavier and shorter than that typically used in combat. It is so heavy that only the strongest fighters in the city can use it effectively (takes a moderate strength roll to use without a penalty). Range: 1-2. Damage: 4 blunt. Very hard strike, very hard vital strike. Weighs 65 lbs. Costs \$25.

Crate Cutter- A small folded piece of metal contains a razor blade. Designed as a multi-purpose cutting tool. Range: 0. Damage: 1 bladed. Easy slash. Costs \$7.


Crossbow- Takes 2 actions to load the bow (or 1 action with a hard strength feat). 2 handed. FR 7 ft. MR 350 ft. Damage: 3 bladed (pierces armor as 5). Weighs 7 lbs. Costs \$250 +\$7/bolt.

Dagger (Throwing)- A dagger designed and weighted to be thrown. FR 1 ft. MR 20 ft. Damage 2 bladed. Costs \$49.

Dagger- A knife designed for stabbing through the ribcage and in to the heart. Damage: 2½ bladed. Easy vital strike. Costs \$35.

Fire Axe- A red painted axe from the fire-hose alcove of some office building. These are plentiful on the black market (being the first things rioters would steal during every major riot in the last 100 years). Range: 1. Damage: 3 bladed (pierces armor as 6). Hard strike, easy vital strike. Weighs 3 lbs. Costs \$40.

Harpoon- A heavy metal spear designed for piercing the thick flesh of sea creatures and holding them on a hook. Weighs 25 lbs. Requires moderate (20 difficulty) STH feat to use without penalties. Removing violently (once it has pierced flesh) does 5 ragged bladed damage. FR 5 ft. MR 75 ft. Damage: 6 bladed damage (pierces as 7). Hard Strike. Weighs 15 lbs. Costs \$100.

Kitchen Knife Spear  - The blade from a small kitchen knife is tied in to the split end of a stick. The result is a primitive, but highly effective, spear. The spear is mainly used for throwing, but in a pinch it can be used as a hand-weapon. When thrown: FR 2 ft. MR 40 ft. Damage: 3 bladed. When used as a handheld weapon: Range: 2. Damage: 2 blunt (when bashing) or 3 bladed (when stabbing). Easy parry, easy slash. Weighs 2 lbs. Costs \$8.

Knife (Combat)- This knife is crafted specially for fighting with. It is best at slashing-type attacks. Range: 0-1. Damage: 2 bladed. Easy slash, easy wing. Costs \$35.

Knife (Hunting)- A large knife with a serrated back side and a hollow handle (containing matches, fishing hook and line, sharpening stone and water purification tablets). Range 0-1. Damage: 2½ bladed. Costs \$30.

Knife (Kitchen)- A large bread knife. Each time it hits an opponent there is a 1 in 20 chance of the blade breaking. Range 0-1. Damage: 2 bladed. Costs \$3.

Knife (Switchblade)- A spring loaded knife designed to be concealed in the palm and opened in an instant for surprise attacks. Range: 0. Damage: 1½ bladed. Easy slash, easy wing, easy vital strike. Costs \$45.

Machete- A rounded sword-like blade designed for chopping through thick foliage. Range: 1. Damage: 4 bladed. Weighs 5 lbs. Costs \$40.

Nightstick- One handed weapon made from plastic or fiberglass. Range: 1. Damage: 3 blunt. Very easy parry. Weighs 5 lbs. Costs \$40.

Pen Knife- What looks like a fancy metal pen conceals a strong, sharp blade which is just long enough to pierce the ribcage and heart. Range: 0. Damage: 1 bladed. Easy slash, easy vital strike. Costs \$45.

Pickaxe- Range: 2. Does 3 bladed damage (pierces as 6). Hard strike. Costs \$100.

Pike- A long sharpened stick or rod, braced against the ground, used to impale oncoming enemies. More useful for mass combat than person-to-person combat. Range 3. Damage: 5 bladed (pierces armor as 6). Easy vital strike. Weighs 20 lbs. Costs \$50.

Pipe- An old metal pipe, scavenged from a hole in the ground, or a piece of rebar scavenged from a ruined building. Range: 1. Damage: 3 blunt. Weighs 10 lbs. Costs \$4.


Quarterstaff- A 6 ft. long straight piece of wood. Range 1-3. Damage: 2 blunt. Easy parry. Weighs 10 lbs. Costs \$20.


Railroad Spike- An old metal railroad spike sharpened to a sharp point. Range: 0-1. Damage: 1½ bladed. Easy vital strike. Costs \$5.

Razor Ring- A part of a razor blade welded to a brass ring. The idea is to wear the razor inside, keeping it hidden and doing a surprise attack on someone's jugular vein with it (see the Assassin: Armed skill, p.22). Range: 0. Damage: ½ bladed. Costs \$30.

Ripper- Like the shank, this weapon was first designed by prisoners and is now manufactured by homeless people from trash. The ripper is a piece of ragged scrap metal with a handle on it, designed to cut and tear flesh. While the shank is a weapon of assassination, the ripper is a tool of intimidation. Range: 0-1. Damage: 2 ragged. Easy pain/stun, easy slash. Costs \$35.


Sharpened Stick- A 2.5 ft. long stick, fire-hardened and sharpened to a point. Range: 2. Damage: 2½ bladed. Hard strike. Costs \$2.

Shiv-  This is a small sharp object (usually a piece of glass, plastic or scrap metal) sharpened to a point on one end and wrapped up in cloth (as a handle) on the other. It is just long enough to pierce the heart if driven in to the body with enough force. This is a traditional assassin's weapon, especially in prison. Range: 0-1. Damage: 1 bladed damage (pierces armor as 3). Hard strike, easy pain/pain stun. Costs \$2.

SSkullcrusher-  A long tree branch, forked at the end, with a heavy pointed stone or piece of concrete lashed to the end. The pointed end on the rock makes the skullcrusher excellent for breaking shields, doing damage through armor and crushing skills. Range: 1-2. Damage: 3 blunt damage (pierces as 6). Weighs 5 lbs. Costs \$30.

Sledgehammer- A very powerful weapon, yet its size makes it difficult to use. Requires moderate STH feat to use without penalty. It can be raised over the head (one action) and brought down for a double-damage smash attack. Range: 2. Damage: 4 blunt (pierces armor as 6). Very hard strike, very hard vital strike, very hard parry. Weighs 14 lbs. Costs \$40.

Steel Toed Boots- These boots are made for working in dangerous situations (PR 6 bladed 6 blunt to the feet) but they are also very good for kicking and stomping. Adds 1 blunt damage to kicks or stomps. Weigh 3 lbs. Costs \$70.

Stick With Nail-  This is either a large tree branch or a board, with a long nail through one end. The Stick With Nail is the perfect weapon to use against someone wearing phonebook armor (p.94) as the nail can penetrate the armor. Range: 2. Damage: 3 blunt, 1 ragged (pierces armor as 4 bladed). Easy pain/stun. Weighs 4 lbs. Costs \$15.

Swinging Rock- A rock or chunk of concrete tied to the end of a length of cord. Range 2-3. Damage: 3 blunt. Hard strike, hard vital strike. Weighs 4 lbs. Costs \$6.

Sword (Broadsword)- A replica medieval sword. It is very heavy, two-handed and designed to cleave through armor. Takes an moderate (20) STH feat to use without penalty. Range: 1-3. Damage: 5 bladed damage (pierces as 7). Hard strike. Weighs 5 lbs. Costs \$100.

Sword (Fencing)- A thin, flexible stabbing-sword that focuses on speed vs. power. Range: 1. Damage: 3 bladed. Easy parry, easy vital strike. Weighs 2 lbs. Costs \$60.

Sword (Katana)- A replica of a Japanese samurai sword. Range: 1-2. Damage: 5 bladed. Easy vital strike. Weighs 3 lbs. Costs \$100.

Sword (Rusty Saw)- This blade is made from an old hand saw, cut in to a blade and reinforced to make it less flexible, connected to a makeshift handle. The sword is designed to look quite nasty, although it is not the most efficient weapon to use in battle. It is used to grab a hold of and tear skin open. Range 1-2. Damage: 2½ ragged. Hard strike, easy pain/stun, easy slash. Weighs 3 lbs. Costs \$75.

Swords


Newcomers to the city are often surprised to see the large number of people, especially Well gang-members, carrying and using machetes and swords. There are three basic reasons for this:

First, guns are too expensive for most gang members to afford, thanks to a severe gun ban which has continued from the Freedom War days.

Second, swords were the number one weapon (until the invention of guns) because they are very effective weapons. They give longer range than a knife, they move faster than a club and they are sharp and heavy enough to pierce rudimentary (leather or phonebook based) armor.

Third, many people in the city, especially wells, grew up in VR fantasy worlds where swordplay was common. Although real combat and VR combat has significant differences, the numerous battles fought in VR were enough to make swords the easiest weapons for young street punks to learn to use.

Telescoping Baton- A metal tube that can fit in a pocket. When it is swung, it telescopes out in to a full sized baton. Range 1-2. Damage: 3 blunt. Easy pain/stun attack. Weighs 1.5 lbs. Costs \$100.

Throwing Glass-  A 2, 3 or 4 pointed "star" made with sharp shards of glass hot-glued together. FR 1 ft. MR 50 ft. Damage: ½ bladed damage. Costs \$2.

Tiger Claws- A pair of wristbands with three claws each curving over the fist for bladed punching and clawing attacks. Adds 2 bladed damage to a punch. Easy slash attack. Costs \$45.

Tomahawk- Although made of steel, it is shaped and balanced exactly like the original Native American throwing axe. This ancient design gives it portability, accuracy and power that few weapons can rival. When thrown: FR 3 ft. MR 20 ft. Damage: 4 bladed (pierces armor as 6). Very easy vital strike. When used as a hand weapon: Range: 1. Damage: 4 bladed. Weighs 1 lb. Costs \$150.

Whip- A leather whip, usually sold in sex shops. Range: 3. Damage: 1 bladed. Easy pain/stun attack. Costs \$35.

See Also

Carving Tools, p.99
Crowbar, p.100
Flare, p.100
Phonebook Armor: Glass, p.94
Spiked Armor, p.194
Spiked Armor: Poison, p.194
Torture Kit, p.101



Chapter Four - PC Groups

Amin and his fellow gang members stood and waited, breathing heavily. A few blocks down the street, the Omniscients turned the corner and came in to view. The Omniscients were coming at them at a brisk walk, not running. The walls suddenly brightened as someone behind Amin started up the floodlight. They had thrown together a shielded floodlight at the last minute, knowing how the Omniscients liked to break street lights and fight in the dark. For the tenth time in the last few minutes, Amin checked the sharpened machete in one hand and the makeshift shield attached to his forearm. He raised them slightly, in his head he ran through the basic block and strike pattern he had practiced. This would be his first battle.

He raised his machete as the Omniscients came nearer. The first ranks of the two gangs raced in to battle and Amin rushed forward, looking for someone to take on. He saw that some of the Omniscients were hanging back. Watching his sides, making sure nobody attacked him from behind, he pushed his way through the fray towards them. Something seemed odd about them - they didn't seem interested in joining the battle. As he got closer he noticed that some of them looked old and dirty, with the leathery skin of a homeless person. They were dressed in Omniscient clothing but didn't have any visible implants. Amin saw scars - not the random zigzags of accident scars but the clean rows of something done on purpose. Amin stopped in his tracks - it had to be Insomniacs, hired by the Omniscients, dressed up as Omniscients so they wouldn't be targeted.

Amin inhaled to scream out "Insomniacs" but when he tried to speak he found his vocal cords paralyzed. He could feel his arm moving, and he felt the cold metal of the machete touch his throat...

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Non-Player Character Groups

These are elements of the city's population that are a significant portion of the city population but they are not appropriate as player characters.

Children- Adults in the city tend to think of children as being in the same group as their parent's (e.g. that's a shut in kid, that's a Drake kid). Despite this, kids have their own needs, lifestyles and social groupings. Not appropriate as PCs because their self-sufficiency and ability to exercise free will is limited. See p.177 for more info.

Colins- Colin is a serial killer who kidnaps people and uses mental installer technology to copy his mind over theirs, thus reproducing himself. Not appropriate as PCs because they are not unique characters with unique personalities and because their moral standards are inherently different from most other PCs. See p.179 for more info.

Cultists- These are members of one of the city's many cults. Not appropriate as PCs because their ability to exercise free will is limited. See p.183 for more info.

Crazies- This is the most common slang term for homeless people who are unable to get by in any social group because of a mental illness. Not appropriate as PCs because they have little or no control over their own actions.

Drug Lords- Generically, this is any employee of the Drug Lords organization, from the rich and powerful lords, to lowly street pushers, to chemists working in production labs. Not appropriate as PCs because their moral standards are inherently different from most other PCs. See p.190 for more info.

Hostel Patients- At any given time, there are very many people in the city who are patients at government run hostels. These are usually very old people or people in the terminal stages of incurable diseases. Inappropriate as PCs because they seldom leave these hostels and have very little autonomy.

Non-Player Character Groups (continued)

Serial Killers- These are people who kill other people to satisfy their own emotional needs. They are generally loners and not part of any social grouping. Not appropriate as PCs because their moral standards are inherently different from most other PCs.

Violent Criminals- These are groups of bullies who prey on those weaker than them in order to get money. Most are young God Killer addicts with troubled childhoods who live in a nexus between addiction, mental illness and plain evil. Not appropriate as PCs because their moral standards are inherently different from most other PCs. See p.190 for more info.

Visitors- At any time there are people travelling through the city. Some are tourists with a sense of adventure, other are business people staying in one of the city's cheap hotels. Some people come to the city from private cities, gated communities and corporate living centers in order to take advantage of drugs, prostitution, gambling and other forms of illegal entertainment. Not appropriate as PCs because they don't stay long in the city.

Shut-Ins- These are Wells and Indies, who are afraid of the city. The majority spend all day in Virtual Reality fantasy worlds. Not appropriate as PCs because they avoid the streets whenever possible.

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STREET PEOPLE FAMILIES

Favorable Stereotypes- Hard working, clever, loyal, responsible, specialized, humble, unprejudiced, realistic, patient, willing to do unpleasant things.

Unfavorable Stereotypes- Immoral, uneducated, opportunistic, short-sighted, dishonest criminals and thieves.

Street People who have formed themselves in to large extended families are better off, by a large degree, than most other street people. The members of families have pacts of mutual self-defense and revenge similar to gangs, with the same deterrent effect. In fact, many wells and Indies see the families as nothing more than "homeless gangs," although being in a family has many more benefits than being in a gang.

Street People vs. Homeless

Many Street People don't like to be called homeless. Most have homes which they are quite proud of. Their homes are decorated, defended, and are quite comfortable places to sleep or just hang out. Some homes even have pirated electricity or running water.

The word "homeless" is usually used to refer to someone who does not have an income and does not have a safe place to sleep at night. The real homeless are usually nomadic, switching from place to place as something goes wrong with the last place they slept. The worst off homeless people do not even have time to seek a place to live: they sleep wherever they are when exhaustion overtakes them.

Street Poetry and Music

For more than a century, poetry has been the primary form of artistic expression of the homeless in the US. The reason is simple: poetry is one form of art that doesn't require expensive equipment and supplies or massive amounts of training. If people can memorize their poetry, they don't even need a pencil and paper.

Street poetry in the city does not resemble other art scenes. There are no stars of poetry, no homeless people reproduce the poetry of another, and nobody bothers to analyze another person's poetry: they hear it, enjoy it, and forget about it soon afterwards. The poetry scene is thus incredibly egalitarian, everybody on the street, whether they have ever written a poem before or not, is equal. There is also little impetus for anyone to refine or perfect their art.

Poetry reading is seldom organized. Some street people read poems around campfires when they are bored and there is nothing else to do. Some write poems on scraps of paper and leave them lying around: someone might read them, or they might not. Occasionally, some well-meaning Indie from outside the city will gather a bunch of street poetry and publish it on the net, and it may enjoy some small success outside of the city (mostly for the unflinching emotional honesty, not for the poetic skill) but that success seldom reaches back to the people on the streets.

Some poems are put to music and sung. Some are stories, funny or sad, about the poet or people the poet knows. Some are pure descriptions of the feelings of the poets. Some have a political flavor: demands for rights and respect and jobs. If street poetry has any use, besides keeping street people entertained during boring hours, it is in getting street people used to saying, loudly, how they feel and what they want (a skill that too few of them have).

Street musicians in the city can not make enough money to make a living, yet when someone walks down the major avenues of the city in the evenings, one can still hear the vigorous playing of street musicians. These street musicians are street people who have spent all day pursuing their real livelihood, and when it is time to relax, they get out their instruments, get together with their friends and play music. They always have a hat out in case someone wants to give them money, and they do get a significant amount of spare change, but even if they didn't they would probably still be playing music somewhere.

Most street people don't have anyone watching their backs. If they don't hit a good dumpster, they starve for that night. If they get sick, nobody is there to take care of them. When they leave whatever abandoned spaces they have claimed as their own, nobody is around to keep their stuff safe. If they are attacked, they can call for help but it is likely that nobody will come. The families, on the other hand, live as large collectives that watch out for each other in ways that even Indies and wells envy.

Families take over whole blocks, creating neighborhoods they can walk in safely. Abandoned buildings are taken

Den Mothers and Fathers

Not all unborn family members engage in the trade typical for that family, yet they usually do something to help the survival of the family. Some come in to the family by common law marriage. Others grew up in the family, but felt their skills and talents lent to them doing something other than the family's occupation. When young, these people are usually errand and message runners. When they become older, many become "den mothers" or "den fathers" who spend all their time making sure that the spaces that the family lives and works in are running smoothly. Den mothers and fathers usually have quite a lot of authority because they are responsible for everything from keeping quarters sanitary to resolving disputes between family members.

Food

Street people get food from four basic sources:

-First, food handed out at soup kitchens or by outreach workers.

-Second, homeless people buy food at fast food restaurants (street people become adept amateur nutritionists, finding out what foods satiate them the longest at the lowest price).

-Third, scrounging through dumpsters. There is quite a lot of food in dumpsters: for every five pounds of food that is prepared and served in the city, approximately one pound of food is thrown out. How the food is thrown out makes a major difference. In some restaurants (with employees that know how things work on the streets), cooked food being thrown out is put in to plastic bags separate from uncooked meat and other trash. In the worst case scenario, restaurant employees are under orders to sabotage their garbage to discourage scrounging. They mix food in with other garbage and even sprinkle on cleaning products or rat poison.

-Fourth, a few people hunt and gather for food. Only the Keepers have been able to gain a significant portion of their nutrition this way, but other street people occasionally supplement their diet with the occasional pigeon or fruit from a tree growing in someone's yard.

over and turned in to street people mansions. They are guarded all the time, so family members can leave their possessions lying around. When family members come home, they have a luxury few street people have: the ability to relax. They can let their guard down, kick off their shoes, chat with friends and family, eat a warm meal, and when they are lucky they can even take a hot bath.

The families also have developed a culture of being homeless. People born in the families are born homeless and are trained from an early age on the skills that they will need to survive on the streets. The major families each have some special skill or ability that helps them make money and makes them an invaluable resource to other city groups. Since they are trained from birth to do one thing, they are incredibly apt, experts whose knowledge and skill cannot be rivaled.

For all that the members of Street People Families have, the one thing they don't have is hope. They will never be anything other than homeless criminals. They are only able to exist in the city because it is a sort of blind spot in the vision of society. Were the economy to ever improve, the streets made safe, the trash cleaned up, organized crime agencies destroyed, ordinary people convinced to leave their apartments, the street people families would be like a rat's nest that has been suddenly uncovered: forced to scatter.

Unborn

N., Street slang for someone who was born in the US, but was not born in a hospital and does not have a birth certificate. Unborn are usually the children of homeless people and are born with the help of homeless midwives. Since they do not "exist" in any government database, it is almost impossible for the Unborn to get a legitimate jobs or get on public assistance, and most grow up resigned to the idea of being a homeless criminal for all of their lives.

Black Meds

In Brief- Large street family who make their living as unlicensed street-doctors.

Favorable Stereotypes- Creative, quick thinking, compassionate, resourceful, never denying anyone help.

Unfavorable Stereotypes- Barbaric, ignorant, unethical, arrogant, afraid to admit ignorance.

Other Names- Street Doctors, Black Market Doctors, Rusty Scalpels.

Origin- The 2040s were a very hard time for the city, and people found themselves homeless in increasing numbers. Hospitals were required by law to provide emergency care for the indigent, but economic crises, natural disasters and plagues made going to a hospital dangerous and unrewarding. A homeless person going to a hospital for medical treatment might be mistakenly thrown in a plague ward, or might die under a tent in the hospital parking lot before a triage nurse could even get around to seeing the homeless person.

Fortunately for homeless people, a significant amount of medical knowledge had made its way to the streets. Many people with significant medical training had become homeless. Many immigrants still practiced indigenous healing practices. The homeless in New York started practicing medicine on each other. Many homeless people were soon more comfortable with homeless midwives than with hospitals, and the children born on the streets to these midwives were the first major group born in the United States without birth certificates, a group that would later become known in city slang as the unborn.

Even as the homeless medics gave birth to the unborn, they were teaching medical knowledge to other homeless people. They blended together modern science, ancient traditions, and new improvisations to create a form of medicine that could be preformed with equipment scavenged from the trash. The street medics had their own children on the streets and taught them their medical techniques.

When the Freedom Army took control of the city, medical volunteers did their best to treat the city population, but their supplies were severely limited. Many homeless people with street-medicine knowledge volunteered, and many were inducted in to the Freedom Army's medical corps.

After the Freedom Wars, most homeless medics lapsed back in to homelessness. Continuing to practice medicine on the streets, they gained loyal patients from throughout the city. The post-war gangs also found that they sometimes needed medical services outside of a hospital, and their money helped the homeless medic families become successful. The homeless families traded knowledge and supplies and they were the first street families to join in to mutual self-defense pacts. Over the course of a nearly a generation, the connections between the families became so close that some started to consider themselves to be all one family. They clustered around the Bowery (the part of the city with the highest population of homeless people) so they could defend themselves more easily.

Timeline

2045- First HDNA virus outbreak (will become worst plague in human history).

2047- 25 children born this year in NY to homeless midwives.

2050- Freedom Army attacks.

2054- Nuclear explosion in central park is beginning of end for Freedom Army.

2057- Manhattan reopened to habitation.

2060- 320 children born this year in NY to homeless midwives.

2070- Medic families join together in self-defense pact.

2079- 1000 children born this year in NY to homeless midwives.

Becoming- Black Med children hang around when their parents are performing medical care and they become familiar with many medical problems and medical procedures at an early age. Black Med children are allowed to view everything that goes on, from consultations, to amputation, to death and burial of patients. The average Black Med child can distinguish syphilis from other venereal diseases at the age of seven. Young Black Meds are often asked to help out in many ways, including handing tools to elders in the middle of a surgery. With some exceptions, young Black Meds are not allowed to touch patients until they reach their teenage years. During their early teenage years, elders try to have someone watching them whenever they are working on a patient, though during busy times young Black Meds sometimes have to work alone. Black Meds are usually allowed to make house calls by themselves at around fifteen to seventeen.

At level one, adventure one, the PC is still a junior member of the household, is still considered a student, is still required to consult with an elder when he or she is in any doubt, but the PC is allowed to deal with patients and make house calls on his or her own.

Lifestyle- Homeless people have many more medical problems than non-homeless people. They are exposed to many more diseases, are much more likely to be injured, have poorer nutrition, and have a harder time keeping wounds clean. Many homeless people are homeless because of medical problems and physical disabilities. Altogether, significant medical problems are the norm for homeless people, and people without medical problems are rather rare. Even though there is one Black Med for every 23 street people (including addicts and homeless "crazies") the Black Meds are kept very busy.

When homeless people are sick or injured, many are well enough to walk across the city to the Bowery, where they seek out any building with a red cross on it. Those who can not walk may be lucky enough to have friends strong enough to carry them. Most homeless people don't have friends that strong and they must send someone to go get a Black Med. Any adult Black Med can make a house call (there are no specialists). Any adult Black Med will take on any medical problem. Black Meds will also treat animals (especially the pets of other street people).

As soon as the Black Med gets a good idea what the problem is and what steps must be taken to fix it, the Black Med asks about payment. Unless the patient is truly on the edge of death, the following discussion sounds much like any other haggling taking place for goods or services in the city. Black Meds ask for less from poorer clients than they do from wealthier ones. Black Meds are more likely to take IOUs from street people and people they know than they are from others. If the client can't pay and the Black Med is unwilling to take an IOU, the Black Med usually requires an agreement from the patient that he or she will

stay and work off the debt once he or she is returned to health. Street People, especially, are often very happy to agree to this arrangement. Once the patient is cured, the Black Med household puts the patient to work in any way they can think of: the patient cleans, does manual labor, watches children, helps during dumpster diving runs, and sometimes even helps the Black Meds defend themselves. The Black Meds are the final arbiter of how much work it takes to pay off a debt, though they rarely get more than their money's worth from these arrangements.

Average Price Charged by Black Meds			
	Street People	Wells	Indies
Simple consult	\$1	\$10	\$20
Treating a small infection or wound	\$2	\$15	\$30
Large infection or wound	\$5	\$20	\$40
Installing a cybernetic implant	\$10	\$50	\$75
Treatment of a deadly, communicable disease	\$30	\$100	\$200
Problem requiring major surgery	\$50	\$200	\$300

The Black Meds use many methods to treat patients, including many methods that legitimate medical personnel would never consider. They use stolen pharmaceuticals (though their supply is very limited and they use them sparingly). Over the counter drugs, which have been shoplifted, are used much more commonly. The Black Meds also grow herbs and use them in teas, tinctures and poultices. Most injuries and infections are treated using soap stolen from public restrooms (to clean the area), a bucket of tap water (to rinse it), alcohol or a hot knife (to sterilize it), a sewing needle and thread (to stitch it up) and boiled rags (to bandage it). Patients are asked to take out their own stitches when the wound is healed. Surgery is avoided whenever possible, since the Black Meds know the terrible possibilities of infection. When surgery is performed, it is usually to remove a foreign object from a wound or to drain an infection, and it is usually with little or no anesthetic (a belt of whiskey is the most common anesthetic used). Caesarians are never preformed unless the mother is already dead (the risk of infection is too high). Acupuncture, massage, hypnosis and psychic physiological manipulation are used occasionally, though not every Black Med has these skills. When Black Meds believe a patient doesn't have an actual problem, they readily give out placebos (usually horrible tasting, though useless, herbal teas).

Black Meds know that there is a limit to their abilities. City hospitals are required to treat the indigent who are in imminent danger, and Black Meds sometimes decide that the best thing to do is patch someone up enough to the point that they will survive the trip, then help the person make it to the city hospital.

The Black Meds are famous for having an attitude of "If you don't like how I do things, you can go crawl off and die." The patient has no choice as to treatment options, they must take whatever the Black Med gives them. Black Meds find it hard to make life-or-death decisions every day without a bit of megalomania, even if it is a pretend megalomania that goes away at the end of the day. Some Black Meds, however, take the megalomania to heart and think of themselves as infallible. If Black Meds think a patient would want to be euthanized, they do it (usually

by suffocating the patient). When a patient does die, the Black Meds make every attempt to bring the body back to the loved one's friends and family, but if they can't find any friends and family they usually use the body as a teaching tool for young Black Meds, then bury it in a small non-denominational ceremony. The Black Meds don't have to worry about malpractice lawsuits, though they have occasionally had to defend themselves when they were blamed for a patient's death.

It is rare that Black Meds have serious enemies, but when they do they will typically refuse the enemy treatment, or may even pretend to treat an enemy and then kill them. Black Meds also kill patients who they find out are serial killers, child molesters or other people that the Black Meds feel are beyond salvation. Black Meds could use their medical knowledge to do a lot of horrible things to enemies (torture, surgical mutilation) but they seldom do, usually because they have been battling pain for all their lives and find the idea of purposefully creating more to be distasteful. Some Black Meds keep samples of diseased fluids from plague victims they treat. They have never had occasion to use them, but the implication is obvious: if some group seriously hurts the Black Meds, the Black Meds will fight back using biological weapons.

There are no ethical standards for Black Meds and no review of a Black Med's actions beyond the eldest in the household. Black Meds are often forced to make life-or-death decisions with no guidance but their conscience. In these cases, a bit of megalomania is good: it allows for a Black Med to make a decision and carry through with it, rather than freezing up. Black Meds are commonly thrown in to situations where multiple people are wounded and they only have time to save one person's life (and will often choose to treat the friend rather than the stranger). Sometimes people will refuse needed treatment because of fear, because it is painful, because of religious objections of for other reasons. Black Meds sometimes allow people to go off without treatment, but sometimes will force unwanted treatments on people, especially if they think people are mentally ill or are the victim of cult brainwashing. Other times, patients will try to purchase treatments for themselves that the Black Meds think are unwise. These people are often mentally ill and believe that they have diseases or have problems with their physical appearance that they don't have. Like Sex Workers, Black Meds entertain each other with stories of the weird things they are asked to do. Black Meds sometimes refuse and sometimes do not, depending upon how much money they are offered and how they feel about the patient. A common excuse given by Black Meds for performing questionable acts is "if I didn't do it, he/she would have just found someone else who would, at least this way it's my family that gets fed."

Sometimes Black Meds are asked to do something that is unquestionably unethical. They may be paid to sabotage the treatment of another patient. They may be paid to torture or surgically mutilate someone. They may be paid to give people implants against their will. Although most Black Meds will refuse, customers keep asking until they find a Black Med who will. Black Meds who do this sort of thing keep it strictly secret (or risk ostracism by other Black Meds). Some Black Meds make a regular practice of taking on these very unethical jobs, others are just desperate for cash and fall prey to temptation.

When they are not performing medicine, Black Meds spend most of their time making or acquiring medical supplies. Black Meds often trade with other street people, trading medical services for over-the-counter drugs and medical supplies that the street people have shoplifted. Some skilled Thieves even raid pharmacies and trade prescription drugs. Teenaged Black Meds are often sent to jump the barbed wire fence compounds in the backs of hospitals. They quickly bust open the locks on the biohazard dumpsters, grab gray plastic bags and run before the security guards can get there. At home, they and their families carefully sift through the trash looking for anything that can be salvaged, soaked in bleach and re-used. Biohazard waste that is not reused is often kept for use in traps. Black Meds also make their own medical supplies. They tear up rags, boil them, bleach them and use them as bandages. They sometimes even make scalpels by snapping razor blades and melting them in to the end of toothbrushes (a technique some black med probably learned in prison decades ago). Many older Black Meds have tiny gardens growing in backyards where they grow medicinal herbs which they harvest and sell or trade to other Black Meds.

Social Structure- The basic unit of Black Med life is the household. A household typically has one or two members who are considered the wisest doctors in the household, and everyone else in the household works for the wisest as assistants. In a typical household, children run errands (take messages, borrow supplies from other households), adolescents and teens make house calls, carry non-ambulatory patients on makeshift stretchers, and do basic intake of patients. Young adults handle the majority of cases, doing basic surgery and treatment for minor problems. The oldest and wisest Black Meds take over whenever a problem is complicated. If their hands are too unsteady with age to perform surgery, they watch and direct a younger surgeon. Some household members do not have any medical skills, but they help out in other ways: manufacturing bandages, helping keep the household clean, etc.

Advancement- Advancement in the Black Meds is a slow process of seeing case after case until one develops a body of medical wisdom. The longer a Black Med has been practicing, the more weight their medical opinion holds. Starting a household and being the patriarch or matriarch of the family is also a means of gaining respect and influence.

Population- There are about 1,300 Black meds, making them the largest street family.

External Relations- Black Meds are generally thought of as soft: they are not skilled at combat and the worst they typically do to enemies is threaten to withhold medical treatment. This is perhaps an illusion: since nobody has made a serious attempt to wipe out the Black Meds, nobody knows how vicious they can get.

Street People Families: The Black Meds are the oldest and best known of the street families. They literally and figuratively helped give birth to the other street families. In so much as there is a homeless community, the Black Meds are the glue that hold it together. Whenever there is a serious threat to the Black Meds, other street people (including addicts) help out, if only out of a selfish desire for self-preservation. The Black Meds often take favors in exchange for treatment, and every Black Med household is owed at least one favor by each of the major families. If they called in all their favors, no homeless group

would have as much political or military power. They have few reasons to use this power though: they have no real enemies and few needs beyond salvaged and stolen medical equipment.

Crackers: The Black Meds share turf with the Crackers and have a very close relationship with them, often trading services and favors.

Jacks: If there is any homeless group that the Black Meds do not like it is Jacks because Jacks sometimes give medical advice and even attempt medical procedures, usually with no real medical knowledge.

Indies: Almost all Indies pay for medical insurance which gives them faster and better medical care than the Black Meds can. Most Indies will find some occasion to hire or buy things from the other street families, but rarely ever deal with Black Meds. Some Indies don't even know that Black Meds exist. The Purists know that there are a bunch of homeless doctors and many have nightmares of a dirty homeless person cutting them open.

Traders: Most Black Meds have a strong relationship with a black market trader who refers clients to the Black Med. Both the Black Med and the Trader find this an advantageous relationship.

Volunteers: Volunteers also provide basic medical services for street people, often with a vastly different style from the Black Meds. Volunteers usually see only the mistakes that the Black Meds have made, or cases where the patient never went to a Black Med treatment. Volunteers rarely hear about the cases that Black Meds treated successfully and so few believe that there is quality medical care available on the streets. There are sometimes clashes when a street person is begging to be taken to the Black Meds while a Volunteer is trying to arrange for an ambulance to pick them up.

Needle Punks: Black Meds sometimes buy drugs from Needle Punks. When they have clients who can afford it, the Black Meds sometimes even write prescriptions and send people to the Needle Punks as if the Black Meds were doctors and the Needle Punks were pharmacists. The Needle Punks, on the other hand, rarely ever need anything from Black Meds (their medical problems are very different from what the Black Meds know how to deal with) and don't often think of the Black Meds.

Wells: When Wells go to get illegal implants, they often go to state healthcare doctors who take bribes to do illegal surgeries, but when they can not find a doctor or can not afford the bribes, they often go to Black Meds. The Well groups who get the most implants, the Animalists, Freaks, Risen and Freelancers, are common visitors to the Black Meds.

Goods: Of all the Wells, it is the Goods who are most familiar with the many varied services of the Black Meds. Goods often need to call in Black Meds to help when a homeless client is suffering from an OD, withdrawals or other medical problems relating to drug use.

Military Style- When Black Meds fight, which is rare, they tend to rush in, slash at enemies in places which will incapacitate them, then immediately run away. They grab their wounded as they run, scattering, hiding and providing medical care for their wounded. When the wounded are either patched up and ready to fight again, or stabilized and put in a safe place, the Black Meds meet at a pre-arranged spot to plan their next strike. Although they are poor fighters and have little strategy, the Black Meds' quick response to injuries means that they suffer fewer fatalities in a battle than other groups.

Than Death

The Black Med's biggest weakness is their insistence on taking all of their wounded with them when they retreat, which can severely slow them down. They also depend on being able to find safe hiding places nearby where they can treat their wounded. This is no problem when they are fighting in the Bowery, but when fighting elsewhere they often have to depend on street people seeing them and guiding them to hiding places.

In one famous battle with the Math Addicts, the Black Meds fought with the Math Addicts until several of the Math Addicts were badly wounded. Even as the battle raged, Black Med elders formed a truce with the Math Addicts: if the Math Addicts would cease their aggression, the Black Meds would treat the Math Addict wounded. Although proud of this victory, most Black Meds assume that other enemies would not be as rational or trusting.

Typical Weapon- A scalpel with a Drake poison smudged on it is a common weapon.

Turf- Almost all of the Black Meds live in the Bowery. Those who don't are close enough that they can flee to the Bowery in times of danger. The Bowery is in the Southeast corner of downtown, hugging the sunken city. The part of the Bowery that the Black Meds live in is bordered on the North by Houston street and on the South by the ruins of the Brooklyn bridge. In the late 1800s, the Bowery was a bustling theater district. In the beginning of the 20th century commerce moved out and the Bowery became a run down skid row, home to hundreds of flophouses. It stayed mostly a skid row, despite a few minor periods of gentrification in the late 20th and early 21st centuries. Today the Bowery is the most run down

part of town with the most abandoned buildings. The few surviving commercial enterprises in the Bowery are cheap residential hotels and liquor stores. Since there is no commerce here, the city government has no incentive to keep street lights running or keep the roads repaired, and the result is something that looks like a post-apocalyptic city. The Bowery has the city's highest concentration of homeless people. The Black Meds and Crackers share the area, living interspersed with each other and other street people. Most Black Meds live inside old abandoned hotels. Inside the Bowery, the Black Meds live interspersed with Crackers and other street people. Most live in abandoned hotels scattered throughout the turf.

Distinguishing Features- Black Meds often wear a red cross on their clothing, usually made from scraps of red cloth. Their clothing is often covered with many old blood-stains. Black Meds can sometimes be recognized by the cleanliness of their hands. The Black Meds wear simple clothing and hairstyles with nothing hanging down that might accidentally get in to a wound.

Symbols- Black Meds paint red crosses on the buildings where they live so that people know where to go when they are seeking medical care. They occasionally even make crosses out of bloody bandages.

Slang

Aunt Mary: n., a way to call for help by an elder without alarming a patient (e.g. "get Aunt Mary" means "get anyone you can as fast as you can.")

Bleed: n. any ruptured blood vessel with blood flowing from it.



Circling: v., short for “circling the drain” – about to die.

Gomer: n., a person who does not need or wouldn’t benefit from treatment.

Jennie: n., a female patient seeking gynecological treatment.

Pincushion: n., a patient with multiple stab wounds.

Black Med Combat- This combat skill represents a form of combat that has been made possible by the Black Med’s familiarity with anatomy and with cutting human flesh. To learn this skill, corpses are tied to posts and young black meds slash at them. Elder black meds give feedback on each slash, telling what it would have done to a live person. Black Med combat focuses on cutting the body in places which are easy to hit, not usually protected by armor, but will incapacitate an enemy. Gives the following plusses (with an additional +4 per level above the first) to the following combat actions with scalpels, razor blades or very sharp knives only:

+4 to Crippling Attack

+4 to Pain/Stun Attack

+0 to Blood Strike (Special Maneuver, INL+AGY vs. 30, does damage as per a normal strike but the cut continues to bleed: ½ BLD damage per round for 6 rounds or until the injury is tourniqueted).

Skills

Free Skills: Diagnosis (1), Emergency Medicine (1), Herbal Medicine (1).

Skill Costs: ATH 6, BIO 4, CMBT 6, CRTV 6, INFO 10, MIL 9, PSY:M 16, PSY:S 18, TECH 10, THIE 5, SOC 9, STRT 5.

Special Skills: The special skill Black Med Combat costs 5 skill points per level.

Income- \$250 +\$17/wk.

Special Equipment- Free First Aid Kit: Black Med. PC can purchase medicinal herbs at half their normal price.

Suggested Skills- Acupuncture, Bomb Disarming, Diagnosis, Emergency Medicine, Herbal Medicine, Hypnosis, Gardening, Needles, Pharmacology, Physical Therapy, Running, Surgery.

Suggested Equipment- Alcohol, Auto-Blood Test, Dust Mask, Hip Flask, Latex Gloves, Syringes and all the herbal medicines (p.89).

Suggested Reading- Death Borgs, Disease, Implants.

Crackers

In Brief- Street family whose members are taught from an early age to hack for money.

Favorable Stereotypes- Quick witted, practical, intelligent with many technical skills.

Unfavorable Stereotypes- Cruel, arrogant, cynical, braggarts. Vandals and blackmailers.

Other Names- Street Hackers, Homeless Hackers, Paycomputer Crackers, Shoulder Surfers.

Origin- Hacking gained popularity in the 1980s when dial-up bulletin boards put together teenagers with a desire to explore the computer systems owned by others. Hacking quickly became a sophisticated subculture, which became increasingly feared as computers and computer networks became a bigger part of people’s lives. Although most hackers were teenagers concerned with exploring and going where they weren’t supposed to, criminals soon learned many of their techniques. In New York, for example, criminals would hang around payphones and use stolen calling card numbers to give people unlimited calls to foreign countries for only a few dollars. During this period, hackers would often create the techniques and those techniques would slowly filter down to the underworld.

The degree to which computers were important to people’s lives (and thus the degree to which computer hackers were feared) increased steadily in the late 20th and early 21st century, peaking in the 2030s. As internet connections became cheaper, more homeless people got on the internet and used it to communicate and seek means of survival. Ubiquitous wireless networks let homeless people (who knew how hack) get on to the internet from any part of any urban area. Homeless people remained very well connected until the 2040s, when population growth and global economic crises caused a terrible internet slowdown. The internet slowdown made much of the technology of the 2030s unusable and most homeless people forgot about the internet.

The internet itself was destroyed by terrorist bombing around the globe in 2050. It was not restored until 2060, after the Freedom Wars. There was a short lived economic boom in the city as techs were needed to route new fiber optic lines (or salvage old ones) and to setup new computer systems using the new open-source operating systems released by the restoration committee. In the years after the Freedom Wars, thousands were employed as techs in the city. Then the gated community movement started achieving goals and people started leaving the city to go live in gated communities. The bottom dropped out of the city economy and many of the techs that had helped rebuild the city found themselves homeless. These homeless people found they could gain access to the internet by hacking paycomputers, and they soon taught these skills to other homeless people. Hacking gave some homeless families an edge and insured their growth and prosperity.

The most skilled homeless hackers quickly got to know each other and most became friends, sharing knowledge and tips. As the hackers became older and became the elders of large families of hackers, they found utility in joining the families together for mutual self-protection. By 2075, all of the city’s major hacking families had joined together in to one large group, supporting each other, known as the Crackers.

Timeline

1982- Internet begins.

2040s- Internet slowdown, tech criminals steal tech from corps and experiment on themselves.

2050- Freedom Wars begin, internet destroyed.

2060- Internet restored.

2061-2065- Massive exodus from the city.

2075- Last cracker family moves to the Bowery.

Becoming- Elder siblings are forced to take younger siblings with them on hacking jobs so that the younger siblings can watch and learn the trade. Young kids are given old pieces of equipment and encouraged to play with them and learn as much as possible. By the time Crackers are ten or eleven, they are allowed to go out in to the city in

small groups to hack payphones in order to get change. By the time they are fifteen, Crackers are expected to start doing more sophisticated hacking jobs and to make enough money to support not only themselves but also their families.

At level one, adventure one, a Cracker is part of a small cabal of hackers their own age who travel around making money for the family by hacking.

Lifestyle- Most Crackers go for the quick and easy score. Payphones and paycomputers are the biggest targets for Crackers. Sometimes they rig the machines to get change out of them. Other Crackers hack the machines so they can get free service, then they sell unlimited free service to passers-by at a low cost. They shoulder surf at pay computers, getting people's logins to pay-for-use sites and selling them to other people. They steal parts from broken pay computers and salvage parts from dumpsters to make cheap computers that they sell to Wells.

Crackers can also be seen with tiny homemade computers hooked up to network router boxes on the streets. They sabotage the internet lines going in to buildings then offer to fix the problem for a few bucks. They tap network lines, recording phone conversations and blackmailing callers.

Other ways Crackers make quick cash are: They extort small business owners with threats of denial of service attacks on their public servers. They peddle cracked software and illegally copied porn on street corners. They hire themselves out to help thieves defeat security systems. They forge their own barcodes using cheap printers (or sometimes even by hand). These barcodes code for cheap products, and they take them in to stores and stick them on expensive products. If the clerk doesn't notice, a Cracker can pay a couple of bucks for hundreds of dollars worth of stuff which they can use or sell.

There are also the "big-time" hacking jobs which most people associate with hackers. Most Crackers do not generally live on big-time hacking jobs. Also, they require quite a large investment of time and money before any profit is seen, whereas most crackers need money right away. Finally, a hacker's ability to get in to a system is as much a matter of luck as it is skill, and street people don't like to risk their time, money on effort on anything that is not a sure thing.

It is usually the best, the most skilled and the most wealthy Crackers who attempt "big-time" jobs. Sometimes they are paid to get in and do a specific thing on a computer or network (steal a particular piece of data, change a particular network, or bring a particular system down). Other times, they hack in to a system hoping to find data they can sell. Sometimes they are trying to push money in to a bank account of theirs. Whatever the specific goal, big hacking jobs are the result of weeks of research and

"leg-work" and no matter how much work Crackers put in to a job they might not get in.

Social Structure- Younger Crackers, especially those who have not yet started families, typically form themselves in to cabals. Cabals are groups of 4 to 6 Crackers who work together whenever they find a big hacking job to do. Childhood playmates often grow up to be Cabal members, and lovers and siblings are often in the same cabal with each other. People tend to be in Cabals with Crackers of similar skill levels. Cabals usually dissolve when Crackers start raising families and the extended family becomes a more important grouping.

The Crackers are not as closely knit as the other street people families. The Crackers are not all connected

by blood or marriage, and Cracker households feel less familial obligation towards each other. An elder from one family has little authority over Crackers from another family. On the other hand, the Crackers are very well connected via the internet and the Cracker elders are in constant communication with each other. When some Cracker family has a need, all the other Crackers know about it and there will almost always be some Cracker elder willing to volunteer the services of a child or grandchild to help out.

Advancement- Most Crackers never become "big time" hackers. They practice the basic scams the family makes its money on. They become street-savvy, wise and respected members of the community without ever breaking in to some corporate server. A few cabals will make it big, however, making enough money to invest in better equipment and giving them enough free time to attempt big jobs. To stay on top, Cabals have to be on the internet nearly every waking hour, keeping up with every little development in the world of operating systems and computer networks. When cabals do make it big time it is usually only for a few years. After a few years, they start having children and forming families and they can no longer stay cutting edge. Instead, they lapse back in to scrounging change from payphones and peddling pirated data on street corners.

Cracker elders are a powerful resource for the Cracker community because they are a wealth of hoarded data. Most of this data isn't about the latest security holes or network protocols, it is about people. Elders have spent decades hoarding data, often with highly eccentric filing systems which only they know how to use. When a young Cracker wants to know about the internal structure of a company (so they can call up and pretend to be an employee), or when a Cracker stole some piece of data and doesn't know who to sell it to and how much it is worth, or when a Cracker needs info about the habits of a network security admin, they go to their elders. By hoarding secret data that has been stolen over the decades, Crackers often know quite a lot of the city's secrets.



Population- There are about 1,100 Crackers. About 330 (30%) are adolescents and teenagers who group together in Cabals, making money for their families. About 385 (35%) are adult Crackers who have started families and spend as much time keeping a household going as they do messing with tech. About 165 (15%) are grandparents and great-grandparents who do little hacking but preside over a hoard of information and contacts. At any given time only about 55 (5%) of Crackers are attempting "big-time" hacking jobs.

External Relations- To most people in the city, Crackers are blackmailers and some even think of them as "computer terrorists." Most people only hear about Crackers when Crackers destroy some service those people are using (or are falsely accused of destroying the service). Of all the Street People, Crackers are the best able to make their feelings known to the rest of the world, including their feelings of alienation and hatred for the society that condemned them to a life on the streets. Most unborn are born homeless and don't know anything other than what it is like to be homeless, but the Crackers make a living understanding and infiltrating the world of the rich and powerful. They quickly learn that those with money and power seldom deserve it, and many Crackers end up speaking with a spite towards the comfortable that puts people (especially those old enough to remember the Freedom Wars) on edge. People know that a Cracker can easily mess up their lives in ways that they don't know how to defend from, and that scares people.

Black Meds: The Crackers have a very strong relationship with the Black Meds: they both live in the Bowery together, often neighbors and occasionally roommates. There is quite a lot of intermarriage and mixed households. Crackers and Black Med households often trade services. Politically, though, the Black Meds distance themselves from the Crackers. Crackers get in to a lot of trouble as they steal, invade and blackmail, and the Black Meds don't want to be asked to answer for the crimes of Crackers.

Street People: Crackers have very good relations with other Street People. The Street People, who don't depend on information systems (such as bank accounts) to survive, have nothing to fear from the Crackers. Instead the Crackers give Street People access to information and worldwide communication that they would not otherwise have. Some street people have never been on the internet except using paycomputers hacked by some Cracker (with a Cracker helping them to navigate the net). Crackers often work together with other Street People, especially with thieves, who get them in to places the Crackers can not get via networks alone.

Traders: Cracker elders in particular spend a lot of time creating and maintaining contacts with black market Traders. Traders come to Crackers when someone needs a hacker for hire, and Crackers come to Traders when they need to sell some piece of data they stole off a system.

Arcadians and Technophiles: These two Indie groups often engage in computer hacking, but their reasons are vastly different from those of the Crackers. The Arcadians do it to gain an edge over other people and the Technophiles do it out of passion for technology. Both see the methods of the Crackers as crude and destructive, and they sometimes alert system managers to the presence of Crackers, creating bad blood.

Sat Jumpers- Sat Jumpers would be a great asset to the Crackers if they weren't too fixated on loyalty to their jobs to take a good bribe. Crackers often spend time

seeking out the rare Sat jumpers who will take some cash in order to give up a password or insert a piece of code in to a satellite. Most Sat Jumpers refuse to take bribes, and do so with an obvious distaste that pisses off most Crackers.

Night Walkers and Y1s: These Indies depend on the internet for their livelihood and often run afoul of the Crackers. Knowing how desperately they need their internet connections, Night Walkers and Y1s are common victims of the "I heard your internet connection is down, I can fix it for \$20" ploy. Unlike VR Addicts, who are usually too naive to know that they are being had, Y1s and Night Walkers often figure out the extortion and try to get back at the Crackers.

Law Enforcement: Crackers seldom gain the attention of the Night Shift, who have few computer skills and are too busy worrying about serial killers and drug gangs to think about petty computer crimes. Night Shift often have an attitude towards Crackers of "I'd kick your ass if I knew what it was you were doing." Occasionally, when some city government site is being hacked and network administrators track down the Crackers, the Night Shift are asked to go grab the offenders. Sometimes the FBI become involved, though usually by the time they can make it to the city the Crackers are done and gone. The Crackers only really worry about corporate security forces, who let very little stand in the way of keeping their multi-billion dollar systems secure. When corps get a physical location on Crackers they may send city security guards (usually well Freelancers) or they may send elite corporate operatives. The corps try to catch the Crackers in the act, and use an army of corporate attorneys to put the Crackers in prison for life. Crackers doing big-time jobs live in fear of armies of corporate employees tracking them down.

Military Style- The Crackers are fairly unsophisticated in military matters. When forced to battle, they stand side by side to form a wall or circle and advance on the enemy, stabbing with their screwdrivers or whatever weapons they have.

Typical Weapon- A sharpened screwdriver.

Turf- Crackers live scattered throughout the area known as the Bowery, which they share with the Black Meds and many non-family street people and addicts. The Bowery is bordered by Houston street on the North and the Manhattan base of the Brooklyn Bridge on the South. The Bowery is famous as a skid row and has the highest concentration of street people of any place in the city. See the Turf section of the Black Meds for more info.

Distinguishing Features- Crackers look mostly like other street people: they wear scrounged clothing, usually in multiple layers. They tend towards black clothing when they have a choice and many wear sunglasses. On occasion, Crackers dress up as if they are field techs (tool belts, polo-shirts with company logos, fluorescent safety vests) so they can hack in to payphones and network lines with less chance of getting caught.

Symbols- A screwdriver is a common symbol for Crackers.

Slang

Big Time: adj., 1. attempting to hack in to an important computer system to make money, 2. cabals who attempt such jobs regularly.

Cabal: n., A small group of hackers who regularly work together whenever they find a big job.

Cracked: adj., An illegally copied piece of software or data with the copy protection software removed.

Owned: adj., hacked in to and controlled by a hacker.

Pirated: adj., Illegally copied software or data.

Leg Work: n., Any part of preparing for a hacking job that is done in person (e.g. raiding dumpsters, eavesdropping on network security personnel in their after-work hangouts, etc.)

Skills

Free Skills: Operating Systems (1), Payphones (1).

Skill Costs: ATH 6, BIO 9, CMBT 6, CRTV 6, INFO 5, MIL 9, PSY:M 18, PSY:S 18, TECH 5, THIE 4, SOC 8, STRT 5.

Income- \$250 +\$15/wk.

Special Equipment- \$5000 in pirated data (including software, information and the installation coding for mental programs).

Suggested Skills- Alarm Systems, Copy Protection, Corporations, Cryptography, Data Pirating, Denial of Service, Forgery, Internet Browsing, Linework, Lock Picking, Money, Network Protocols, System Crashing, System Prowling.

Suggested Equipment- Code Breaker: Latest, Computer Repair Tools: Portable, Crowbar, Data Cards, Denial of Service Program, Port Scanner, Programmer's Suite, Script Kiddie Suite, Trojan: Spy.

Suggested Reading- Corporations, Hacking (p.61), Hidden, Information Technology, Some Computer Systems (p.223).

Drakes

In Brief- Homeless family, makes and sells poisons (including psychic disrupting ash). They ingest and gain immunity to a poison which makes their bodily fluids poisonous.

Favorable Stereotypes- Honest traders if treated well, efficient killers if pushed.

Unfavorable Stereotypes- Devious, dangerous, reckless, cowards, unethical assassins.

Other Names- Poisoners, Poison Sellers, Toxics.

Origin- In the chaos and disasters of the 2040s, many people found themselves on the streets of the city alone, homeless, separated from their friends and family, often from their culture and homeland. One lone immigrant on the streets was Jacob Drake. As early as 2047 he was supporting himself by making and selling poisons. He recognized poisonous weeds growing in cracks in the pavement and empty lots, he gathered them, ground them up, and made highly concentrated tinctures. Jacob Drake was also known to poison enemies. By the standards of the city's homeless people, Jacob Drake was very successful. He made enough money to support himself and eventually a common-law wife and several children. His wife and children joined him in the business.

The Freedom Wars disrupted almost everything in the city, but not the Drake's business. When the Freedom Army took control of the city, they tried to disarm its populous. They swept the city for guns with high-tech sensors. People were desperate for some of self-defense and they paid or traded whatever they could for potent poisons they could stick on the end of a knife. The Drakes even sold to some of the rebels fighting the Freedom Army.

Jacob Drake died shortly after the end of the Freedom Wars. His wife and children carried on with the family business, and they learned more sources of poison and what they were good for. They followed one practice that Jacob Drake had taught them: to always take very tiny bits of the poisons they made so that they would have some partial immunity should they accidentally poison themselves. The rule was to start with a dosage that is certain to be safe, then take more and more until the person gets sick. The Drakes discovered one poison, which they made from a fungus, which had a massive potential for immunity. Drakes taking the poison had to take more and more to get sick. After months of taking the poison, they found that they could take doses of the poison that would kill an ordinary person. After years of taking

the poison, one young Drake took as much as he could stand and fed some of his blood to a rat, killing it. The Drakes had discovered a way to make their blood, saliva and even their breath poisonous to others.

As people fled the city to live in gated communities and corporate living centers, the city became more and more lawless. The Drakes were able to start operating out in the open. Their name had been well-known among the city's homeless community for years, but now non-homeless people in the city began to hear about the Drakes and came to buy poisons from them. The Drake family grew very rapidly: a young Drake would marry another homeless person and teach everyone in the spouse's family how to manufacture and sell poisons.

Drakes are always searching for new poisons they can manufacture cheaply. Two years ago, one Drake read an article on the internet about a plastic that, when burned, created a sort of psychic "static" capable of disrupting the use of psychic skills. A group of the Drakes learned how to scrounge this plastic from trash heaps and burn it in the furnace of their buildings. Smearing themselves with the ash, these Drakes could sabotage psychics just by being present. With growing numbers, a healthy trade in poisons, and now the ability to take on psychics, Drakes became one of the most powerful street families in the city.

In 2079. The Sat Jumpers, an Indie group (who was then trying to act like a gang) had gotten in a war with the Drug Lords and was about to be destroyed. The leader of the Sat Jumpers paid \$75,000 (\$75 for every Drake) to help them fight the Drug Lords. The Drakes joined the fray, using the same tactics they used in their own self-defense, and were able to make the Drug Lords back off with very few Drake casualties.

Timeline

2040- Jacob Drake sells poisons in the city.

2042- Jacob Drake marries Eun Hoang

2050- Freedom army invasion of the city.

2055- Last Freedom army soldiers flee the city.

2055- 5 members of Drake family.

2057- Jacob Drake dies.

2060- Dioxyl Butylene Vinyl Chloride (Dioxyl-BVC) invented.

2061- Drakes start taking fungus poison.

2063- 59 member of Drake family.

2065- Drakes discover they can make their blood poisonous.

2060- 703 members of the Drake family.

2078- Scientists discover psychic disrupting properties of Dioxyl-BVC ash.

2078- Tammy Drake reads about Dioxyl-BVC ash.

2079- Drakes hired by Sat Jumpers to fight Drug Lords.

2079- Eun Drake dies.

Becoming- Women are not allowed to ingest or work with poisons while pregnant or while breast-feeding. After being born, Drake babies are started on tiny doses of Drake poisons. The doses are slowly increased (with each step up causing short periods of illness). At around five, young Drakes are taught to defend themselves against non-Drakes by finding pieces of broken glass (which can be found nearly everywhere in the city), putting poison on them and stabbing enemies. Young Drakes are taught to cut themselves and use their own blood as poison if they do not have anything else. It is hard, but most young Drakes eventually learn to cut themselves. Drake children keep small doses of the Drake fungus poison, but otherwise they are not allowed to prepare or handle Drake poisons (because they might accidentally poison themselves). They are often asked to work in the fields however: weeding, watering and harvesting plants.

At around twelve, young Drakes begin to be instructed on how to handle poisons carefully. They watch their parents or older siblings make poisons, and eventually they are allowed to do it themselves. They are taught the effects and dosages of each poison and are eventually allowed to sell.

At level one, adventure one, the PC is considered old enough to manufacture and sell poisons and to go out on the streets without an escort.

Drake Ethics

Many people in the city think that by selling murder weapons, Drakes are responsible (in part) for the murder of innocent people. The Night Shift, in particular, would like to hold Drakes responsible for every murder committed using Drake poisons.

The Drakes do not see their acts as unethical. They know that innocent people are sometimes killed by their poisons, but they also know that innocent people are sometimes helped. The Drakes see poison as a great equalizer, letting those too poor to afford fancy weapons or too weak to use them stand on equal footing with the rich and strong. The Drakes speak proudly of battered wives who have poisoned their husbands, or disabled street people who fended off whole pounder gangs with the threat of a poisoned blade. Often the threat or even the mere possibility that someone will use poisons against an exploiter is enough to prevent that exploitation. Drakes will sometimes give special deals to those they suspect are being abused and exploited.

Although they readily admit that much evil is done with their poisons, they feel that the city is, overall, a better place for their presence

Lifestyle- The Drakes sell a product that is not needed often, but when it is needed it is very valuable to the people buying it. Fortunately, the cost of producing poisons is not high for the Drakes: they grow most of what they need and, with more than a thousand Drakes, labor is plentiful. If a Drake can sell one dose of poison in a day it is considered a good day. At any time of day, Drakes can be seen hanging around on street corners in Drake territory and in other parts of the city, waiting to sell. They carry tiny packages of poison hidden in their clothing. People come from all over the city (and occasionally from outside the city) and pay cash to get a tiny package of poison. The buyer rarely knows what poison they want, they simply explain what they want it to do. They may say, for instance "I want something I can slip in someone's food that they can't taste" or "I want something I can put on my knife so that anyone I cut will die." The price is haggled for, and the Drakes usually get \$20 to \$30 from poorer looking clients several hundred from richer looking clients. The customers don't just buy poison: they buy advice on exactly how to use the poison, exactly what the effect will be, and sometimes even what to do if the client accidentally poisons himself or herself.

Drakes try to avoid hearing anything which would tell them how the poison will be used. As long as they don't know what will be done with the poison, they can stay ethically neutral. If they find out what a poison will be used for (e.g. a client blurts out that he wants to kill his mother) then the Drake feels morally responsible for what is done with the poison.



The Drakes have seven basic poisons that they create and sell on a regular basis. These are the poisons that they know they can get the ingredients for, at little or no cost, year after year. The most important and widely produced poison is that which Drakes make from juice squeezed from a fungus. The Drakes do not know the scientific name of the fungus, and they do not let non-Drakes see it. The Drakes make thousands of doses of this poison every day, most of which they consume themselves to keep their blood toxic. In order to create this fungus, they have huge grow boxes in dozens of abandoned houses, with hundreds of hours of labor per day put in to feeding them, keeping them warm, harvesting them, then compressing and distilling the juices.

The Drakes also collect other non-standard poisons, in case they run in to a client with a very special need. These may be poisons that they made, stole or traded for. The average elder might have 20 to 50 different poisons and will know the exact effects and dosages of each. The Drakes rarely have a client who needs these exotic poisons, but when they do they typically charge hundreds of dollars.

Young Drakes are expected to be assassins in times of war. Instead of defending themselves in face-to-face battles, the Drakes sneak around enemy territory, stabbing people in the back and poisoning the food of enemies. Sometimes people will come to the Drakes looking to hire them as assassins. Sometimes if the "cause" is good enough (e.g. killing the leader of an especially violent pounder gang), the Drake elders will endorse the project. They are wary of getting in to a war with a superior military force and will often charge money for their services in proportion to the might of the enemy.

There are some Drakes, however, who will take any assassination job, no matter how unethical. These Drakes must operate in secret or face ostracism. They typically work through black market traders, never meeting their clients.

Sometimes Drakes are paid to consult about poisons. When someone in the city is murdered by poison, Drakes are often paid to look at the body and figure out what poison was used. The information a Drake gives (how the poison was administered, how long it would have taken) is sometimes vital in solving murder mysteries.

Social Structure- The core unit of the Drakes is a household. A household is an extended family living and working together in an abandoned building. Within the household, jobs are divided up according to skill and ability, and the majority of teens and young adults are given the job of going out and selling poisons. The household is typically led by the eldest people in the household, even though these people may not have the most knowledge of Drake poisons. In some households there are two leaders: one controls the workings of the household and relationships between household members, the other leader controls the household's dealings with other households and the outside world.

Drake households are more than just neighbors – they are connected by blood or marriage to every other household. Households do provide help to each other whenever it is needed and to support the family as a whole.

There are a large number of elders in the Drake family, and most of them are the parents and grandparents of people who married in to the family. These elders are respected for their wisdom and knowledge. Though living long lives has taught them how to run a household and survive

A Typical Drake Household

The Yanna and Marcellus Drake household lives in a small abandoned townhouse, with poisonous fungi growing in the basement, and poisonous weeds growing in the small back yard. The eldest members are Yanna and Marcellus, both in their sixties, who run the household. Living with them is Uncle Paul, Yanna's younger brother. Three of Yanna and Marcellus' five children live with them, along with their three spouses and five grandchildren. The grandchildren range in age from 2 to 12. Yanna and Marcellus' oldest son, Kurro, is married to Lisa Drake, a granddaughter of Jacob Drake, who lives in their house. When she married Kurro eight years ago, she taught the family how to create and sell poisons, thus turning them in to Drakes. Pinky Drake, the ex-boyfriend of Yanna and Marcellus' dead daughter, sleeps in the house most nights and helps out whenever he can.

on the streets, they haven't been making and selling Drake poisons for very long. The Drakes who have the most experience being Drakes are the five children of Jacob and Eun Drake (aged 30 to 38). Despite their youth, these five are considered respected elders. They are each the head of a household and every Drake owes them. When a Drake household isn't pulling its weight, the children of Jacob talk to them, sometimes even threaten to kick them out of the family.

Jacob Drake's wife, Eun Drake, married again after Jacob died. Many of Jacob Drake's children disliked Eun's new husband and disliked their half-brothers and sisters. Tammy Drake, who discovered dioxyl ash, is a daughter of Eun Drake and her new husband. Tammy trained her family in gathering dioxyl-plastic, and the furnace that she burned the plastic in was in her family building. The dioxyl burning Drakes have, thus, always thought of themselves as slightly separate from the other Drakes. The majority of Drakes aren't related by blood to Jacob or Eun, and they don't care one way or another. It is the children of Jacob who view the dioxyl-Drakes with a bit of suspicion and perhaps dislike. Despite this, the dioxyl-Drakes always cooperate in the livelihood and the self-defense of the Drakes, and the Drakes have always protected the dioxyl-Drakes as they would any other Drake.

Advancement- The most common way to advance within the Drakes is to gain experience, start a family, move out and found a household. Anyone who becomes well known as accomplished in some skill (e.g. as an accomplished warrior, an accomplished diplomat) will often be called upon for favors and will gain many owed favors in turn.

Population- There are about 1000 Drakes, only about 25 are actually descended from Jacob Drake, the founder of the family. About 200 are the family Tammy Drake and manufacture dioxyl ash.

External Relations- The attitude of most indie and well groups towards the Drakes is dislike, distaste and distrust tempered by a tolerance. The tolerance comes from need: Indies and wells seldom need poison, but when they do they usually go to Drakes. Indies and wells recognize that poison is an important type of self-defense, though they often fear and dislike the Drakes' methods. The gangs that rely on military and personal strength are the most critical of the Drakes because they know that poison is a sort of equalizer, the perfect weapon for the physically weak. The Animalists, Humankalorie, Hummingbirds, Roofers, Risen and Skin Borgs depend on might rather than sneak attacks. They are the most critical of the Drakes, calling them cowardly assassins. Even members of these groups visit the Drakes occasionally.

Purists: The Purists have an incredible distaste for the Drakes. To the Purists, the idea of poisoning oneself is tantamount to spiritual suicide. The Purists avoid the Drakes whenever possible. For their part, the Drakes know they would have an incredibly hard time poisoning a Purist and so they try to avoid conflicts.

Street People: Street People are more respectful of the Drakes. One reason is because street people are traditionally apowerless and depend on poisons for self-defense. Another reason is because they realize the value of doing anything, even morally questionable activities, to make money to take care of one's family.

Night Shift: The Night Shift almost never buy poisons from the Drakes. They investigate murders committed with Drake poisons and hold the Drakes responsible for all of them. The Night Shift like to harass Drakes whenever they can, and only the danger of getting up-close to a Drake keeps them from being more trouble to Drakes.

Psychic Gangs: The dioxyl-Drakes, with their psychic-disrupting ash, are thorns in the sides of the psychic gangs (Insomniacs, Bleeders, Immortals and Tea Drinkers). The Drakes don't often pick fights with these gangs (like other street families, they don't have time to start wars) but the dioxyl-Drakes do hire themselves out as mercenaries and bodyguards to other groups who are fighting with psychics. The Bleeders have an additional reason to dislike the Drakes: the Drake's poisonous blood makes it dangerous for the Bleeders to do anything to them.

Military Style- Drakes always prefer assassinating enemies to fighting them in outright battles. In times of war, hundreds of Drakes may prowl through enemy territory, looking for lone enemies they can hit from behind with an instant poison, or watching to see where enemies live so they can break in to their homes later and poison their food. When Drakes are confronted by an actual battle they cluster together, creating a small zone of flying shards of glass that most enemies are afraid to come near. If any of their members are wounded, they are dragged to the center of the cluster. If any Drakes are killed, they are picked up and used as shields. The cluster of Drakes will try to move away from the enemy as quickly as they can. The target is usually an alley, where a few brave Drakes can hold off the enemies while the rest run away.

Typical Weapon- Shards of glass coated with poison. The glass is either held in one's hand, thrown, or launched from a home-made slingshot.

Turf- The Drakes occupy a small piece of turf in what used to be called the East Village, directly North of the Bowery. This part of town was a hip home to artists and political radicals during the 1960s, but drugs and crime turned it in to a skid row almost as bad as the Bowery. Drake turf is South of 8th Street, North of Houston, East of 2nd Avenue and West of Avenue A. The only real landmark in Drake turf is the Orpheum Theatre, an old Yiddish playhouse turned off-Broadway theater, now abandoned. Directly East of Drake turf is St. Mark's Church in-the-Bowery, a very old (though oft rebuilt) church with one of the largest soup kitchens in the city.

Distinguishing Features- Many Drakes wear wide-brimmed hats. Most wear clothes with long sleeves that hide their hands (this helps them slip poisons in to things without being seen). A few wear clothing with pieces of broken glass glued to the outside of their clothing (this helps persuade people not to mess with them, especially when they are recognized as Drakes). Otherwise, they wear normal street people clothing: whatever they can scrounge from the trash or stitch together from the remains of old clothing.

Symbols- Specks or droplets spilling from a hand (with pinched fingers) are common graffiti symbols for Drakes. Perhaps because of this graffiti, pinched fingers pointing down have become a common hand-symbol for poison.

Slang

Children of Jacob: n., the direct descendents of Jacob Drake, who are the most persuasive elder in the family.

Dioxyl: n., (from Dioxyl-Butylene-Vinyl-Chloride), 1. the plastic that can be burned to create psychic disrupting ash, 2. the Drakes who create and use this ash.

Skills

Free Skills: Drake Poison Immunity (2), Drake Poisons (2)

Skill Costs: ATH 6, BIO 9, CMBT 6, CRTV 6, INFO 10, MIL 9, PSY:M 24, PSY:S 28, TECH 10, THIE 4, SOC 8, STRT 5.

Special Skills: The special skills Drake Poisons and Drake Poison Immunity cost only 7 skill points per level.

Drake Poisons (Uses INL)- This is like the Poisons skill (p.126), except the emphasis is strongly on the poisons used by the Drakes, how they are made and what they do. There is some knowledge of non-Drake poisons, but it is sparse and there is little knowledge of the biological mechanisms of their action. The secrets of Drake poisons are guarded.

Easy (10): Recognize a Drake poison by sight.

Moderate (20): Make Drake Fungus Poison.

Hard (30): Recognize a Drake poison by inspecting a dead body.

Legendary (40): Recognize a non-Drake poison by inspecting a dead body.

Drake Poison Immunity (Uses END)- This skill represents the Drake practice of taking tiny doses of their own poisons in order to build up an immunity should they ever accidentally poison themselves. Note that some poisons are easy to build and immunity to, others are hard: Drake fungus poison is easy, Drake deleriant, knockout drops, pain juice and suicide poison are moderate and Drake blood and glass poisons are hard. This skill also works against non Drake poisons but at +10 difficulty.

Very Easy (5): Feel no effects from a non-lethal dose of Drake Fungus Poison.

Easy (10): Feel no effects from a non-lethal dose or survive a lethal dose of Drake Fungus Poison.

Moderate (20): Feel no effects from a non-lethal dose or survive a lethal dose of Drake Deleriant.

Hard (30): Feel no effects from a non-lethal dose or survive a lethal dose of Drake Blood Poison.

Income- \$250 +\$14/wk.

Special Equipment- The PC has access to up to 5 doses of each Drake Poison and Blinding Powder (p.105) per week, 1 dose of Drake Dioxyl-BVC ash per week, and 20 doses per day of Drake Fungus Poison for personal ingestion. The PC can get much more poison if expecting to make a big sale (though will have to share the profits). The PC can pay a dioxyl-Drake to prepare a Dioxyl Ash Pipe (see p.123) for \$5 (or an equivalent IOU). PCs can buy Homemade Slingshots (FR 1 ft., MR 30 ft., do 1 bladed damage with a piece of sharp glass) for \$20.

Special Bonus Characteristics

Poisoned Bloodstream: (Mandatory Advantage)- The PC has gained a massive immunity to Drake fungus poison and takes daily doses. The doses the PC takes are thousands of times more than is necessary to kill a person, and enough can be found in their blood, tissues and bodily fluids at any given time to be deadly.

-Saliva or a few drops of blood put in something someone has ingested will have moderate effects (see 2x Effects) within 10 minutes.

-If something coated with the PC's blood pierces a person's skin, the person suffers from serious effects immediately (see 4x Effects).

-The particles of moisture coming up out of the lungs have enough poison in them that if the PC breathes directly in the face of someone who is inhaling, the victim will get a tiny dose of the poison (see 1x Effects) which takes effect nearly instantly (within 1 round).

-Unprotected sexual intercourse exposes the partner to toxins passing through mucous membranes (which are much more permeable than skin) so that the partner suffers from moderate effects (see 2x Effects).

-Any person or animal to consume large portions of the PC's blood and flesh will suffer immediate and powerful effects (see 8x Effects).

Grandchild of Jacob: (Optional Advantage)- Costs 5 Bonus Points. The PC is one of the grandchildren of Jacob Drake. Grandchildren are given slightly more respect, are believed to know a little more about Drake poisons (even if their knowledge is no better than other Drakes). Most importantly, one of the PC's parents is one of the most influential of the Drake elders, who have been Drakes longer than anyone alive and who have the most influence over what the family does.

Dioxyl: (Optional Advantage)- Costs 7 Bonus Points. Cannot be taken in conjunction with the Grandchildren of Jacob advantage. The PC belongs to the small group

Dioxyl Ash Pipe

This is a length of metal pipe, filled with dioxyl-BVC plastic and sealed, then put in to a furnace until it is red hot. The pipe is handled using thick welder's gloves. While still hot the pipe lets off powerful anti-psycho static which disrupts psychic skills over a wide range (as opposed to cold dioxyl ash which is only strong enough to work by touch). Within 10 ft. the ash gives -4 to all psychic skill rolls, within 2 ft. it gives -10. Hitting someone with a dioxyl ash pipe does both blunt and burn damage and hitting them in the head (an aimed shot) can seriously disrupt someone's nervous system (especially psychic systems). The pipe stays hot enough to burn for about half an hour.

Range: 1

Damage: 2 blunt, 1 burn (see p.56). Any time the pipe touches a person's head, that person suffers from dizziness (-7 to save vs. loss of balance) and faintness (-7 to save vs. unconsciousness) for 5 rounds and psychic disruption (-15 to psychic skill rolls) for 1 hour.

of Drakes that scavenge dioxyl plastic, burn it, use and sell the ash. The PC has access to 5 doses of Dioxyl-BVC ash per week and can make a Dioxyl Ash Pipe whenever he or she is heading in to battle with a psychic. The PC also gains immunity to the disruptive effects of dioxyl ash (no dizziness or faintness) but the result is permanent densitization of the normal psychic systems (any attempt by the PC to use a psychic skill or by a psychic to effect the PC is at -15 even when dioxyl ash is not present).

Suggested Skills- Gardening, Lock Picking, Knife Throwing, Prowling, Sleight of Hand, Street Fighting: Armed.

Suggested Equipment- Blowpipe, Lock Picks: Homemade, Knife: Kitchen, Poison Ring, Phonebook Glass Armor, Throwing Glass.

Suggested Reading- Assassins, Black Market, Drake Poisons (p.102).

Drake Poisons in Brief

See the p.102 of the equipment section for more details.

Drake Blood Poison: Made from: incubated blood, feces and disease samples. Used for: putting on a weapon to create horrifying infections. Effects: fever, paralysis, delirium.

Drake Deliriant Poison: Made from: extracts from weeds. Used for: brainwashing and torturing people. Effects: confusion, loss of willpower, hallucinations and delusions.

Drake Dioxyl-Butylene Vinyl Chloride Ash: Made from: burned plastic. Used for: disrupting the abilities of psychics. Effects: Psychic attempts are obscured by something like "static."

Drake Fungus Poison: Made from: juice from a fungus. Used for: killing quickly, keeping Drake blood toxic. Effects: Weakness, paralysis, heart failure.

Drake Glass Poison: Ground glass, plant based irritants and insect venom. Used for: killing with access to something a person will only touch (like a doorknob). Effects: first itching, then when the person scratches the itch enough that deadly poison enters the bloodstream: numbness, paralysis, permanent neurological damage.

Drake Knockout Drops: Made from: medicinal herbs and stolen pharmaceuticals. Used for: knocking people out. Effects: Unconsciousness, occasionally death.

Drake Pain Juice: Made from: hot peppers and herbs. Used for: torture, self-defense.. Effects: debilitating burning pain.

Drake Suicide Poison: Made from: Insecticide. Used for: painless deaths. Effects: Euphoria, numbness, sleepiness, heart failure.

Insomniacs

In Brief- Use a drug which gives psychic power while "burning" away the ability to sleep (leading to numerous psychological problems).

Favorable Stereotypes- Powerful psychics, highly aware, self-sacrificing, awesome self-control.

Unfavorable Stereotypes- Psychologically damaged, self-hating, dangerous, intolerant, hate life, bizarre addictions.

Other Names- The Sleepless, Sleep Burners, Sibosiners, Sibos.

Origin- In 2072, researchers at a corporate pharmaceutical research lab thought they had discovered something they had been trying to find for a decade: a drug that would remove the need to sleep. Sibosin, the name given to the experimental drug by the marketing department, seemed to remove the need for sleep in primates with no side effects other than a slight irritability. Human tests showed

that not only did the drug decrease or eliminate the need to sleep, it also increased psychic ability. The military rushed to sponsor more research. Two side effects derailed the high-hopes of the corporation. First, the irritability first seen in primates was much more pronounced in humans. Second, to the horror of the test subjects, too many doses in a row and the effect of the drug was permanent. The number of doses that would cause permanent insomnia was not stable between subjects: some could take the drug for thirty nights in a row without a permanent effect, others could take it for two nights and never be able to sleep again. Irritability in permanent insomniacs quickly turned in to a form of madness: constant awareness of their surroundings led to an annoyance that many subjects said was worse than physical pain. Although their environments could be changed, the insomniacs felt the same way about their own bodies, and they quickly turned to all manner of self-destructive habits and finally suicide.

Knowing that they could never get FDA approval for the drug, and fearing the terrible consequences if Sibosin should become an abused street drug, the military and the corporation attempted to destroy any information about the chemical structure of the drug or how to manufacture it. A test sample made it on to the black market, where it was passed around the community of illegal drug manufacturers (each paying hundreds of thousands to get a sample of the drug). The drug hit the streets through the black market traders (the Drug Lords saw no use for it, since it wasn't addictive) and there was a brief fascination with using it. That fascination was quickly soured: a number of horror stories circulated through the city of people who used the drug, became permanently unable to sleep, mutilated themselves and then killed themselves. Use of the drug waned and some Traders stopped carrying it.

There was a tiny cluster of street families in the city who thought of themselves as psychics. Unable to afford expensive electrochemical feedback machines, these street people had to resort to teacher-to-student training. Teacher to student training is an inefficient, unreliable and lengthy process. Most students who learn this way take years to learn even the most miniscule psychic skills. The psychic street families thus had barely any skill, but it was enough to give them a slight edge. They heard about Sibosin, how it increased people's psychic abilities, and they heard the horror stories about people going insane. Having led hard lives on the streets, they figured that as a community they could deal with a bit of insanity, and they figured it was better to be insane than dead. They pooled money and bought a large batch of Sibosin, waiting for more desperate times to use it. They did not have to wait long for desperate times (street people seldom do) and they started taking Sibosin en masse, knowing that there was a good chance that many of them would become permanent insomniacs. Two members of this small group became permanent insomniacs, but the use of the drug made the group powerful enough to pull themselves out of trouble.

Next time the group faced hard times, they dipped in to their stash of Sibosin again, and again and again. As more of their members became permanent insomniacs, they found out more about the nature of the madness. Some of their members succumbed to suicide, but even more learned to live with the madness, and to remain productive members of the community. The group came to depend on Sibosin more and more and to use it almost all the time. The group became known throughout the city as a powerful and dangerous group of psychics. The Insomniacs became one of the city's most successful street families and they grew quickly as many people married in to the group.

Timeline

- 2071- A group of small street families who dabble in psychic skills form a loose alliance of families.
- 2072- Sibosin invented.
- 2075- Human tests with Sibosin, side-effects discovered.
- 2075- Sibosin research ends.
- 2075- Sibosin hits the black market.
- 2076- The families purchase a large batch of Sibosin.
- 2076- Insomniacs first use of Sibosin.
- 2076- Two Insomniacs permanently unable to sleep.
- 2078- 50 Insomniacs permanently unable to sleep.
- 2080- 250 Insomniacs permanently unable to sleep.

Becoming- Young Insomniacs are trained in psychic skills from an early age. The type of training requires a skilled psychic to spend many hours with a student, giving endless verbal feedback on what the students' psychic systems are doing. Children as young as seven are also allowed to imbibe powerful concoctions of caffeine, amphetamines and even maxin, to help prepare them for what using Sibosin will be like. No member of the family is forced to use sibosin, although almost all choose to. An Insomniac must be fifteen before they allowed to take sibosin (the elders keep all of the family's sibosin and decide who can have it). Even when they are allowed to take it, young people must be very careful: they can not take it more than three days in a row, except in the most dire emergencies. They will need to get much older and wiser before they are allowed to use Sibosin at their own discretion.

At level one, adventure one, a PC is still considered young by the family, and has only been using sibosin for a short period. It is possible that the PC has become permanently unable to sleep, but it is unlikely. The PC is only now starting to develop bad habits that will plague him or her in later years.

Lifestyle- Sibosin comes in a tiny yellow pill that will leave a horrible bitter aftertaste if it is not swallowed down quickly enough. The effect is immediate, though sometimes subtle. The drug does not amp one up: a user can be calm or tired, but not sleepy. Any sleepiness that the user has disappears immediately and doesn't come back. The other effect is that the user can not become inured to details. Say there is a crack in the wall, the sibosin user can not simply get used to it and forget it is there. They will notice the crack again and again every time they look at it, even if they have looked at it a million times already. The user will eventually become so sick of the crack it will be like torture and the Insomniac will want to destroy it or do something else so that he or she never has to look at it again. The longer the user stays awake, the worse this effect gets. Eventually they become aware of the sound and sensation of their own breathing, of their heart beating, of blinking, of food churning within their intestines, and even the feel of their own skin. It is like they are wearing a coat, made of some hot, sticky, slimy, unbearably uncomfortable material that they can not take off for even a second. For those with psychic skills, their raw power increases dramatically (skill and subtlety does not increase). It takes at least 24 hours without sleep for psychic power to increase by a significant level.

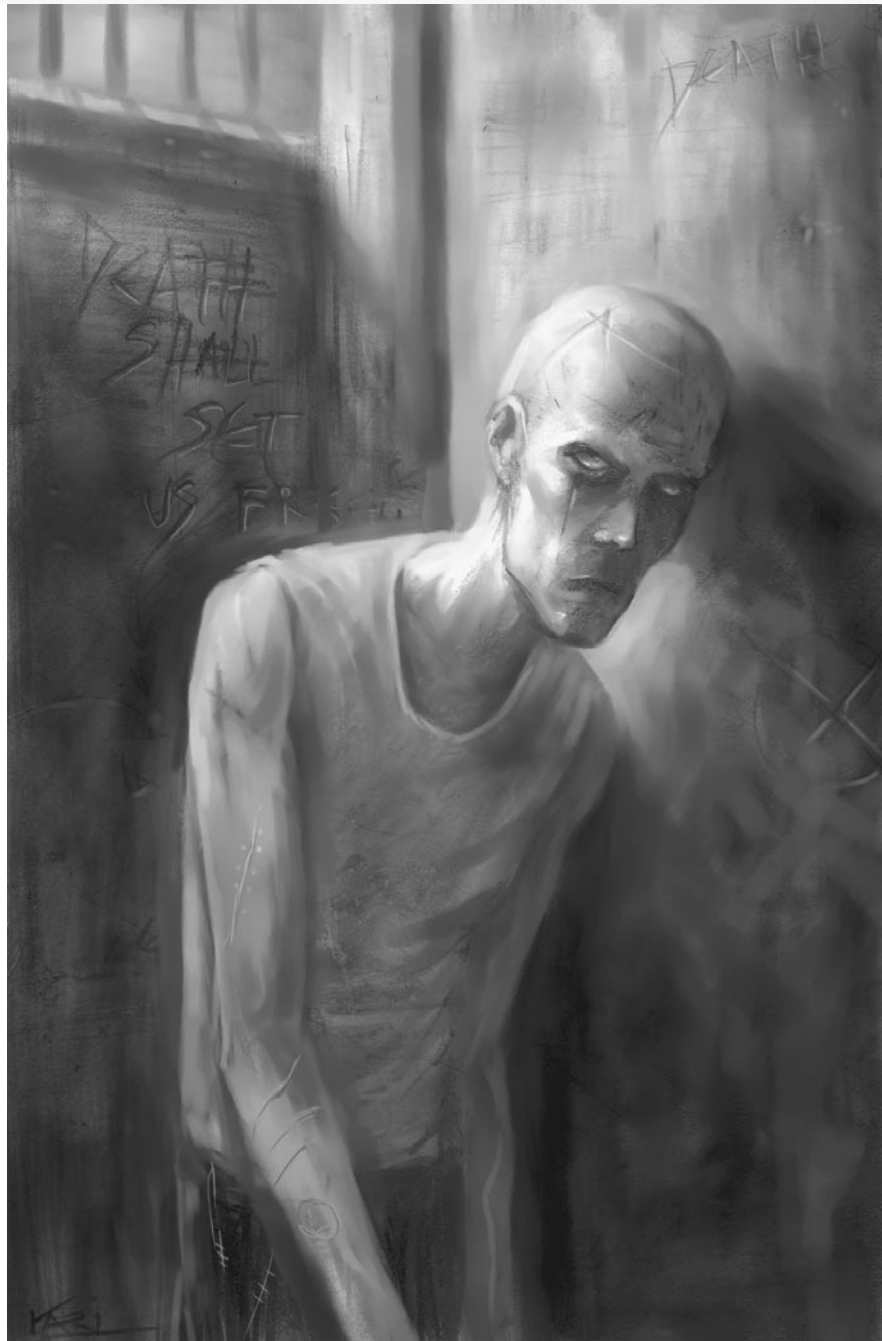
When someone stops taking sibosin, the constant awareness of their surroundings slowly fades, and the ability and need to sleep comes back a little at a time. Twelve hours without sibosin, and a person might be able to sleep a few hours, another day and they may be able to sleep five or six, another day and they can sleep through a full night. There is no "crash" like after coming down from amphetamines. Sleep simply comes whimpering back, like some kicked dog who comes back when it gets hunger overcomes its fear. Or sometimes not. Sibosin users never know when they stop using sibosin if the need for sleep will ever come back, if the irritable awareness will ever fade. For many, a simple yawn can be a cause for relief, and even weeping with joy. Every day, more and more Insomniacs find themselves unable to sleep.

Than Death

Unlike some other families, who have been living the same way for generations, the Insomniacs are a family in the process of changing. Four years is the longest anyone in the family has gone without sleep. Nobody else that the Insomniacs know of has gone longer. Even if the first test subjects were still alive, they would only have been without sleep for five years. Nobody has any idea what might happen after ten years without sleep, or after twenty. Some Insomniacs believe that they will slowly grow more and more powerful as the years go on until they are more powerful than any psychic in recorded history. Others secretly hope that after many years without using sibosin, the ability to sleep will slowly return. This is perhaps the Insomniacs' only hope, since nobody in the world seems interested in finding a cure for insomnia (the government claims that Sibosin never made it on to the black market).

What's worse, Insomniacs have a growing annoyance with the sound of their own thoughts and their own states of consciousness. This can not be changed as easily as one's home or body can, and most drugs provide too short a solution. Non-Insomniac addicts can spend their days high on drugs and then pass out as they are coming down, but Insomniacs do not have that luxury. For every high they experience every low in excruciating detail. Many insomniacs become addicted to sniffing glue and self-asphyxiation for the brief feeling of dissociation from reality it gives them. Some Insomniacs pay a lot of money for drug cocktails (usually made by Needle Punks or Goods) which will knock them out in a way that resembles sleep. This is rarely a good solution: it is expensive and the drugs have annoying side effects.

If insomniacs hold incredibly still for long periods of time, they cease to feel their own bodies and the sense of uneasiness with their own bodies disappears. Many experienced Insomniacs who have been charred for a long time give up on the moving world and stay in a motionless state most of the day, using their impressive psychic powers to communicate and interact with their environment. These insomniacs often learn breath control, and exist in a constant state of near-hypoxia. These Insomniacs, called the "Stills" or "Non-Breathers" seldom leave Insomniac territory. They can be quite impressive to outsiders: their breath and pulse are hard to detect, making them seem dead, but their minds are powerful enough to make their will known without a blink.



Social Structure- Insomniacs are mostly free agents, searching the city for ways they can use their psychic skills to make money. They use the money they get to care for their younger siblings, children and other dependents. They also pay a small tribute to their elders. Whatever is left, they get to keep. Older insomniacs may assign a job to a younger member, but these assignments are considered favors rather than impositions.

Respect for elders is an unvarying rule. Younger Insomniacs don't have to obey the orders of elders, but they must listen quietly, answer any questions asked of them and call their elder "Ma'am" or "Sir." Any failure to show respect is taken as evidence that the young Insomniac has forgotten how much more powerful the elders are. The elders see nothing wrong with trying to cure this ignorance by taking control of the younger Insomniac's body and mind and making him or her feel complete helplessness. The "Stills" often demand that younger Insomniacs pay them respect by telling them everything that is happening throughout the city.

Sibosin has redefined age: a twenty year old who has been without sleep for five years may be considered the “elder” to a fifty year old who has only been using Sibosin for a few years and still sleeps the occasional nights.

Advancement- A regular user of sibosin will eventually lose his or her ability to sleep, it may take months or it may take years but it will happen. Some members of the family take little or no sibosin and care for the family in other non-psychic ways. These Insomniacs rarely gain much respect.

When a person becomes “charred” (permanently unable to sleep), the tortures of sibosin turn in to an inescapable prison. Some lose hope and kill themselves, but for most it is the commitment to their families that keeps them going, and it is this commitment that is honored by the non-charred. Even as the charreds’ problems get worse, so do their powers. Even as they become increasingly unable to live a normal life, and more and more subject to bizarre and self-destructive behaviors and addictions, they grow more powerful and more respected by the other Insomniacs. By the time they spend most of their time still, the Insomniac has the power (and usually the wisdom) to command tremendous respect from the Insomniacs and most of the rest of the street community.

Population- There are about 800 Insomniacs in the city. About 300 of them are too young to take Sibosin. About 50 are old enough, but choose not to use Sibosin. 200 are using Sibosin but can still sleep. 200 are charred, but still walk the streets with their uncharred family members. About 50 in the family are the “still” or “non-breathers.”

External Relations- The Insomniacs are able to gain considerable respect in the gang community simply by virtue of being psychic. Most people don’t like to mess with psychics, and so they avoid messing with Insomniacs. On the other hand, the Insomniacs have no fear of other psychic gangs, and they put the Tea Drinkers, Immortals and the Bleeders on their list of people who they don’t care if they offend. Insomniacs sometimes even bully these other gangs around, though they usually stop short of provoking pointless wars.

Street Families: The Black Meds often call Insomniacs to consult on medical cases, the Crackers often pay them to steal passwords out of people’s heads, the Water Rats and Keepers think of the Insomniacs as fair and reputable traders, and visa versa. Ever since the new Dioxyl group formed within the Drakes, though, the Insomniacs and the Drakes have had a sour relationship. The dioxyl Drakes have the ability to mess with psychics, and they use it whenever possible, sometimes cruelly. Like most street people, though, the Insomniacs are usually too busy trying to stay alive to get in to wars, and the Drakes are the subject of more spite than violence.

Skin Borgs: Quite a few Skin Borgs have anti-psychic armor, and those Skin Borgs make it a point to bully Insomniacs whenever they see them. There have been a few battles between Insomniacs and Skin Borgs, but no all-out wars.

Traders and Goods: Insomniacs make a lot of money by selling their psychic skills, but they also spend a lot of money on Sibosin. The Insomniacs depend on black market traders to find them clients and to sell them Sibosin at bulk rates. Insomniacs also sometimes buy Sibosin from Goods.

Military Style- During war, even the elder still Insomniacs begin moving again (often moving with the help of two younger Insomniacs). The Insomniacs are not afraid to cross the city in search of an enemy to strike, and they only leave enough members behind to keep the children hidden if someone should come to their turf while they are away. The party moves slowly, not caring much about stealth, dealing with any enemy they come across. With this style of advancing, a full-out battle is usually unavoidable. When battle begins, the elder Insomniacs stay still as pillars, using psychic powers to confuse and disable the enemies. The younger Insomniacs run around with knives and clubs, taking out any enemy who appears unable to defend themselves. The elders also use their powers to give orders to the younger Insomniacs. If there is an enemy that seems immune to the powers of the elders, the elders will command several young Insomniacs to surround and ambush that enemy.

Typical Weapon- A wooden club or steel pipe is a common weapon for an Insomniac, with a knife being the next most common.

Turf- Insomniac turf is downtown, just North of the Bowery, bordered by Houston on the South, Avenue B on the East, the sunken city to the East and 14th Street on the North. Like the Bowery, this part of town has been run-down for some time, the buildings are nearly all abandoned (save a few cheap hotels, welfare apartments, soup kitchens and liquor stores). Nobody has made any serious efforts to save any of the buildings in this part of town for more than a century. Those buildings that haven’t already fallen down are rotting and crumbling away.

Many charred insomniacs live in abandoned buildings right on the edge of the sunken city (because many have an addiction to ice-cold baths).

Distinguishing Features- Multiple fits of self-mutilation have left most Insomniacs with many scars. The older and more powerful the insomniac, the more scars, and the deeper those scars tend to be. They usually also have tattoos and piercings. Because they hate to be hot, they wear little clothing and what they do wear are things like short sun-dresses, thin tank tops, cut-off shorts, holey slacks and sports bras. Being dirty or oily annoys them so that they bathe more often than any other street people and are therefor remarkably clean.

Symbols- A red X or a bloodshot eye are used to represent insomniacs.

Slang

Burn: v., temporarily remove the need and ability to sleep with sibosin.

Charred: adj., permanently unable to sleep.

Itchies: n., annoyance with some detail an Insomniac can’t ignore.

Non-Breathers: n., those who spend most of their time not moving and seldom breathe.

Still, the: n., another term for non-breathers.

Yellow: n., sibosin.

Skills

Skill Costs: ATH 6, BIO 9, CMBT 6, CRTV 6, INFO 10, MIL 9, PSY:M 10, PSY:S 10, TECH 10, THIE 5, SOC 8, STRT 5.

Income- \$250 +\$14/wk.

Special Equipment- The family pools money to buy sibosin in bulk. The PC can get up to 3 doses a week free.

Special Bonus Characteristics

Charred: (Optional Disadvantage) Gives 7 Bonus Points. The PC has taken sibosin one time too many and can no longer sleep. The PC never needs to sleep and never suffers from sleep deprivation damage. Additional doses of Sibosin have no effect on a charred PC. **Addiction:** Any time the PC becomes asphyxiated, is exposed to very cold water, or does inhalant drugs, he or she must make a save vs. psychological addiction (20 difficulty, +5 for every level the PC has been charred). **Itchies:** Any unpleasant sensation that is constant and unchanging becomes harder and harder to deal with (+1 difficulty to save for every hour the PC has to deal with it). Example: *An Insomniac notices an annoying hum near his dwelling. Every hour, he must make a save, using WIL, to avoid doing something about the hum. After 10 hours, it is only 10 difficulty, after 20 hours it is 20 difficulty, etc. The difficulty keeps rising until the PC is forced to find and destroy the source of the hum, move away, or poke his own eardrums out.* **Mutilation:** Unless the PC becomes entirely still (so the PC doesn't feel his or her own body) the PC must make a daily save to avoid changing his or her own flesh (cutting it, scarring it, piercing it, tattooing it, etc.). The difficulty of this save is 5 per level that the PC has been charred. **Psychic Prowess:** The PC gains +4 AWR, +10 to psychic based WIL rolls and +10 pooled END for use with psychic skills.

Cold Water Addict: (Optional Disadvantage) Gives 5 Bonus Points. This disadvantage is only available to PCs with the Charred disadvantage. The PC is addicted to immersion in very cold water (cold enough to force them to make a save vs. hypothermia). As per the addiction rules (p.57) the PC must make a Cravings roll (difficulty 20 +5 for every level the PC has been charred) every day to avoid acting on their craving for immersion in cold water.

Asphyxiation Addict: (Optional Disadvantage) Gives 7 Bonus Points. This disadvantage is only available to PCs with the Charred disadvantage. The PC is addicted to being asphyxiated to the point that they nearly lose consciousness (must be long enough to force them to make a save vs. unconsciousness, see p.52). As per the addiction rules (p.57) the PC must make a Cravings roll (difficulty 20 +5 for every level the PC has been charred) every day to avoid acting on their craving to be asphyxiated.

Suggested Skills- Belief Attack, Clairsentience, Control Attack, Hold Breath, Pain Attack.

Suggested Equipment- Lighter: Disposable, Stick With Nail.

Suggested Reading- Body Modification, Psychic Phenomenon, Sibosin (p.90).

Keepers

In Brief- Live a hunter-gatherer lifestyle in the wilderness of Central Park, hunting wild animals.

Favorable Stereotypes- Self-sufficient, skilled survivors, protecting a strange and marvelous ecosystem.

Unfavorable Stereotypes- Xenophobic, territorial, ignorant and increasingly primitive.

Other Names- Holers, Central Park Hunters.

Origin- In the Mid 19th Century, rich New Yorkers, wanting to emulate the large park spaces of major European cities, campaigned for a large park to be built. The state legislature purchased a large portion of land in the middle of the city that was underutilized because it was too rocky, mountainous and swampy. 843 acres were eventually purchased. The area was heavily landscaped over the course of many years, and was the first park in the US to be landscaped. In addition to being the city's largest and most majestic park, Central Park was also used to store water for the city in human-made lakes.

Throughout the late 19th, 20th and early 21st centuries, Central Park was once one of the world's most impressive parks. Buildings and services slowly invaded the park, including museums, community centers, skating rinks, sports fields, a zoo, payphones, food-carts. In the 2030s, corporate sponsors of the park filled it with vending machines and advertising billboards. In the turbulent times of the 2040s, huge shantytowns of homeless people made their home in central park (despite attempts by riot police to clear them out) and heat-waves and pollution killed off much of the greenery.

During the Freedom Wars, Jeffrey Hernandez moved the base of operations for the Freedom Army to the city. Jeffrey Hernandez found the park an ideal place to build: it was the largest piece of land in the city where he could build without having to tear anything down. Taken with the beauty of the park, Hernandez did not want to destroy

the greenery so he planned, as much as possible, to build in harmony with it. Many of the buildings in his complex were designed to be mostly underground with underground roads and walkways between them. These mostly-underground buildings would also be harder to bomb.

In 2054, while the complex of buildings was still under construction, rebels snuck bombs in to the buildings and detonated them. Most were traditional explosives but one was a small nuclear device. The buildings were destroyed and thousands of Freedom Army soldiers were killed. The Freedom Army itself soon fell. The restoration committee did a minimal cleanup of radioactive waste in the park, then fenced it off and condemned it. As soon as people were moved back in to the city, people started cutting holes in or knocking over the fences. People went in to "the hole" as it had become known, for privacy: to do drugs, have illicit sex, hide bodies or stolen goods or to hide from enemies. For the most part, this activity occurred on the outsides of the park. People rarely went deep in to the interior of the park.

Street people began to move in to the park and build small shacks to live in. Some of these street people formed small cooperative associations, others didn't. The street people who lived there found that they could hunt and trap animals in the park and gather edible plants. Recent immigrants who had lived in similar ways in their native countries took to this quickly, but even hardened urbanites quickly became skilled hunters and gatherers. The Street People who lived in the park found a comfortable life there. However, addicts, mentally ill people and violent criminals soon started encroaching on their living spaces. To escape the growing danger of life on the outside of the Hole, many of the people who had been there the longest moved closer to the center of the hole. These older park residents became a community of friends. These friends became more and more skilled at surviving in the ecosystem of the hole, and in turn they became more dependent on it.

The older hole dwellers feared that too many people moving in to the hole would deplete the natural resources, and they formed a task force with the name "Keepers of the Hole" to try to dissuade newcomers from moving in to the hole. They accomplished this mostly by destroying homes and stealing the belongings of newcomers. The newcomers could not retaliate in turn because they could never find the homes of the Keepers. The Keepers then started imposing limits on how, where and when non-Keepers could hunt. The Keepers disliked violence, but they found that the same strategies that let them hunt and trap animals could be used against invaders. They also found that setting up many traps in "Keeper only" areas was a good way to keep people out of those areas.

The more self-determination the Keepers achieved, the more other Street People wanted to join them. The Keepers allowed those that they liked to join. As their population grew, so did the "Keepers only" areas of the park. By 2075, all non-Keepers had been forced out of the hole. The Keepers were now firmly in charge of every inch of it.

Timeline

1853- NY State authorizes purchase of central park.
 1859- Central Park first opened for use.
 1871- Central Park Zoo.
 1880s- Poor people campaign for equal access to park.
 1925- Croton Reservoir in Central Park closed.
 2050- Freedom Army attacks on corporations and government in New York.
 2051- New York firmly under Freedom Army control.
 2052- Construction of Freedom Army complex in Central Park begins.
 2054- Several bombs, including a small nuclear bomb, destroy Freedom Army complex.
 2057- Nuclear cleanup ends, Central Park fenced off and people allowed back in the city.
 2061- Elder park residents forced to move deeper in to the Hole.
 2062- "Keepers of the Hole" task force forms.
 2075- Keepers have complete control of the Hole.

Becoming- The Keepers are not currently accepting new family members, except on the rare occasions when a young Keeper falls in love with and marries a non-Keeper (and even then, the "marriage" is usually not considered legitimate, and the spouse is considered only a visitor, until children are born).

Young Keepers are taught to hunt and gather plants at an early age. For snacks they pick berries and catch and cook lizards. They play games of hide and seek in the hole (although older children must accompany young children to make sure they don't accidentally wander in to areas that have traps). At adolescence, Keepers are expected to participate in adult activities: cooking meals, going on hunting parties, building shelters, setting up traps.

At level one, adventure one, the PC is about fifteen and is considered old enough to go out of the Hole and in to the city by themselves to trade, scrounge and make war.

Lifestyle- The Keepers know of several types of edible berries, roots and greenery growing within the hole. Some Keepers know herbal medicine and gather medicinal herbs as well as food-plants. The Keepers also hunt for animals to eat. The Keepers have been known to eat snakes, mice, rats, gophers, raccoons and birds (especially pigeons).

Each Keeper has a hunting area in which he or she is allowed to put small homemade traps. Once or twice a day a Keeper checks these traps and gets any animals that have fallen prey to them. When Keepers find signs that a bigger animal is living in the park, they form small hunting parties. They track it down and kill it with small homemade bows. The Keepers will occasionally chase a prey animal out of the hole and continue to track it through the city. The Keepers are careful to never hunt a species in to extinction (unless it is a foreign species that is causing ecological problems in the hole). When Keepers can not hunt or gather enough food to give them good nutrition, they leave the hole and visit soup kitchens and city dumpsters.

Keepers typically only spend a three or four hours a day hunting and gathering. The exception is some young people who enjoy the challenge of a hunt so much that they will hunt for hours to catch an animal, even though that animal may not have much meat on it. Most Keepers spend several hours a day outside of the hole. They wander around in the block or two surrounding the hole. They hit dumpsters looking for anything they can salvage for use in crafts. The Keepers may sell hand-made weapons, clothing, food and even some medicinal herbs that grow in the park. They also offer services: anything they can do with their wilderness survival skills, from hunting down a rabid dog to butchering and dressing a raccoon that some addict caught (in exchange for a portion of the meat). The Keepers have been known to take and hide fugitives, but the price tag is usually very high and the Keepers will not hide someone from an enemy they do not think they can defeat (e.g. the Drug Lords). They also do some begging and canning, hoping a little change to buy things they can't buy, trade for or find in the trash (such as alcohol or hygiene products).

Keepers typically spend their evenings sitting around communal fires in clearings deep in the park. They sit around, tell stories and jokes, have discussions and debates, and work on various crafts: clothing, traps, weapons, tools, etc. Many Keepers have hunting dogs and these dogs are cared for and trained in the evenings. At night they sleep in groups of three to five in small homemade shelters. The shelter is usually just a large lean-to, with plenty of room for several people to sleep in but not enough space to stand up. In the winter, when the weather is poor and the Keepers anticipate spending more time in-doors, larger "hut" like dwellings are constructed.

Social Structure- The basic unit of the Keepers is a household: a single adult, couple or parents and children who sleep in the same shelter. A family is responsible for taking care of its own needs. Several families (usually about 50 people in total) will share a clearing, but have no special duties to each other (beyond being cordial neighbors).

Most major decisions among the Keepers are made by group consensus of the elders of the community. Keepers generally get along and cooperate well together. Most disputes are solved with the help of elders. Only a few times has anyone been accused of breaking some law. The Keeper's laws were put together when the Keepers were first formed. A Judge decides when someone has broken a law and what the punishment should be. The judge is chosen by the elders, holds the position for life, and is expected to be fair and impartial.

Keeper laws are simple, and worded differently depending on who is repeating them. The general message is always the same: every person living in the park must not harm the ecosystem of the park, must not harm park residents, must cooperate with group projects (anything that can not be done alone, like building a shelter or a group hunt) and must fight against enemies of the Keepers (insomuch as they are physically able). The only rule that applies to outsiders is that non-Keepers can not enter the park without permission of the Keeper elders.

When Keepers are judged to have broken these rules, the Judge's most common punishments are: taking away personal property from the perpetrator and giving it to the injured party, shunning the perpetrator for short periods, banishing the perpetrator for short periods or (in the most severe cases) permanent banishment. When outsiders are caught in the Hole, the punishment depends on what the judge thinks the trespasser's motivation is: some are simply escorted out of the hole, some are robbed and beaten then escorted out of the hole, a few are killed and fed to hunting dogs.

Advancement- People gain respect within the Keepers by being good at the skills that Keepers alive: hunting, wildcrafting, crafts, trading. The surest way to gain respect and power is to become old, as elders are the acknowledged advisors and leaders of the Keepers.

Population- There are about 500 Keepers living in the Hole.

External Relations- The Keepers are fiercely protective of their turf. They equate their livelihood with their ability to control what goes on in their turf, and thus any invasion is taken as a physical assault. Unfortunately, the city population has many motivations to enter the hole: it is tempting as a shortcut, a place to hide, a place to meet privately, a place to stash stolen goods, and a place to see and experience a true wilderness (something few city residents have seen outside of VR).

Boarders and Runners: The Boarders often think of the hole as a good place to do some "off-roading" and Keepers like to give them a good beating whenever they catch them. Runners are tempted to enter the park in their endless quest for shortcuts, and they are given a little more leniency when caught (because they are fellow street people just trying to make a living).

Neos and Hunters: Neos enter the hole, mostly for religious or spiritual purposes. Neos new in the city don't know that anyone owns the hole, but when it is explained to them they are usually polite and ask permission, are willing to pay, and are respectful enough of the environment that Keepers let them in. Hunters are another

common intruder, coming in to the hole to hunt humans or animals they have released there. Keepers would beat or kill Hunters if they could, but are usually forced to retreat in the face of the Hunters' superior firepower.

Military Style- Any time the Keepers are engaged in a conflict, they do whatever they can to get the enemy to come in to the hole after them. This works well because the Keepers are rarely the aggressors (when they are, they usually try to hunt down and assassinate the enemy instead of confronting them). When an individual does something against the Keepers, if that individual can make it out of the hole alive, he or she will probably get away with whatever the perpetrator did.

Inside the hole, the Keepers use their best hunting skills to their advantage. They hide in blinds, picking off enemies with arrows and spears. They get an enemy to chase them and then lead that enemy right in to a trap. Or, they simply wait for an enemy to get tired of trudging through thick underbrush looking for someone to fight, then they attack in a massive ambush.

Typical Weapon- Home-made bows and arrows are a common weapons, but in close quarters combat they are discarded and replaced with short spears and large knives.

Turf- The Hole (a.k.a. central park), a rectangle of untamed parkland (with the occasional ruin) sitting in the center of the island, bounded on the North by 110th Street, on the South by 59th Street, on the West by Central Park West (a.k.a. 8th Avenue) and on the East by 5th Avenue. The entire park is surrounded by a barbed wire fence with many faded "caution" and "condemned area" signs. The whole of the hole is under the control of the Keepers and they do whatever they can to keep strangers out: They patch up the fence surrounding the

hole to leave only a few entrances and exits, they put traps throughout the hole (that serve a dual purpose of catching food and dissuading intruders) and they keep an eye on the area from tree-top blinds. For more on the park, see p.194.

Distinguishing Features- Keepers dress much like other Street People, wearing a variety of old stained and dirty clothing scavenged from the trash. The Keepers modify their clothing by adding skins, furs and cloths and cords made from plant fibers. They also wear trophies of successful hunts as jewelry: bits of bone, teeth, claws, scales, etc.

Symbols- A squiggle approximating the shape of the city and a large rectangle in the center is a common symbol of both the Hole and the Keepers.



Monis Ef (Keeper Judge)

Attributes- AGY 8, AWR 15, CHM 3, END 3, INL 17, SPD 6, STH 5, WIL 14, BLD 2, BDY 4, INCY 1.

Appearance- Monis Ef is middle aged, part Middle Eastern and part East Indian in ethnicity. He has a shaved head, many black Maori-style tattoos. He always wears an olive military-surplus coat. He has tinted glasses with thick frames.

Social Status- Monis is the judge of the Keepers, and he will keep this position until he is dead or senile. Any time an outsider is caught in the hole or a Keeper is accused of a crime, Monis decides what punishment (if any) will be met out. He has never executed a Keeper, though he could if he wanted. Monis is exempt from the duty to participate in group projects and other Keepers anonymously leave him food and gifts to help support him. Monis is required to stay completely impartial, and this requires that he form few emotional ties with anyone in the community.

History- During the early days of the Keepers, Monis came to the park as a young homeless wanderer. He learned the ways of the park and married a young woman living in the park. Together they had two children. About five years ago, his wife and children died during a plague outbreak. Extremely depressed, he moved his shelter away from the rest of the Keepers and barely hunted enough to survive. The other Keepers allowed him to slack off on his duties, although they could have accused him of a crime if they had wanted. When the original judge died of cirrhosis of the liver (after many decades of alcohol abuse) Monis was asked to become the new judge. Monis wanted a way to help the community without having to spend too much time around them, so he agreed.

Personality- Monis spent much of his life a wandering loner, preferring books and ideas to people. His wife and children made him more sociable, but when they died he became more of a loner than he had ever been. He has suffered from bouts of depression throughout his life, but now he feels there is no reason for him to come out of his depression. He spends most of each day lying in a hammock near his property, drifting in and out of half-sleep, reading paperback books others have brought him, and watching the forest. It is only rarely that Monis is called upon to act as a judge, but when called he takes his job very seriously and he believes he does it well. Monis is cynical, believing that most people act out of bad motives, though he does like to give people the benefit of the doubt the first time they are brought to him. His punishments are not cruel - they are utilitarian, calculated to do whatever is necessary, but no more, to prevent the crime in the future. Emotional appeals do not sway Monis, instead they disgust him and piss him off. He is soft spoken but not afraid to let people know his displeasure if he feels they are interfering with his ability to do his job. Monis does not like to display emotions, much less talk about them, and he has never discussed with anyone his feelings about the death of his wife and children.

Motivations- Monis feels he has an important part of ensuring the survival of the Keeper community. He believes that without an impartial judge, the Keepers would factionalize and the community would break up. He doesn't think anyone else in the community has the capacity for impartiality that he does. He always makes rulings to protect the community, not out a desire for fairness or vengeance.

Methods- Monis had little persuasive power, but when a person is brought before him accused of a crime, Monis' ruling is final. When Monis is judging, he hears testimony from anyone who wishes to give it, allows time for witnesses to be sought and evidence gathered. If an accused can not be found, he is not afraid to rule in his or her absence. He is usually ready to give a ruling as soon as the testimony ends.

Special Skills- Monis likes to read, and since his selection is limited he reads whatever he can get. He thus knows a lot of trivia about different subjects.

Slang

Hole: n., Central Park.

Judge: n., a Keeper with the job of judging any crime committed by a Keeper.

Skills

Free Skills: Tracking (1), Wilderness Survival (2).

Skill Costs: ATH 5, BIO 9, CMBT 6, CRTV 6, INFO 12, MIL 9, PSY:M 18, PSY:S 18, TECH 12, THIE 6, SOC 9, STRT 4.

Income- \$150 +\$7/wk.

Special Equipment- Since there are many animal breeders and trainers among the Keepers, the PC can get trained animals at 50% off.

Suggested Skills- Animal Training, Archery, Blacksmithing, Climbing, Herbal Medicine, Prowling, Running, Swimming, Tracking, Trading, Weapon Making.

Suggested Equipment- Bow: Archery, Cloak, Fingerless Gloves, Knife: Kitchen

Suggested Reading- City Geography: The Hole, Environment & Ecology.

Water Rats

In Brief- Scavengers and thieves who use water tunnels for quick escapes and live without fear of retribution in fortresses in the sunken city. did was dive in to the sunken city, pull up scrap metal and sell it to recyclers.

Favorable Stereotypes- Lucky, charming, daring, attractive, athletic, proud but humble.

Unfavorable Stereotypes- Immature, irresponsible, thoughtless, arrogant kleptomaniacs.

Other Names- Timms, Sewer Surfers.

Origin- The five Timm siblings grew up on the streets. Their parents, who were unborn alcoholics, let them wander around the city unattended. Led by the oldest brother, Matt Timm, they did a lot of dangerous things including swimming in the dangerous waters of the "sunken city" (those parts of the city that had been partially submerged by rising ocean levels). When Matt was thirteen, the Timms' parent's died and they were solely responsible for their own survival. One thing they

As they continued to make a living this way (as well as canning, panhandling, trading, shoplifting and other normal street people activities) they became stronger swimmers and discovered methods to explore more of the sunken city. They created makeshift diving bells and strung rope between submerged buildings (hidden underwater so that nobody else could use them). Looking for more salvage opportunities, they broke in to storm drains to pull trash out of the catch basins. They heard that a group of dead, isolationist homeless people lived in the sewers, but the Timms had always been known for their luck and bravery. Eventually, the Timms did run in to the Moles but they found that if they turned and walked away as soon as they saw a Mole, there wouldn't be any trouble. The Timms were the first (and are currently the only) group to form an agreement, spoken or unspoken, with the Moles.

As they became more successful, the Timm family grew. The siblings became old enough to have boyfriends and girlfriends and these eventually became husbands and wives who brought in their own extended street families. The family grew exponentially and the Timms were happy to teach their new family members to dive and navigate in the sunken city. The Timms made their own boats to take elder family members around. Soon they discovered that travel to the half-submerged buildings of the sunken city was so easy that they took up permanent residence in them. Since the Timms were the only ones who knew how to get to these buildings, they had found a space that was exclusively theirs. The Timms slept more safely than anyone else in the city.

The young Timm children (and the other children that had joined the family) were encouraged to play in the water as much as they wanted. These children found themselves crawling up in to the water tunnels that terminated in the sunken city. Since most of the tunnels under the city are below the groundwater level, massive amounts of groundwater have to be pumped out of the island each day to keep the tunnels from becoming infiltrated. The tunnels that carry this water out to the water are constantly flowing, though usually not very full (except when it rains). The young Timms found that they could wade up the tunnel (against the current) then get on makeshift surfboards and surf their way out to the sunken city. Eventually the elder Timms figured out that this would be a great way to escape from enemies. The Timms scouted out and broke the locks off of entrances to these tunnels throughout the city. They found that nobody was willing to chase them in to the tunnels.

Like most street people, Timms did a little bit of shoplifting and other petty theft to get by. Now that they had an easy way to escape from pursuers, they became much more bold in their thievery. Recyclable scrap was becoming harder and harder to find and the Timms were happy to focus more of their time on theft. Groups of Timms would walk in to stores, grab whatever they could, and run out, not caring if a security guard pursued them.

Very few people had ever heard of the Timms while they were salvaging and selling scrap from the sunken city. When they started shifting towards bold theft as a means of income, people started hearing about the Timms. The Timms were a constant pain for well Freelancers working as security guards, who started calling the Timms "Water Rats" as an epithet. The Timms heard about this and, delighted that they had received notoriety, started calling themselves Water Rats with pride. As the Water Rats became more bold they started stealing from anyone who had something worth stealing, including a few gang members. The Water Rats had to fight against a few angry gang members and proved that they could hold their own even against a city gang.

Timeline

2052- Matt Timm born.
2058- Timm parents die.
2062- Youngest Timm born.
2067- Timms dive in to sunken city for scrap.
2071- 1st Timm children born.
2074- Moles "discovered" by city population.
2075- Timms first encounter Moles.
2078- Timm children invent sewer surfing.
2079- Timm parents adopt sewer surfing as a way to escape from enemies.

Becoming- Toddlers are dragged in to the water by their elder siblings. They learn to swim before they can even walk well. Play is also work (as it is for most street children): as soon as they learn to dive, they are encouraged to find anything on the bottom that can be used or traded. The salvageables that Water Rat children being up are usually worth only a few bucks a week, but it gives the young Water Rats a sense of contributing to the family. Older Water Rats will sometimes throw spare change in to the water and let kids keep whatever they can grab. Adolescents move on to more dangerous games, such as exploring the flooded basements of old buildings, underwater wrestling, and surfing the flow of water out of storm drains on homemade rafts.

At level one, adventure one, the PC is around sixteen years old and is generally thought of as an adult and is expected to pull his or her own weight within the family. The years of play will have given the PC almost every skill necessary to make a living as a Water Rat. At this age, the PC is also expected to help defend the Water Rats in times of war.

Lifestyle- All around the city are the dangerous waters of the "sunken city". The current between half submerged buildings is swift and dangerous, and even powerful speedboats have trouble making it through. This was one of the reasons Jeffrey Hernandez chose Manhattan as his base of operations during the Freedom Wars: an amphibious assault would be problematic at best. The Water Rats are the only people in the city able to navigate the submerged ruins of the city safely. Their primary tool is a maze of hidden ropes under the water. These lines let them navigate the sunken city without being carried off by the swift currents.

The younger Water Rats spend much of their day exploring the hundreds of half-submerged buildings of the sunken city looking for anything that can be salvaged or reused. Besides finding profit, they enjoy the thrill and challenge of exploring. The most accomplished swimmer dive in to dark, flooded basements. They use flashlights wrapped in plastic bags. Rope is a precious commodity to the Water Rats an any they find they keep for themselves. The strongest swimmers among the Water Rats carry rope between buildings, creating lines that less-accomplished swimmers can use to get from building to building.

Water Rats have build a number of small boats, which are typically used for ferrying elders (who can not swim as well) back and forth from the sunken city to the city. When the weather is very cold, even the strong swimmers travel by boat. Water Rats like to move back and forth between the city and the streets in the early hours of the morning, when there are fewer people who might be watching. The Water Rats worry that if someone was to watch them, they could find the hidden lines and make their way to the partially submerged buildings that the Water Rats live in.

Water Rats spend a lot of time in the city visiting recycling centers, black market traders and anyone else who they think will buy the stuff they have salvaged from the sunken city.

Every few weeks, when the weather isn't too cold, the Water Rats will plan a "rampage." They scout out an entrance to the groundwater outflow tunnels. Then they infiltrate neighborhood stores. At a precise moment (usually the chiming of a church's bells) they grab whatever they can (including people's wallets and purses) and race to the sewers. As they run, they dump the goods in to bags made of mesh or old nets, which they strap to their backs. Security guards often try to chase them, but the Water Rats are only a few blocks from the tunnel entrance and once they jump in they are safe.

Social Structure- The Timms are a small, tightly knit group who depend on each other for their survival. There is only one family name: Timm. People are either born with it or take on the name when they marry in to the group. Matt Timm is the undisputed leader of the Timms, and leads by virtue of the respect everyone in the family has for him.

Elders are respected, but do not lead the family (as they do in most other street people families). One reason is that the Water Rats are a very new family, and the elders who came in to the family (often because a child or grandchild married a Water Rat) were too old to learn the skills of the Water Rats. They don't know how to dive or sewer surf and so the most useful thing they can do for the family is stay at home in the partially-submerged buildings and keep the homes running smoothly.

Advancement- Unlike most street families (which reward age and wisdom) the Water Rats reward youth, vigor and daring. Acts of bravery that benefit the Water Rats will cause a PC to be liked and respected by other Water Rats, including Matt Timm. The only way to gain a lot of influence in the Water Rats is to become a friend of Matt Timm's.

Population- There are about 300 Water Rats living in the city. 5 are the original Timm siblings, 10 are the children of those siblings and the rest are people who married in to the Water Rats and their extended families.

External Relations- Most wells and Indies see the Water Rats as nothing more than thieves who might grab something they own and run off. Most gang members in the city have to live with the consequences of their members' actions and it makes them slightly annoyed that the Water Rats can do whatever they want and then run off to the safety of their sunken city fortresses. The Water Rats also have a propensity to trespass on the turf of other gangs and are most likely to get in to trouble with gangs who don't like people violating their turf (specifically the Night Shift, the Keepers, the Purists, the Risen, the Roofers and the Skin Borgs).

Freelancers: For Freelancers working as security guards, the Water Rats are a big embarrassment. Only a small percentage of goods shoplifted in the city are taken by Water Rats, but when the Water Rats steal everyone sees it and the security guards usually get in trouble with their bosses for letting the thieves get away.

Moles: The Water Rats are the only group to have any kind of relationship with the moles. This is an unspoken pact to leave each other alone. When Water Rats see Moles they simply turn and walk the other way. The Water Rats haven't run in to any of the deadly traps the Moles are known for, probably because any traps set in the storm drains would quickly be washed away. Some people are so enamored with the idea of the Moles as psychotic, inbred, xenophobic killers that they refuse to believe that something as simple as live-and-let-live could be the explanation for the Water Rat's ability to move through the storm drains without being attacked by Moles. Many people accuse the Water Rats, and Matt Timm in particular, of having various nefarious deals going with the Moles.

Military Style- The Water Rats are a small, inexperienced and poorly equipped military force, and they know it. They avoid traditional warfare whenever possible, since they know they would be devastated. Their approach is to harass and annoy the enemy for years. They pop out of tunnels in enemy territory, race through doing as much

Matt Timm

(Eldest Timm Sibling and Leader of the Water Rats)

Level 8 Water Rat

Attributes- AGY 16, AWR 9, CHM 14, END 18, INL 14, SPD 16, STH 17, WIL 12, BLD 6, BDY 4, INCY 4.

Appearance- Caucasian and African features, tall with broad shoulders, muscular, clean shaven with shaved head, broad mouth and attractively round head with a little bit of baby fat. Many people find Matt very physically attractive. When not wearing his homemade black wetsuit, Matt wears cotton shorts and holey t-shirts.

Social Status- Matt is the eldest of the Timm siblings and the acknowledged leader of the Water Rats. He, more than anyone, is responsible for the creation of the Water Rats and he is respected for his intelligence and leadership skills, even by elders who have been brought in to the family. Matt is the only one of the Timm siblings who has never married and had kids, though he is a loving uncle to his many nieces and nephews.

History- When Matt's parents committed suicide, Matt was forced to take over the care of his younger brothers and sisters. So that his siblings wouldn't lose hope, Matt adopted an optimistic demeanor, full of dry humor and false bravado. Eventually this "act" became his real outlook on the universe. He fearlessly led his brothers and sisters in to dangerous parts of the city: the sunken city, the storm drains. It was a surprise to him when the Timms became a successful street family.

Personality- Matt is jovial, friendly, never lets him self get stressed out or anxious about anything that happens. He will joke about anything, including subjects like torture, war, disease, insanity, etc. Matt believes in "Timm luck" and encourages others to believe in it. Matt enjoys music and plays almost every night with family members. When Matt needs to think he pounds out long, fast paced, deafening solos on his homemade drum set.

Methods- Matt personally leads almost every major attack, theft run, and dive project. Matt is the strongest swimmer in the family had he has strung a majority of the Rats' ropes and cables. Matt will never veto or criticize a plan because it is too dangerous. Instead of issuing "orders," he tries to get other Water Rats excited about a plan or project, hyping how great the project will be. When he has to negotiate with non-Water Rats, he tries to use similar persuasive tactics on them. Matt is vengeful but not bloodthirsty: he loves to humiliate an enemy, but not to kill them.

Motivations- Matt is motivated by two drives: a desire to protect and provide for his family, and a desire to do fun and interesting things.

Special Skills- Hold Breath (4), Swimming (6), Tunnel Surfing (3), Water Combat (3), Wrestling (3).

Typical Attack- Timm tries not to get in to a fight without a body of water nearby he can drag his opponent in to. Typically he will try to tackle an enemy (to push them in to the water) at SPD (16) + STH (17) + 12 (skill) 1d20 vs. 25 (or 20 + 1d20 vs. 0). Once in the water he tries to get the person in a wrestling hold where he can keep them immobile underwater until they go unconscious. The Grab: Wrestling is at STH (17) + INL (14) + 12 (skill) + 1d20 vs. 30 (or 12 + 1d20 vs. 0). Since Timm has the Water Combat skill he does not suffer the -8 penalty to actions and reactions from being underwater.

damage and stealing as much property as they can, then they disappear in to the tunnels again. They sometimes hurl chunks of concrete at enemies as they run past, but this is the limit of their offensive strike capabilities. The Water Rats try to embarrass enemies in to submission rather than fight with them.

The Water Rats know that once they get to the tunnels they are safe. Anyone who dares follow the Water Rats in to their tunnels will probably be smashed in to the walls of the tunnels. If they make it to an exit, they will have to fight Water Rats underwater. Water Rats are deadly fighters when in the water, since most have been wrestling underwater since they are children. An assault on the Water Rats' homes would be even more dangerous: nobody knows exactly what buildings they live in or how to get to those buildings without being smashed against the sides of partially-submerged buildings.

Gangs know little about the sewer systems and they rarely know which of the thousands of manhole covers around the city lead to the tunnels the Water Rats. If any gang was to figure it out they would have a powerful weapon against the Water Rats: they could block their access to the tunnels and trap them on the streets. Fortunately, the Water Rats have not yet pissed off anyone enough to prompt such measures.

Typical Weapon- Almost all Water Rats carry knives on them. They also like to pick up whatever is at hand and throw it at an enemy as they race away.

Turf- The Water Rats consider their turf to be strips of half-submerged city streets that surround the island, known in city slang as "the sunken city." At any given point on the coast there might be no sunken city at all, there might be a few buildings deteriorating as a few feet of water lap at their foundations, or there might be whole city blocks under five to ten feet of water. There are about a thousand buildings partially submerged by water and the Water Rats have gone in to most of them looking for salvageables at some point. The Water Rats make the majority of their homes on the broad swaths of sunken city submerged by the East River near midtown and downtown.

When they come out of the water and on to the city streets, most Water Rats like to stop by at the Painted Rock, a small dive bar directly to the North of Mem Junkie turf at 30th St. and Park Ave. This small, dimly lit bar has an interior decorated with pieces of old ships (given to the owner by Water Rats). The bartenders give cheap drinks to Water Rats.

The Water Rats have secret lines tied underwater that let them navigate through the sunken city safely. These lines are very important to the Water Rats and so is keeping them secret. To outside observers, most Water Rats can be seen crawling in to windows in to abandoned buildings at the foot of the sunken city, and then the Water Rats are gone.

The Water Rats also consider Roosevelt Island a part of their turf. Roosevelt Island was a small sliver of land in the East River. The entire island is now submerged in the East River, although most of the large apartment buildings survive. Since it is harder to travel to than the sunken city, the Water Rats have not explored the majority of this part of their turf yet. They have plans to go here should their current dwellings ever be invaded.

Distinguishing Features- Water Rats have the physique of swimmers. Their hair is short or shaved and they seldom wear facial hair or makeup. They often wear homemade wet suits, stitched together out of materials and fitted exactly to them. The often wear mesh backpacks containing plastic garbage bags protecting whatever they need to keep dry. Those with Timm blood have, among other things, Caucasian and African American features, a strong brow and jaw-line, broad shoulders and attractively shaped heads.

Symbols- The color blue, water drops and cartoonish rats.

Slang

Shakeys: n., the Painted Rock Bar (called this because Water Rats are often shaking with cold when they enter).

Tunnel Surfing: n., swimming or rafting through the groundwater outflow tunnels.

Skills

Free Skills: Swimming (3), Hold Breath (2).

Skill Costs: ATH 5, BIO 9, CMBT 6, CRTV 6, INFO 10, MIL 9, PSY:M 18, PSY:S 18, TECH 10, THIE 4, SOC 8, STRT 5.

Special Skills: The special skill Tunnel Surfing costs only 7 skill points per level.

Tunnel Surfing- Uses END. This skill allows Water Rats to navigate through the groundwater outflow tunnels without getting smashed to death against tunnel walls. Water Rats with this skill have learned every tunnel entrance, every fork and turn and can tell where they are in the tunnel system even in complete darkness. Strong swimming or paddling and kicking off of walls is needed to avoid being smashed. Tunnel surfing is easier when the Water Rat has some sort of raft or surfboard, harder if they are just swimming. When there are heavy rains the tunnels become flooded and tunnel surfing becomes significantly harder.

Easy (10): Surf on a raft on a rain-less day.

Moderate (20): Swim on a rain-less day.

Hard (30): Swim on a rainy day.

Legendary (40): Swim on a rainy day while carrying another person.

Income- \$200 +\$13/wk.

Special Equipment- Free Mesh Backpack (a small backpack pieced together from piece of old net). The PC can buy a homemade wetsuit, made from scrounged materials and fitted to the PCs body by family elders, for \$25. The suit has a +7 heat factor and has AR 6 PR ½ bladed 2 skidding.

Special Bonus Characteristics

Hot Body: (Mandatory Advantage) Over the years, the PC's body had adapted to surviving swims in ice cold temperatures. The PC's metabolism increases when it gets cold, especially if aided by a nice hot irish coffee at Shakeys. The PC gets +6 to save vs. hypothermia.

Suggested Skills- Hold Breath, Music, Pocket Picking, Water Combat.

Suggested Equipment- Crowbar, Dagger, Diving Bell, Dock Rope, Homemade Wetsuit (see above), Flare: Underwater, Flashlight: Small.

Suggested Reading- Sunken City, Underground, Weather.

NON-FAMILY STREET PEOPLE

Favorable Stereotypes- Intensely motivated, skilled, observant, brave, very hard-working.

Unfavorable Stereotypes- Dirty, crazy, diseased, untrustworthy, desperate liars and thieves with no control over their lives.

Being a street person without a large family to turn to for protection is dangerous and hard. Nobody chooses to end up in this position (although some people are partially at fault for their current lives). Most people in this position desperately want to do something else with their lives. Those who were born with birth certificates usually just want to get on welfare and get off the streets. Those who weren't born with birth certificates usually would like to join one of the large street families. Non-Family Street People are usually the most ambitious of any people in the city because they know that things can't get much worse. Living on the streets is very hard, though, and when street people lose hope the results are terrible. Most Non-Family Street People are bitter about their place in society. They believe that society kicked them while they were down and is making it difficult for them to improve their lives.

Non-Family Street People are the most victimized people in the city. They are victims of robberies, hate crimes, sex crimes and attacks by pusher gangs. Young people have been known to go pour flammable liquids on homeless people and set them on fire. Street people are not victimized because they are hated more than the rest of the street population, or because they are not as tough and wary. They are victimized because people know that street people have no gangs, no families, no political interest groups, no corrupt politicians looking for reelection that care what happens to them. Occasionally a victimized street person will have powerful friends and family that will come after a victimizer. In the majority of times this is sadly not the case.

Most Non-Family Street People are damaged in some way. The bright, charming, emotionally balanced people rarely end up on the streets by themselves. Even when

they do, life on the streets is so hard that it often makes people bitter and mean, makes them turn to drugs or even drives them crazy.

Non-Family Street People are ingenious in the ways they find to make money. Every scam to cheat someone out of money, every piece of trash that can be salvaged or reused, every line that someone could say while begging for change, every thing someone can do with their bodies to make money, there is a street person who has done it.

Homeless Housing

The sleeping arrangements for street people vary greatly. Some street people live in running or non-running cars or in recreational vehicles parked in the city. Car campers are usually people who work or get a check from the government but still cannot afford an apartment. Most street people are squatters, taking over one of the city's many abandoned buildings and making it fit for living in. Some abandoned buildings are barely modified; they have no electricity, no running water, no heating or air conditioning, no good locks on the doors. These abandoned buildings are no more than holes to hide in when their resident's sleep: the street people often sleep in closets, in heating ducts and under floorboards so that they will be safe from anyone who wanders in. These buildings often become choked with refuse and the people sleeping in them move on to another building. Other abandoned buildings have been heavily remodeled by their squatters, especially when powerful street families have taken them over. These buildings can have secure locks (or better, round the clock guards), stolen electricity and hot and cold running water. The houses that some street families have taken over are so nice that some Wells and Indies envy them. Other street people have been known to create their own shelters out of cardboard and scrap wood.

The homes of street people are not easy to find, and this is done on purpose. An alley that appears to be completely filled with trash may contain a secret home. Some homes are large, others are barely big enough for one person to crawl in, wrap up in a blanket, and sleep. No matter how small the home, and no matter how badly off the owner's current situation is, almost every home is decorated and outfitted with a hundred personalizations, no matter how small. Houses often have ingenious construction, amenities and security features.

The worst off street people are those who do not have any kind of sleeping arrangement staked out. When they are lucky they can sleep in one of the city's few shelters (those who bother to show up at a shelter have about a 1 in 10 chance of getting a bed), or in some other street person's home. Otherwise they must try to find some warm place, with no safety and no privacy, to try to sleep through the night. Sleeping out in the open is always dangerous. Though learning to sleep lightly helps, it never completely illuminates the danger. Some homeless people, usually those who are on drugs or are psychotic, can not even find a warm vent to sleep on. For those street people, the random fluctuations of the weather is the factor that decides if they live through the night.

Home Thieves

Most homeless people, especially older people who know the city's ins and outs, are quite adept and finding good shelter. They can find places that are warm in the winter or cool in the summer, comfortable, well hidden, dry, easy to defend, etc. Some street people, however, take over other people's shelters. These are usually younger, stronger people, often drug addicts or mentally ill, who find an older street person with a nice dwelling, and forcibly move in. If the home's finder stays, he or she will be reduced to the position of a housekeeper. Most leave, preferring to find another shelter than fight to their old one. Unfortunately, the home thieves seldom take good care of their homes and when the homes are choked with waste and infested with rats and insects from improperly stored food, the home thieves leave to prey on more responsible street people again.

Street People Alignment

Common folk-wisdom among Street People is that people fall in to one of two categories:

-The "what goes around comes around" people. These people offer help and kindness and help to each other (when they can) and they believe they will at some point receive help and kindness back. They also avoid ripping off or giving shit to other street people because they believe that this will eventually come back to them as well. "What goes around comes around" people attribute the mechanism of repayment to various sources. Some believe god will make sure people are repaid for their deeds. Other believe in an invisible, impersonal principle at work in the universe that enforces karma. Other simply believe that enough people are like them that it is inevitable that their charity will someday be repaid.

-The "take what you can get" people. These people either don't believe that what goes around comes around, or they do believe it and are too desperate to care. They ask for help, favors and even loans which they will never return, and they take advantage of other street people. The "take what you can get" people try to associate with "what goes around comes around" people as much as they can, but they often are ostracized after constantly taking and never giving and are forced to hang around with other "take-what-you-can-get" people.

Getting On Your Feet

Rising in social class from street person to well is commonly called "getting on your feet." Getting on your feet is easier for some and harder for others. For members of Street People Families it is very hard: most are unborn, without birth certificates and no way to prove who they are. Some members of Street People families have birth certificates, others are able to get hacked access to a birth certificate. Even those who do, and who manage to get on welfare (see Getting on Welfare, p.15) often continue to live the lifestyle of their families. It often comes down to a simple choice: do they abandon the group that raised them and live the marginally more comfortable life of a well, or do they give over their welfare checks to their family elders, who will do a tremendous amount of good with it. Most people choose the latter, those who choose the former are rarely talked about among the families.



In Brief- Live on the street, everything in their lives centers around feeding their drug habits.

Favorable Stereotypes- Cunning, tough, wary and street-smart despite their sad disability.

Unfavorable Stereotypes- Diseased, desperate, unwise, weak-willed, remorseless, cowardly, mentally ill, unprincipled, willing to betray anyone.

Other Names- Junkies, Dopers, Users, Druggies.

Origin- Drugs are a technology and this technology has seen several major increases over the years. With every technological leap, more people become addicted to drugs and more people are so addicted that they end up on the streets. When Arab alchemists distilled alcohol, when tobacco companies found that adding ammonia to tobacco would cause more nicotine to enter the bloodstream, when Bayer labs found that two morphine molecules could be bound together to create a heroin molecule, when drug dealers discovered that cocaine and baking soda could be used to create crack, the number and plights of addicts have increased.

For many years, alcohol was the king drug of the US. In Seattle, Skid Row was a street where lumberjacks would slide felled trees downhill, and as this neighborhood deteriorated it became the home to many down-and-out alcoholics. The Bowery in New York, once a quite nice neighborhood, became one of the poorest parts of New York. Cheap lodging houses meant that alcoholics could spend less money on rent and more money on booze. The Bowery quickly developed in to one of the country's most famous skid row neighborhoods.

For street gangs illegal drugs have always meant quick and easy money. During prohibition, the mafia turned in to a nationwide organization by distributing and selling

Warning: Not all character classes are equal. Most character classes have advantages and disadvantages that balance out to make them approximately as powerful as each other, but this character class is inherently unbalanced and will not be as powerful as starting characters from other classes.

alcohol. In the 80s the Crips and Bloods spread franchises nationwide by getting in on the ground floor of the booming crack market. In 2044 God Killer, a drug even more addictive than crack, was invented. Within a few years, cities all over the country were being terrorized by God Killer pushers. They were rich, armed to the teeth and completely fearless from using their own product.

During the Freedom Wars, Jeffrey Hernandez, a recovering addict, gained power over most of the US and many parts of the rest of the globe. Hernandez broke the back of international drug cartels and domestic pusher gangs with one single act: he legalized drugs. Addicts had to register as addicts, attend treatment programs, and they would be dispensed a free dose of their drug, whether it was opiates, alcohol, amphetamines or even God Killer. Nobody was willing to pay money for what they could get for free and pushers went broke. Drug related crimes and medical problems among addicts dropped dramatically. Despite being given free drugs, many addicts managed to get off drugs during the Freedom Wars. After the wars, ex-addicts reported that the treatment programs, the monitored doses, and the reduction of stress and anxiety (since they no longer had to spend every hour of the day scrounging to make money for drugs) helped them quit using.

When the Freedom Army was destroyed, the old narcotics laws were immediately reinstated. Even while survivors of the New York bombings were in refugee camps, illegal drug sales started again. When the city was reopened for occupation, drug sales began again. The people who got in on the ground floor quickly became rich and powerful criminals, known as "drug lords" who controlled the movement of all drugs in to the city. The drug lords sold drugs to street gangs. The street gangs grew rapidly, becoming huge and powerful organizations. They sold mostly God Killer to poor and homeless people. The street gangs made millions for the drug lords. The street gangs

fought for turf, and they used the money they made to buy expensive weapons. While the street gangs sold the most drugs, there were a variety of other dealers: users who occasionally bought in bulk and sold to fellow users, homeless people who hung out on major avenues selling low-quality marijuana to tourists, black market traders who sold stolen pharmaceuticals, lone dealers who carried pagers and developed a loyal clientele by selling quality drugs.

Then, in 2075, the city drug scene changed forever and this variety disappeared. The city's biggest Drug Lords got together, killed all the others and took over every level of the drug trade. The Drug Lords formed their own organization to create, distribute and sell drugs. The Drug Lords were incredibly efficient and didn't waste time and money with infighting. The Drug Lords were the most powerful organization in the city. Soon after taking power, the Drug Lords introduced new and even more addictive drugs. Although more addictive, they were not as pleasant, and pushers had to go to extreme methods to get people hooked. Pushers started holding people down and forcefully injecting them with drugs until they were addicted. The number of addicts increased, and more and more people ended up on the streets. In the five years since the Drug Lords consolidated the number of addicts on the streets doubled.

Timeline

700- Alcohol distilled by Arab alchemists.
 1850s- Skid Road (later Skid Row) in Seattle.
 1853- Hypodermic needle invented.
 1855- Cocaine first extracted from coca leaves.
 1887- Amphetamines invented.
 1895- Heroin invented.
 1919- Methamphetamines invented.
 1920- Heroin illegal in the US.
 1925- Heroin black market in China Town.
 1970- Amphetamines illegal in the US.
 1985- Crack revolutionizes crime and addiction in NY.
 1988- Ecstasy illegal in US.
 2044- God Killer invented.
 2053- Freedom Army legalizes drugs for registered addicts.
 2055- Freedom Army rule in the city ends.
 2075- Drug Lords consolidate.
 2076- Chomper invented.
 2076- Maxin invented.
 2077- Mauler invented.
 2077- Trace invented.
 2078- Escape invented.
 2078- Slave invented.

Becoming- Addicts have many different stories. Some were once rich, some have always been poor, some have been on the road to being a homeless addict since they were kids, some people were hit out of the blue just recently.

The most common life story of an addict is something like this: *You were a poor kid and the other kids you hung out with drank or used drugs to pass the time. You started using and soon couldn't stop. You alienated friends and family and soon ended up on the streets. You were just learning to get by when some pusher gang grabbed you, held you down, and forced you to use one of their new drugs. The withdrawals from this drug were so bad that you would do anything to get more drugs.*

Some people become addicts and are able to "keep it together" for quite a while. They stay on welfare, they keep their apartments and they are able to keep up their drug habit. The defining characteristic of a true addict, however, is that if it comes to a choice between drugs and anything else, the addict will choose drugs. It always comes down to such a choice: pay the rent or buy drugs, have a phone interview with a welfare department social worker or get drunk and pass out. A lot of addicts choose drugs over their own health and what puts them on the street is medical problems. Most wells and Indies have a social "safety net" that keeps them from ending on the streets: family who will loan them money, friends who will give them a place to sleep for the night, etc. Addicts find themselves continually lying to, stealing from and betraying their friends and family and soon they find that the social safety net is gone.

At level one, adventure one, the PC has been an addict for quite a while, and has been on the streets for about six months.

Lifestyle- Getting money to get drugs takes up the majority of an addict's attention and time. Most addicts have no particular skills that they can reliably make money with. They "hustle," a term which, among addicts, means doing anything one can to make money. Hustling means panhandling, shoplifting, canning, salvaging and reselling things they found in the trash, selling sex, calling up relatives and old friends begging for money, and anything else that they think can make them a quick bit of change. The more desperate for drugs an addict is, the more degrading or dangerous things addicts will do. When they get really desperate, addicts will get together and decide to mug someone. They try to find a person who is alone in a secluded place (or lure someone in to such a place), then grab them, beat them senseless and take everything on them.

When addicts do get some money they go on drug runs to get drugs. Addicts are keenly aware of where they can get the best deal of drugs and will sometimes go halfway across town to get the best deal. Runs are also a dangerous and anxious time for addicts: when they have money or when they have drugs, they are a target for robberies by other addicts. Addicts buy their drugs from whoever is their preferred dealer (a pusher gang, a Good, a black market Trader, a liquor store). Once they have their drugs, they usually (but don't always) have enough willpower to get someplace safe to use the drugs. They know that if they start using in a public place they will wander around intoxicated and may even pass out, making them targets for all kinds of predators. So, when they can, they find some secret little place where they can use their drugs.

Addicts have a tendency to be very ritualistic about their drug use. They handle their drugs and kits with care and reverence. They do everything they can to make the moment when they first take in their drug as perfect as possible. Some addicts use drugs alone, but others like to be around other addicts who are also using. When addicts have enough to share, they usually do.

It is a constant struggle for addicts to ration drugs. They buy drugs that need to last them a certain period of time (a day, several days, a week). They swear they will only use a little bit at a time to stave off withdrawals. The problem is that once they start using drugs, they stop caring and all they want is more drugs. Most addicts fail and blow all their drugs all at once. Sometimes when addicts get

a lot of money they blow it all on drugs and go through a years worth of drugs in a few days. Some addicts manage to stay on public assistance, despite being homeless, and every month they get a huge check. The drugs won't let them spend their money wisely and they typically blow through the money on drugs and things like hotel rooms and prostitutes, and within a few weeks they are back on the streets checking payphones for spare change like the rest of the addicts.

When addicts are trying to get money for drugs, they sleep little and are on their feet a lot. By the time they get their drugs, they are often exhausted and weary. When they use drugs that are sedatives, or when they come down off of stimulant drugs, they crash and sleep for ten to twenty hours (depending on how long they've been up). They might wake up once or twice to go urinate or vomit, but most of the time they just enjoy being unconscious and not having withdrawal pains.

Taking care of other necessities of life comes last. When they are hungry, addicts usually go to soup kitchens, or search through dumpsters. They get clothing and hygiene products in the same way. Medical problems are usually ignored until they become emergencies, at which point the Addict is taken by friends or Volunteers to the emergency room.

Social Structure- Friendships rarely last long among addicts. Most start strong but end badly after one of the friends betrays the other in some moment of desperation. Sexual relationships last longer because there is a stronger mutual need, and addict lovers are likely to stay together despite betrayals. Couples cling to each other tenaciously, depending on each other for the physical aspects of survival as well as psychological support. These relationships are rarely happy ones: paranoid mistrust, frequent arguments and physical abuse are common. Each partner is likely to try to exploit the other, and women in these relationships are often pressured in to prostitution to support both herself and her partner. What's worse, when either partner seems close to leaving the streets or successfully quitting drugs, the other partner is likely to deliberately sabotage this progress.

The more intensely addictive the drug, the less likely the addict is to have friendships with other addicts. Alcohol is one of the least addictive drugs abused on the streets, and winos are likely to form friendships and even small communities that may last for decades. Winos who camp together may watch out for each other and even join together to fight off threats. Slave addicts, perhaps the most desperate of all addicts, may form brief compacts for the purposes of robbing someone or defending a shelter, but they seldom ever trust each other.

Advancement- Advancement as an addict is nearly impossible. There are skills that can help one survive as an addict, but almost all are learned within the first few months on the street. Wise old addicts don't have it much better than any other addict. Most addicts go steadily downhill as their health, their self-esteem and their mental health get steadily worse. A very few addicts catch the eye of a pusher and become personal servants for the pushers, they get paid with drugs for their loyalty and labor, and these addicts are better off than other addicts. Some addicts get off the streets and in to housing, via a job (even pushing) or public assistance, while still using, but their being housed rarely lasts long.

The best way to advance as an addict is to stop using. If pushers figure out that an addict is trying to quit, they will try to stop the addict, and many pushers would rather see an addict die than quit. Other addicts may sell out an addict who is trying to quit, hoping to gain favor among the pushers. There are many people and agencies trying to help addicts get off of drugs, but too few to help every addict trying to quit. At any given time, about one tenth of the addicts (about 1,500 people) are seriously trying to quit, and only about 200 Volunteers involved in programs designed to help addicts and only about 750 Goods trying to get users on less harmful drugs. Most addicts are on their own when trying to quit. Many addicts don't even seek help, knowing that they are likely to betray and hurt anyone who tries to help them.

The ultimate problem of quitting an addiction is a very simple one: an addict can successfully resist the urge to use drugs a million times, but if they fail only once then all that work is for nothing. Addicts expend incredible amounts of willpower in trying to quit, but one moment of weakness can bring it all down. Most addicts have tried to quit, and most addicts have stories about the moment of stupidity, or pain, or anxiety that brought them down.

Population- There are 15,000 drug addicts and winos living on the streets (compared to 10,000 indies and 30,000 wells). There are about 5,000 winos, 2,000 opiate addicts, 1,500 amphetamine addicts, 3,000 god killer addicts, 1,000 chomper addicts, 500 maxin addicts, 2,500 maunder addicts, 500 trace addicts, 1,000 escape addicts and 3,000 slave addicts living out on the streets. The addict population is growing at a rate of 10 per day (15 new addicts show up on the streets while 5 addicts die or make it off the streets).

External Relations- Addicts are one of the most universally disliked groups in the city. "Scum", "insects" and "animals" are words commonly used to describe them. Many think of the addicts as not having any free will of their own, being chemically driven to do whatever depraved act they must in order to get drugs. Even those who claim to have compassion for addicts are careful not to turn their backs on them.

Pushers: Most addicts are dependent on members of pusher gangs to supply them with their drugs. They usually hate the pushers they have to deal with, and may be beaten, raped or ripped off by the pushers with little they can do as vengeance. The only power addicts have is to move to an area controlled by a different pusher gang and hope that the other pusher gang will be nicer.

Drug Lords: The Drug Lords often use the Addicts to their advantage. The Drug Lords may, for instance, have their pushers put out word to all the addicts that they are paying a handsome sum for some piece of information, or they may even put a price on someone's head. It rarely takes the Drug Lords more than a few thousand to have nearly 15,000 addicts (in addition to 5,000 employees of the Drug Lords and many others) looking for some person. Addicts, thus, often become the enemies of the enemies of the Drug Lords (especially Goods, Hungry and Night Shift).

Goods and Volunteers: Goods and Volunteers are the only groups in the city who make it a full time job to help addicts. Most times addicts are grateful and try to help and protect the Goods and Volunteers. Sometimes, however, the addicts do harm to Goods and Volunteers, either to rob them or because they are doing the bidding of the pusher gangs.

Hungry: Almost all Hungry were once addicts living on the streets. Many still have contacts among the addicts community and even those Hungry with no contacts are sympathetic of Addicts.

Night Shift: The Night Shift has a split personality when it comes to addicts. At times they see addicts as victims of an evil organized crime agency. At other times addicts are seen as the largest horde of dangerous criminal scum in the city. Typically the Night Shift forgives addicts the crime of buying, possessing and using drugs, but they will beat down any addict who victimizes anyone else (including fellow addicts).

Typical Weapon- Sharp rocks and pieces of wood.

Turf- Addicts can be found all over the city, though they are more likely to be found outside of gang territory (where pushers operate) and in the most run-down neighborhoods with the most abandoned buildings (where addicts like to sleep).

Distinguishing Features- Most addicts are malnourished, many are skinny, many have thinning hair and missing teeth. They have many scars from untreated infections, and may have amputations of extremities lost to frostbite. Some addicts have needle-tracts on arms, legs, neck, etc. The longer the person has been shooting up, the more tracts. Addict clothing is typically dirtier, smellier and less well fitting than the clothing of most homeless people. Addicts rarely pay any attention to personal grooming, and the men usually have beards and both men and women commonly have long, unkempt hair.

Symbols- Graffiti artists often use pills, needles or small pipes to symbolize addicts.

Slang- Addicts in the city have thousands of special terms they use amongst themselves, and these vary between users of different drugs and between small groups of addicts. Each addict has an average of five slang names for his or her drug of choice and is able to convey messages to their fellow addicts, such as "I am searching for drugs" or "I have drugs" or "I am under the influence of drugs" using slang that few that might overhear would ever understand. More general slang, known by addicts of multiple groups, is:

Backtrack: v., Pull blood in to a needle prior to injecting.

Bang: v., Inject.

Blades: v., Snorting drugs from the tip of a hot knife.

Bring Up: v., Make a vein ready for injection.

Bugged: adj., Having sores from infected injection sites.

Candy: n., Drugs.

Carpet Sniffing: n., The crawl characteristic of an addict coming down and searching for any crumbs of drugs that may have been spilled.

Charlying: v., Rubbing drugs in to small cuts made in the skin.

Chilling: v., Snorting alcohol.

Cutting: v., Adding non-drug substances to drugs to increase profits.

Full Timer: n., A person who lives on the streets, devoting all their attention to getting drugs.

Gank: v., To cheat or steal drugs from another addict.

Hot: adj., Poisoned.

Huffing: n., Using inhalant drugs (e.g. sniffing glue).

Hustling: v., Doing whatever one can think of to make money for drugs.

Kit: n., Set of equipment for using drugs (especially with a syringe).

Lit: adj., Intoxicated.

Mainlining: v., Injecting drugs in to a bloodstream.

Mission: n., A search for drugs or trip to get drugs.

Part Timer: n., A person who keeps up their normal means of income while being an addict.

Popping: v., Injecting drugs directly under the skin, where they create a small bubble and are quickly absorbed in to the bloodstream.

Pulling: v., Vomiting, esp. from drug use.

Score: v., Buy drugs.

Speedball: n., A stimulant and a depressant taken together.

Stash: n., Drug hoard, especially when hidden.

Worm: n., A person who sells fake drugs.

Skills

Free Skills: Drug Resistance (1), Street Drugs (1).

Skill Costs: ATH 7, BIO 10, CMBT 7, CRTV 9, INFO 13, MIL 11, PSY:M 20, PSY:S 20, TECH 14, THIE 4, SOC 12, STRT 5.

Special Skills: The skills Street Drugs, Needles and Drug Resistance costs only 5 skill points per level.

Income- \$50 +\$7/wk.

Special Equipment- PCs who need special equipment to use their drug of choice (e.g. needles, pipes, lighters, spoons, etc.) get one free drug kit.

Special Bonus Characteristics

PCs must have one of the following disadvantages. Each disadvantage is as per their description in the disadvantages section (see p.39) but only gives the number of Bonus Points listed below:

Addiction: Alcohol- Gives 0 BPs. See p.39.

Addiction: Amphetamines- Gives 3 BPs. See p.39.

Addiction: Chomper- Gives 7 BPs. See p. 39.

Addiction: Escape- Gives 0 BPs. See p. 40.

Addiction: God Killer- Gives 7 BPs. See p.40.

Addiction: Opiates- Gives 3 BPs. See p.40.

Addiction: Inhalants- Gives 2 BPs. See p.40.

Addiction: Mauler- Gives 10 BPs. See p.40.

Addiction: Maxin- Gives 0 BPs. See p.40.

Addiction: Multi-Drug- Gives 0 BPs. See p.41.

Addiction: Slave- Gives 10 BPs. See p.41.

Addiction: Trace- Gives 10 BPs. See p.41.

Group: (Optional Advantage) Costs 5 Bonus Points. The PC belongs to a small group of (4-6) addicts who are all addicted to the same drug. These addicts know each other, share living quarters and cooperate in schemes to make money. At their best (when they are not desperate for drugs) the group acts like a corner gang: the members protect each other and seek revenge for crimes committed against each other.

SRO: (Optional Advantage) Costs 10 Bonus Points (only 5 if the PC also has the Group advantage)- The PC (and possibly some fellow addicts) have it together enough, most weeks, to scrape together the rent for a tiny room in a Single Room Occupancy residential hotel. The room is just barely big enough for a single cot and a nightstand. The bathroom is outside of the room and is shared with the whole floor. There is no kitchen, although some residents hook up hotplates and a lucky few even

have old mini-refrigerators. Having a door that locks is a luxury many addicts only dream of and the PC is in a much better position if he or she ever tries to get back on his or her feet. If a week goes by and the PC can't scrape up enough money to give to the manager, the PC will lose the room and be out on the streets.

Long-Term Addict: (Optional Disadvantage)- Gives 7 Bonus Points. The PC has been using his or her drug of choice for quite a while and is suffering badly from the drug's side effects. Depending on the PC's drug of choice, the PC suffers from:

Drug	Using For	Side Effects
Alcohol	10 yrs.	Brain damage (-5 INL, -5 AWR, retrograde ad anterograde amnesia at 10 difficulty save), liver damage (-5 to save vs. drug/poison effects).
Amphetamines	4 yrs.	Malnutrition (-3 BLD, -3 BDY)
Chomper	2 yrs.	Lost hair and teeth (-15 to seduction rolls), Liver Damage (-24 to save vs. poisoning/drug effects), Anemia (-2 BLD).
Escape	2 yrs.	Blunted personality (PC has few strong feelings about anything), severe insomnia (1 in 2 chance each night of getting any sleep), poor vision (-2 to vision based AWR rolls).

God Killer	6 yrs.	Emphysema (-6 END), Brain Damage (-3 INL, -3 AWR).
Inhalants	2 yrs.	Brain Damage (-4 AWR, -4 AGY, -4 INL, -4 WIL).
Mauler	1 yr.	-12 INL, tendency to act without thinking.
Maxin	4 yrs.	Weakened bones (-3 BDY)
Multi-Drug	6 yrs.	Scars and Bad Skin (-4 to seduction rolls), Brain Damage (-3 INL, -3 AWR), Poor Immune System (-4 to save vs. disease contraction and personality), Malnutrition (-2 BDY, -2 STH).
Opiates	4 yrs.	Poor immune system (-4 to save vs. disease contraction and progression).
Slave	2 Yrs.	Weight loss (-1 BDY, -1 BLD), pale skin, liver damage (-2 to save vs. poison/drug effects)
Trace	3 yrs.	Poor immune system (-12 to save vs. disease contraction and progression), arthritis (-3 AGY).

Suggested Skills- Drug Resistance, Light Sleep, Needles, Shiv, Street Drugs.

Suggested Equipment- Phonebook Armor, Shiv.

Suggested Reading- Drugs.

Gamblers

In Brief- Start and play games in alleys, survive by being cunning gamblers and cheaters.

Favorable Stereotypes- Fun, witty, observant, intelligent, like challenges, good people-sense.

Unfavorable Stereotypes- Calculating, charming, amoral, two faced, habitual liars, cheaters, prey on the weak minded.

Other Names- Cardsharks, Cheats.

Origin- The majority of games people play in the city can be traced back to England, China and Native America. English commoners brought their own forms of gambling to the United States. The Puritans tried to eliminate gambling, but failed. The US government eventually turned to lotteries for fund raising. Gambling as a profession first became large in the underworld of Victorian England, where the laws and society created a stable criminal class. "Magsmen" around London would play and cheat others on card and skittle games.

Large casinos appeared early in the beginning of the 19th century, and with them came professional gamblers who would use cheating and skill to make money at the expense of "the house." In the middle of the century, riverboat casinos became popular and flashy riverboat gamblers became well known (and widely hated). The largely unregulated and "uncivilized" west was filled with gambling. Chinese immigrants brought by the gold rush (and later by the railroads) ran some of their own gambling institutions. Prejudice forced many of these immigrants to move to the East coast, especially to New York's China Town (which would quickly grow to become the largest Chinatown in the Western hemisphere).

After the prohibition ended, gangsters turned to gambling as one of their sources of income. The great depression brought a new sense of morality, and mayor La Guardia, elected on a promise to clean up the streets, closed down many gambling houses and fought mobsters. The East

coast crackdown on mobsters sent them West to California, and a crackdown on them there forced them to Los Vegas, a paradise of legal gambling. In Los Vegas they set up large empires which set the culture of gambling for the rest of the country. Atlantic City in New Jersey legalized gambling hoping to become the Los Vegas of the East coast.

The next revolution in gambling came from a number of court decisions which gave Indian reservations the ability to open their own casinos, despite state regulations to the contrary. Gaming released the tribes from the prison of abject poverty they had been trapped in for centuries. Many tribes became healthy and successful communities with their gambling money. By the 2040s, the Native Americans were one of the few economic blocks in the US not owned or controlled by one of the three big multinational corporations. When the Freedom Army refused to grant the tribes autonomy, they formed their own armies and helped the US military fight the Freedom Army.

During the Freedom Army occupation of the city, gambling was outlawed but it did not end. Back-room and back-alley games of cards and dice were as common as ever, even when people had nothing more to gamble with than scraps of food. Even in these incredibly lean times, a few people survived the occupation on gambling proceeds alone. When the Freedom Wars ended, gambling stayed illegal. The city sprouted hundreds of illegal card-rooms, most in the back of bars. Flashy slot machines quickly left city consciousness in favor of simple craps and poker games.

People have been gambling since before recorded history. Whether the gambling was done in mob-owned card rooms, flashy casinos or in back alleys, there have always been a tiny class of people able to make a living through the proceeds of gambling. In the city today there are no tribes, corporations or organized crime agencies that run gambling in the city, but there are still professional gamblers.

Timeline

1665- 1st horse racing track built on Long Island.
 1800s- Large casinos in US.
 1835- Vigilantes in Mississippi lynch 5 cardsharks.
 1833- NY lottery ends after scandals.
 1849-1855- Gold Rush gambling.
 1850s- Heyday of riverboat gambler.
 1850s- Chinese immigrants bring new gambling to US
 1880s- Chinese, fleeing discrimination in California, start NY Chinatown
 1895- 1st slot machine.
 1900s- NY public fear of Chinatown gambling, prostitution and crime.
 1929-1932- NY Mayor La Guardia war on sin (including gambling houses)
 1931- Gambling legal in Nevada.
 1978- New Jersey legalizes casinos to revitalize Atlantic City.
 1980s- Video slot machines become popular.
 1987- Court decision opens door for Indian gaming.
 2010- On-Line gambling so prevalent, casino gambling nearly extinct.
 2050- Freedom Army makes enemy of US Indian tribes.
 2053- Gambling made illegal by Freedom Army.
 2055- Restoration committee grants increased autonomy to Indian tribes.

Becoming- Some gamblers have parents who are gamblers and learn the trade from their family. Others find they have a proficiency as children and learn from other older gamblers (who occasionally like to take on apprentices). Gamblers must learn many skills and weave them together seamlessly to win without causing suspicion.

At level one, adventure one the PC has been gambling professionally for about 6 months, long enough that the PC is confident that he or she can make a living gambling.

Lifestyle- Successful Gamblers do not believe in luck. People who lose money gambling believe in luck. They believe that because they have lost several times they are more likely to win the next round, or they may believe that they may win because they deserve it or because they want it badly enough. Professional gamblers never depend on the outcome of a die roll or card draw to be anything other than completely random. "Luck" never favors any person for any reason, except cheaters.

Professional gamblers survive by combining incredible gambling skill with the ability and willingness to cheat when necessary. Gamblers have learned hundreds of methods of cheating that most people would never think of, some high-tech, some centuries old. There are dozens of ways for a cheater to mark a card so that nobody can notice the markings but them, from creating tiny holes, to using infra-red paint (which can only be seen with special glasses), to making tiny indentations on the card with a fingernail. Gamblers also use sleight of hand to switch cards, making sure they get the good cards and their opponents get the bad cards. Gamblers need only see a card for a blink of an eye to recognize it and Gamblers can easily look at the top card of a deck without being caught. Gamblers can also use sleight of hand to replace dice with loaded dice. Special devices, from mirrors to remote transmitters, can be used to spy on the hands of other players.

Card counting is another common form of cheating. The Gambler keeps note of the value of cards that have been

used, and determines from this information what cards are most likely to come up. Most Gamblers can do the math in their heads, other must hide small calculating devices on their person (e.g. a device in the shoe which responds to coded toe-presses).

Gamblers often work together: one plays as the gambler who will win the money, the other is a "confederate." Confederates pretend not to know the gambler at all, instead they pose as another player or as a person simply observing the game. Confederates not in the game can peek at the hands of other players and relay that information to players using a variety of secret codes. Confederates within the game can strategize together using secret codes and gain a huge advantage over other players. Confederates are also useful to look out for law enforcement, to provide distractions when a Gambler needs people looking the other way, or to "accidentally" get in the way of anyone chasing a caught cheater.

Gamblers try to get in on games that are already going, but they may quickly find themselves unwelcome at card rooms. When people on street corners start games up, Gamblers join in, and they are likely to start some themselves.

Social Structure- Most gamblers work alone, but a few work together in small groups. When they work in groups, it is typically to help create and maintain an illusion in a complex scam. Many gamblers take on apprentices just so they can have confederates for such scams.

Gamblers can typically recognize other professional gamblers by style of play alone, and they avoid playing against each other whenever possible (playing against each other would be the gambling equivalent of a fair fight, and neither party wants that). Some gamblers may be protective of their turf and try to chase off other gamblers. Most gamblers have the courtesy to warn a turf invader, but if they don't take the hint the worst thing a gambler can do is expose another. Most gamblers are more concerned with making a money than conflicts with each other, but a few have been known to get in feuds.

Advancement- Gamblers advance by becoming more skilled at the skills of gambling (Card Counting, Gambling, Read Tell, Sleight of Hand). Those who save their money can reinvest it in nice clothing so that they can pose as Indies and Wells and get in to higher stake games. The limit on Gamblers in the city is that there just aren't enough rich people to have very-high-stake games. A Gambler might move from \$50 pot games to \$500 pot games, but there are no \$5000 pot games unless the Gambler can afford to leave the city and live near large casinos.

Population- There are about 400 gamblers living in the city.

External Relations- Gamblers try not to be known as Gamblers. If someone realizes that someone is a Gambler, then that Gambler has made a serious professional error. Known Gamblers are often hated and sometimes even hunted. Gamblers typically pose as well Freelancers and are treated accordingly.

Street People: Since Gamblers are street people, they may have contacts within the street people community that know that they are Gamblers. Some Gamblers may even hire non-Gamblers to help them as confederates. Gamblers are especially likely to have friends, lovers and family members who are Jacks, Sex Workers and Thieves.

Freaks: Gamblers come to Freak territory en-masse during the festival of the Freak to try to make money from festival goers. Most Freaks use scams or tricks in some way or another. Because they use the same techniques, Gamblers often recognize what Freaks are doing and visa versa. "Professional courtesy" keeps them from ratting each other out.

Typical Weapon- Switchblades are common (because gamblers know sleight-of-hand and can bring out a switchblade covertly).

Turf- Gambling is scattered all over the city. There are many games going on in the backs of bars and many games that start up spontaneously on alleys and street corners. The highest concentration of gambling is in the red light district, directly South of the Hole (a.k.a. Central Park). Many Gamblers can be found in Freak territory during the Festival of the Freak.

Distinguishing Features- Gamblers tend to dress a little more flashily than most street people, they spend a lot of money on clothes and are able to pass as Wells or even Indies. They may have fake jewelry to accentuate the illusion of wealth. It is important for Gamblers to look like people who don't care if they lose a lot of money (rather than street people desperate to turn a profit so they can feed themselves).

Symbols- Dice and cards and other game pieces are common symbols for gamblers. Some gamblers may use personal symbols that consist of specific cards, or combinations of dice, etc.

Slang

Action: n., The total amount one person bets in the course of a game.

Confederate: n., A person who helps a gambler make money.

High Roller: n., A person who gambles a lot of money.

Holdout: n., An extra card kept on one's person.

Juicer: n., Person who marks cards.

Mechanic: n., Sleight-of-hand cheater.

Shooter: n., A person rolling dice.

Shill: n., Person with the job of upping bets (even though they will probably lose).

Spook: n., Someone who peeks on players and secretly conveys information to a player.

Stacking: n., Pre-arranging cards in a deck.

Tell: n., A behavior that betrays a bluff.

Wall Kid: n., Lookout.

Skills

Free Skills: Gambling (2), Sleight of Hand (1), Card Counting (1), Read Tell (1).

Skill Costs: ATH 7, BIO 11, CMBT 6, CRTV 6, INFO 10, MIL 10, PSY:M 18, PSY:S 18, TECH 10, THIE 4, SOC 9, STRT 5.

Special Skills: The special skill Read Tell costs only 10 skill points per level.

Read Tell (Uses AWR) Everyone has a tell, some unconscious behavior that they do when they are bluffing. A Gambler learns to watch a person (a person can make a Hard opposed AWR roll to notice if they are being watched) play several games to discover their tell.

Easy (10): From tells, figure out if a player is trying to hide strong emotions.

Moderate (20): From tells, figure out if someone has a good or bad hand.

Heard (30): From tells, figure out the relative value of a player's hand.

Legendary (40): From tells, and the other cards that have been dealt, figure out every single card a person holds.

Income- \$250 +\$10/wk.

Special Equipment- Free dice and a deck of cards.

Suggested Skills- Card Counting, Drug Resistance, Forgery, Gambling, Pocket Picking, Seduction, Sleight of Hand.

Suggested Equipment- Knife: Switchblade, Outfit: Clubwear.

Suggested Reading- Fashion & Style.

Jacks

In Brief- Persuasive and quick-witted beggars who will say and do anything to make a buck.

Favorable Stereotypes- Quick witted, brave, creative, entertaining, loyal and hard working.

Unfavorable Stereotypes- Loud, obnoxious, hyperactive, annoying, uneducated, prideless con-artists.

Other Names- Jacks-of-all-trades, Beggars.

Origin- Begging has been a staple for homeless people for millennia. Throughout ages and cultures, people have come up with many different methods to enhance their begging. Some used strong arm tactics, begging forcefully and with an implied threat. Some used signs with evocative messages on them. Some came up with stories about needing gas money to drive a pregnant wife to the hospital, or of being robbed after just getting in to town. Some beggars try to be amicable and entertaining, forcing the beggie to like the beggar. Some beggars blurred the lines between beggars and day-laborers: their "will work for food" signs would occasionally net them paying jobs, but much more often would get them

alms. In the 20th century, places like New York and San Francisco became so inundated with beggars that people learned to tune them out. In order to get noticed, beggars in these places had to be very dramatic or entertaining. In the economic troubles of the 2030s and 2040s it became so bad that if a beggar wasn't a child or attractive woman he or she had to be a one-person show. To make even a bit of change a beggar had to be able to sing and dance, tell jokes and stories, even do dangerous stunts.

There is a story that, around 2070, someone came around some street corner asking for Jack, wanting to hire him for something. A local beggar, thinking that there might be some opportunity in it, said that yes, he was Jack. He was taken along to some job, bluffed his way through it (stories about what he did vary), succeeded via quick thinking and pure luck, and was paid a handsome sum of money. The beggar told his beggar friends, and the next day when someone came looking for Jack, a handful of people came up all claiming to be Jack. The story goes on to say that the skills and quick thinking of "Jack" became increasingly well known, until every beggar in the city was claiming to be Jack and claimed to do any sort of job.

A new form of beggar was born in the city. A brave, gregarious, extroverted, quick thinker who claims to be able to take on any job. "Jack" beggars became so popular that beggars (save for the children and people too old or disabled to be cavorting around) were forced to start calling themselves Jacks in order to compete.

Timeline

1980s- "Will work for food" signs became popular.

2070- First Jack.

2075- City beggars all call themselves Jack.

Joining- Being a Jack is not a learned trade, it's something people do if they don't have any other skills that they can use to make a living. Many Jacks grew up on the streets as homeless orphans, surviving mostly by begging. Very few Jacks are ever "trained" by other Jacks, although Jacks may watch other Jacks in action and see what they do. For the most part, though, being a Jack can't be learned, it's about improvising, saying or doing anything to make money.

At level one, adventure one, the PC has been calling himself or herself Jack for about half a year and has learned most of the ins-and-outs of the trade. The Jack is usually too new to have any loyal repeat customers.

Lifestyle- The Jack phenomenon is begging that has evolved to meet the current sensibilities of city residents. Jacks are homeless people who make money by begging and doing odd-jobs. They accost people who are walking down the streets and ask if there's anything they can do for the person for a buck. The Jacks have a near limitless list of things they can do for a buck: give directions, tell a joke, sing a song, take a message, give a foot massage, listen to the begee's problems, carry their bags, protect their home from burglars while they are gone, watch their back, etc. Usually the person who was accosted gives the Jack a dollar just to get them to shut up and go away. Sometimes, the person hears something they like and pays a dollar for the service. People have varying experiences when they actually pay for a service, some say that the Jacks did a horrible job and ripped them off, other claim that the Jacks did a great job. Enough people have had good experiences that they come back asking for Jacks whenever they need help doing something. Jacks who do their jobs well often become trusted servants for Indies and even Wells.

Some Jacks use their people-skills as sales-people. They or other street people will salvage things from the trash and then the Jack will try to sell it to the people he or she accosts. A Jack might sell some trinket worth ten cents for a buck. The buyer typically knows the item is not worth much, but buying it serves the purposes of giving money to this likable person and getting the person to go away. Some Jacks even turn to drug sales: selling soft drugs (cheap marijuana, hallucinogens, mild opiates) to tourists and young people.

Jacks are especially good at recognizing people new to the city. When they find a newcomer their goal is to both protect and exploit the person. Jacks do help people find their way around the city, give them interesting information about the city, teach them how to survive, and even protect them when necessary. The Jack's assistance is valuable, but also costs a lot (up to \$20 a day). The new person in the city may become dependent on the Jack and sink a good portion of his or her income in to supporting the Jack.

Jacks are also good at finding people who have a hard time saying no. If the Jack does something for someone and gets a buck, it's not in the Jack's interests to simply go away. The Jack tries to find something else they can do for a buck. A Jack will never leave until a person stops paying them. As long as a person pays, the Jack will follow the person home and become a butler or maid. Jacks are so persistent and helpful that a lot of people let Jacks in to their homes. Typically, this kind of situation doesn't last long. Jacks are good at thinking on their feet and making friends, but they are seldom good at commitment and dependability. So, Jacks may have periods when they have a nice couch to sleep on and good food to eat, but in all likelihood they will be back on the street within a week.

Life as a Jack is all about uncertainty. Jacks can never know how much money they will get that day, where they will be sleeping or how they will eat. Some people would go crazy with anxiety and stress in this kind of lifestyle. The people who survive as Jacks are people who seldom think about the future and focus their minds only on the present moment. Jacks are classic extraverts, and many would be diagnosed with attention deficit disorder if they had ever been to a doctor. A few Jacks have bipolar disorder: when they are manic they beg and make money, when they are depressed they survive on whatever they have saved.

Social Structure- Jacks operate independently and autonomously, owing allegiance to no person. The only relationships or obligation that Jacks have are obligations to loyal customers.

Advancement- Jacks can increase their income tenfold in the course of a day if they run in to a person for whom they can make themselves indispensable. A small number of Jacks have left the streets after becoming personal servants to city Indies.

Population- There are about 1,500 Jacks in the city.

External Relations- No group prompts more varied opinions than Jacks. Some think of them as admirable, hard working and honest. Others think of them as liars, cheats and leeches on society. Jacks are out meeting and interacting with as many people as they can every day and almost every person in the city has had some experience, good or bad, with a Jack. That experience sets how they view Jacks.

Street People: Most of the Street People who make a living via some skill or talent don't like Jacks. In their rush to say anything to make a buck, Jacks often claim to be Black Meds, Crackers, Insomniacs, etc. When they do this, Jacks don't just compete with other Street People, they hurt their reputations. For instance: when a Jack claims to be able to hack in to a computer and then fails, it is the Crackers whose reputations suffer. The Black Meds have even tried to make PR war against the Jacks: every time they see a poor stitching job they say "this looks like a Jack job."

Typical Weapon- Many Jacks invest in tools they can use to do odd jobs: hammers, crowbars, brooms, etc. These tools often double as weapons.

Turf- The Jacks have no turf, they wander around all of the city looking for people to accost. They are found wherever people tend to be found: the major cross-town avenues, Broadway, subways and near the tourist hotels in the Northern part of the red light district.

Distinguishing Features- Jacks find that it helps to dress as nicely as they can. They are still obviously homeless people but they pay a lot of attention to their appearance. Street People who are attractive find it easier to survive by begging and so many Jacks are physically attractive.

Symbols- The letter J is a common symbol of jacks, and some Jacks even wear J patches or tattoos.

Skills

Skill Costs: ATH 6, BIO 8, CMBT 7, CRTV 5, INFO 10, MIL 10, PSY:M 18, PSY:S 18, TECH 9, THIE 4, SOC 8, STRT 5.

Income- \$100 +\$10/wk.

Special Bonus Characteristics

Quick Improvisation: (Mandatory Advantage) Jacks are not necessarily smarter than other people in the city, but through practice they have become quite good at thinking improvisationally. What this mean in terms of game play is that GMs should afford players a bit more time to think about their reactions, even in time sensitive situations.

Suggested Skills- Acrobatics, City Knowledge, Fashion and Beauty, Cooking, Music, Seduction, Sleight of Hand, Storytelling, Trading.

Suggested Equipment- Carpentry Tools.

Suggested Reading- City Culture.

Runners

In Brief- Messengers and package deliverers for the black market and others. Experts at getting around the city quickly and cheaply.

Favorable Stereotypes- Honest, hard working, reputable, quick, wary, trustworthy.

Unfavorable Stereotypes- Stupid, single-minded, servants with little free will.

Other Names- Riders, Errand Boys/Girls, Gophers, Delivery.

Origin- The modern black market formed during the Freedom Army occupation of the city from 2050 to 2054. Communications systems had been knocked out and the provisional systems set up to replace them were monitored by the Freedom Army. To keep their activities secret, the vast web of black market traders had to communicate in person or by handwritten messages. Children and homeless people were hired to carry messages, goods and money back and forth within the city. Street kids who were proficient with personal transportation (bikes, skateboards, roller blades) were especially valued.

After the Freedom Wars ended, the basic framework of the black market continued. Traders became more blasé about secrecy: they used encrypted voice communications and money transfers to conduct business. They still needed runners to carry physical goods. There was a growing population of people who had been born on the streets and who couldn't get any better job than running errands for black market Traders. There was stiff competition and only the fastest, most efficient and most trustworthy Runners got jobs. Other people in the city, however, started seeing how good these runners were. Soon, people all over the city were hiring runners regularly.

Timeline

2050- Freedom Army occupies the city

2053- Food shortages in the occupied city

2055- Freedom Army in the city destroyed

2075- Traders fight with Drug Lords over drug sales

Joining- Runners typically start very early in life, as homeless children with no other way to make a living who take minor items for quarters. As they grow and learn more about the city, they learn how to get a package anywhere in the city quickly. They gain the trust of Traders and they start making more money. At level one, adventure one, the PC is generally thought of as a young adult and has had several years of good history with Traders.

Lifestyle- For runners, each errand they run is significant to their career. Getting a job done quickly and getting

the package delivered safely means they are likely to be given another job. The runners who are the fastest and most dependable are given the most important (and best paying) jobs.

Runners do most of their jobs for Traders, though they give their contact information to everyone they meet (any satisfied customer might someday hire a Runner). Most runners have cell phones or pagers that people can use to contact them. Some even hang outside in front of the building of the Trader most likely to hire them so that the Trader only has to shout out his or her window.

Whenever they can, Runners like to try to form relationships with shut-ins. This can be hard because Shut-Ins are very wary of talking to strangers. Once a Runner can convince a shut-in that they are trustworthy the shut-in will occasionally call on the Runner to do errands. These errands are usually easy because they don't require the Runner to go very far. The Shut-In typically wants something from a grocery, drug or liquor store and knows that hiring a Runner is cheaper than having the store send a delivery person.

Most Runners have some cheap means of transport. Those who do not have transport will only get local delivery jobs and don't make as much money. Bicycles are the most common. A bicycle is a Runner's livelihood and they often take it with them everywhere (even if that means carrying it up several flights of stairs). Most Runners become accomplished at bicycle repair and can fix most problems within a few minutes.

Runners get together in cooperative groups to do subway hand-offs. They take turns doing "running" and "riding." The Runner who is riding pays to get in to the subway system and stays there for days, riding the trains. Other Runners pass packages through the turnstiles to the Rider, who delivers them to other Runners on the other side. The riders get food and drink passed to them and most Runners enjoy their time riding as the only time they get to relax (and heal from injuries).

Runners survive by being fast. Criminals know that runners may be carrying money or valuable goods. Runners can usually outrun (or outride) any muggers, but muggers have been known to set traps for Runners. Runners try to stay anonymous, but it is hard when they are carrying a package under one arm and racing around the city on a bike.

Social Structure- Runners do the majority of their jobs for one to three traders that they know well. They are most likely to work with other Runners who work for the same Traders as they do. Runners seldom need anything big

from each other, but they do each other a lot of little favors. There is an assumption of reciprocity among Runners: a Runner asks for a favor expecting to someday return it.

Advancement- Runners advance by getting better transportation: a better bicycle, an electric bicycle, even a slipboard. Faster Runners get very important rush-jobs that pay significantly more. The best Runners in the city make almost three times as much as a starting Runner (up to \$45/wk.).

Population- There are about 750 Runners in the city (about 1.5 per black market trader).

External Relations- Traders do well to present themselves as honest and friendly. When Runners meet someone it is usually because they are delivering something. Runners are usually appreciated and liked by the person they deliver to. Runners try to make contacts among every segment of city society: they are as happy running errands for Traders, gang members, street people families or shut-ins.

Traders: The majority (95%) of a Runner's business is given to them by black market traders. Runners depend on the trust and good graces of Traders for their very survival (and Traders depend on trustworthy Runners to run their businesses efficiently). Traders are notorious gossips and are quite willing to tell everyone they know what they think of a Runner. An accusation of theft, even if the Runner is completely innocent, can be disastrous. For the most part, however, Traders trust Runners implicitly. Some Traders grow to trust Runners so much that they will pay them to do non-Running chores like baby-sit their children. A few Runners have become diplomats, speaking on behalf of very powerful traders.

Turf Protective Gangs: Runners need to get places as quickly as possible, and this means ignoring the boundaries of turf. Gangs who don't like their turf invaded tend to be annoyed by Runners. This includes

the Purists, Risen and Skin Borgs. Some of the Runners' shortcuts even involve briefly trespassing on the turf of the Roofers and the Keepers.

Typical Weapon- Although most runners carry a knife or some other weapon, their means of transportation (bike, skateboard, etc.) is usually the easiest thing for them to attack with.

Turf- Runners usually hang out where the black market traders are (see Traders, p.159).

Distinguishing Features- Runners try to dress like average street people, though they are typically more athletic and have better transportation. They often wear baggy clothing so that packages can be easily concealed on their person. A typical outfit would be stained shorts, a knit cap, and a baggy flannel sweater.

Symbols- Running stick figures are commonly used in graffiti to represent Runners.

Skills

Free Skills: Running (2).

Skill Costs: ATH 5, BIO 10, CMBT 6, CRTV 5, INFO 12, MIL 10, PSY:M 18, PSY:S 18, TECH 10, THIE 5, SOC 9, STRT 5.

Income- \$200 +\$15/wk.

Special Bonus Characteristics

Geographic Familiarity: (Mandatory Advantage) The PC gets +10 to any City Knowledge roll concerning how to get somewhere or where anything is in the city.

Suggested Skills- Bicycle, Climbing, Information Smuggling, Mechanics, Mnemonics, Prowling.

Suggested Equipment- Backpack, Bicycle, Vehicle Repair Tools: Portable.

Suggested Reading- Black Market, City Geography, City Infrastructure.

Sex Workers

In Brief- Sell their bodies in the city sex industry. Most have troubled pasts. Many form revenge pacts with each other.

Favorable Stereotypes- Survivors, good instincts, keep promises, empathetic.

Unfavorable Stereotypes- Psychologically damaged, unambitious, weak willed, untrustworthy, hateful.

Other Names- Whores (derogatory), Hustlers (usually referring to male prostitutes), Street Walkers, Prostituted People (a term used by activists to emphasize that prostitution is a crime committed against individuals, not an identity), Hookers.

Origin- Throughout history, the status of female prostitutes (who make up the vast majority of prostitutes) has varied with the status of women, ranging from societies in which women were traded like cattle to societies where prostitutes could become entrepreneurs and gain wealth and status. In ancient India and the Middle East, prostitutes worked in temples, making money for them. Intercourse with these prostitutes was considered holy. Later, in ancient Greece, there were three classes of prostitutes: simple brothel workers, those trained in different forms of entertainment, and owners of salons who played hosts to

Warning: Not all character classes are equal. Most character classes have advantages and disadvantages that balance out to make them approximately as powerful as each other, but this character class is inherently unbalanced and will not be as powerful as starting characters from other classes.

the rich and powerful. In ancient Rome, widespread slavery led to a large class of slave-prostitutes, which Roman law gave even less rights to than normal slaves.

Early Christianity did little to stop prostitution in ancient Europe. Christian churches followed the teachings of St. Augustine. St. Augustine said that prostitution was an inescapable evil: if it were wiped out then there would

be even greater sins committed (like rape). At the same time, corrupt government officials and even church leaders made fortunes on the proceeds of prostitution. It wasn't until the 16th century, when prostitution was linked to syphilis outbreaks, that major government and religious crackdowns on prostitution occurred. Punishments for prostitutes became increasingly harsh, while punishments for the men who visited them were light or non-existent.

In the 18th and 19th centuries, the industrial revolution created huge cities. With the anonymity of city life, prostitution flourished. Many countries quit trying to stop prostitution, and instead implemented cruel and degrading medical inspection of prostitutes. The people running prostitution (usually men with criminal histories) found that foreign women would work for less and with less disobedience. An international trade in human beings

(mostly young women) began and flourished all over Europe, despite attempts by industrialized countries to stop it. This trade would only grow (encompassing the whole globe) in the 20th and 21st centuries.

In the mid 19th century, growing industry in lower Manhattan pushed prostitution up towards midtown (in between 34th and 59th streets). Broadway, always a major commercial thoroughfare, became the center of prostitution in the city. Many of the brownstones in this part of town became saloons, hotels and brothels where prostitutes operated. This part of town became quickly known as the Tenderloin, one of the country's many "red light" districts. Red light districts became popular in the late 1870s as a means of quarantining prostitution to parts of town where it would not bother "ordinary people." The tenderloin remained a red light district until a booming theatre industry forced it out. The tenderloin became "times square." With the theatre came a number of gay men. The bar at the Astor Hotel and the Metropolitan Opera became major tea rooms (places where men would go to pick up other men using pre-arranged secret signals). Gay prostitutes started appearing in the area.

When servicemen returning from World War two started frequenting midtown, there was a sudden market for pornography. Several adult bookstores sprang up in the Times Square areas. In the 1960s, attitudes and laws regarding sex and prostitution became more lax. Adult bookshops, theaters and peep-shows proliferated in the Times Square, and drug dealers and prostitutes (male and female) worked the streets. Times Square once again became known as a seedy and dangerous part of town. This changed in the 1980s with renewed attempts by legitimate businesses to revitalize the area. The city government made deals with large corporations (Disney, MTV) and by the end of the 20th century had virtually wiped out sex and pornography around Times Square (pushing it, instead, to other parts of the city).

After the Freedom Wars, there was a massive exodus out of the city. Most tourist class hotels closed and the only ones left were the former-luxury hotels built along central park South. With the city's only tourists and business travelers nearby, the sex industry once again concentrated in the area near Times Square. Prostitution, strip clubs, massage parlors and peep shows moved back in to the Times Square area, eager to earn tourist dollars. This part of town quickly became known to city residents as "the

of town quickly became known to city residents as "the red light district".

Despite the movements of the sex industry to different parts of town, the lifestyles of prostitutes in the city changed little from the mid 20th century to the late 2070s. Pimps (mostly male), kept prostitutes (mostly female) using psychological and physical bondage. Pimps took all the prostitutes' earnings and only gave back enough for the prostitutes to survive. Pimps, in turn, have often owed allegiances or paid tributes to whatever organized crime was currently ruling the city. Whenever there was a crackdown on prostitution in the city, it was usually the prostitutes that would suffer while little happened to johns and pimps. The pimps had it good and so this system of

exploitation survived many attempts to wipe it out. The average voter knew little about the nature of prostitution: they only saw the scantily clad men and women and did not see their exploiters. The people who spent their time on the streets (the gang members, criminals, gutterpunks homeless people, etc.) knew the truth, but until recently they had very little power.

In 2076, a new gang formed called the Sexologists. The Sexologists were a psychic Indie gang that preached healthy loving sex. As the Sexologists grew in size and influence they decided to make war on the pimps. The Sexologists and their devotees would make regular trips in to the red light district, acting on knowledge gained from informants to find and beat up pimps. Although many Sexologists preached non-violence, they were not afraid to kill if a pimp refused to take his beating and fought back. Within a few months, the city's pimps had either fled, been killed, or had gone deep underground. The prostitutes of the city

suddenly found themselves out from under the thumb of pimps.

The removal of pimps was good in a lot of ways: many people left the sex industry, others were able to become escorts and strippers. Many remained prostitutes but enjoyed increased income and more autonomy (especially an increased ability to choose what tricks to take). The removal of pimps has not, however, been a panacea for the problems of prostitutes. In the absence of pimps, Johns became more exploitative: paying less, demanding more, trading sex for things like shelter and protection. Worse still, johns started preying on prostitutes even more than before: refusing to pay them, beating them, robbing them, raping them and even killing them.



In response to this increased need for self-protection, many prostitutes taught themselves self-defense (even lethal self-defense). Many of the same prostitutes, taking a clue from the gang code of revenge, started forming revenge pacts. About a year ago, four prostitutes formed a pact, and got tattoos with a triangle of symbols to advertise that pact. Other copied this and the triangles quickly became common, almost a status symbol among prostitutes. The triangle also became a symbol that city prostitutes were coming in to their own, learning to defend themselves. However, hope for city sex workers is still limited: those who really become self-sufficient typically leave the sex industry, to be replaced by naïve and psychologically weak runaways.

Timeline

1500s- Syphilis outbreaks in Europe cause crackdown on prostitution.
 1699- 1st US anti-prostitution laws.
 1700s-1800s- Industrial revolution creates big cities, larger prostitution market.
 1849- Term "hooker" (British slang for a thief) 1st used to describe prostitutes in US.
 1863- Disreputability of Gen. Joe Hooker's soldiers helps popularize term "hooker".
 1825- Anti-brothel riot in Lennox Pennsylvania
 1870s- Creation of "red light" districts in order to hem in prostitution
 1910- Congress passes "white slave traffic" act.
 1910s- Broadway becomes home to the much live theatre.
 1925- Charles Luciano, early Mafioso, gains control of all of Manhattan prostitution.
 1945- Returning WWII soldiers create market for semi-legal porn shops in Times Sq.
 1960s- Sex laws loosen, bring legal pornography to Times Square.
 1984-1996- "42nd Street Development Project," MTV, Disney & city cleans Times Sq.
 2055- Prostitution returns to Times Sq. as legal commerce dries up.
 2076-2078- Sexologists form.
 2079- Sexologists attack pimps.
 2079- First "triangle" revenge pact.

Becoming- Most of the current sex workers were forced or coerced in to prostitution before the Sexologist war on pimps. Almost all had tragic childhoods and ended up on the streets of the city with absolutely no knowledge of how to protect or care for themselves. Runaways come to the streets every day, from every strata of society, and professional exploiters are always on the lookout for those who look especially lost and helpless. Some of these exploiters are from cults, some are from the pornography industry, and up until recently most of them were pimps.

Pimps are often sweet at first, but end up keeping prostitutes in line with physical intimidation and psychological abuse. Abuse keeps prostitutes' self-esteem so low that they seldom seek anything better in their lives. Pimps keep prostitutes totally dependent on them, never allowing them to learn to take care of themselves.

At level one, adventure one, the PC has been working in the sex industry (primarily working the streets as a prostitute) for several years. The PC has been free of his or her pimp for several months. The PC has learned how to obtain food, clothing and shelter, but still has no non-sex industry skills which could be used to make a living.

Sex Workers and Childhood Sexual Abuse

A large portion of sex industry workers have been sexually abused as children (more than other city residents). There are two explanations for the high prevalence of childhood sexual abuse:

The sociopolitical explanation is that both the sexual abuse history and the current state of prostitution can be explained by one overarching cause: bad homes. Almost all prostitutes were raised in homes that were rife with mental illness, substance abuse and criminal neglect. These households made the children vulnerable to every type of victimization, including sexual victimization, as well as making them vulnerable to ending up on the streets, penniless, having never been taught any skills that could be used to make a living, with prostitution just about the only means for survival.

The psychologists' explanation is more subtle: sexual abuse has caused the person to grow up thinking of sex not as a pleasurable activity, not as an activity that strengthens a romantic relationship, but as an service that can be bartered. This unhealthy sexual worldview makes people more likely to seek employment in the sex industry.

Lifestyle- The most common transaction in the city sex industry looks something like this: *A male john walking down Broadway sees a female prostitute that he likes and that he thinks is within his price range. He walks up to her and offers a certain amount of money for a quick sex act. She quickly decides that he is probably not a serial killer and starts haggling with him. Whether or not a condom will be used and whether or not the john will pay up-front are just points in the negotiation. When the two come to an arrangement, the prostitute leads the john down an alley, to a nice quiet, private spot (that is within earshot of the prostitutes' friends if she calls for help). The sexual act is engaged, standing or on an old weather-beaten couch (placed there for just that purpose). The prostitute and the john arrange their clothing and the john pays. The prostitute has made \$10 for an hour of waiting around, a few minutes of haggling and rarely more than a minute of sexual activity.* Countless variations exist on this basic scenario. Not all prostitutes are female and not all johns are male. Some situations are better, with the sex worker leaving happier and wealthier, and some are much worse.

Some johns are better than others: some are repeat customers who the prostitute knows and trusts, some pay more than the normal market price because they feel like it, some are socially isolated people who are paying for human interaction as much as they are for sex. Some Johns will buy presents or food for prostitutes, or will take them to a nice hotel (the prostitute may even get a cut from the hotel owner).

Some johns are worse than others. With no pimps to protect prostitutes, many johns believe they can do whatever they want. Some haggle quite viciously, knowing that the sex worker will work for next to nothing if pushed. At two or three AM, when many prostitutes are ready to go to sleep for the night, many Johns come by offering a place to stay the night in exchange for sexual services. A few johns are even evolving in to pimps: demanding both sex and a few bucks for a safe place to sleep for the night. Johns might seem perfectly nice but have some communicable disease that the sex worker may catch. Johns sometimes try to humiliate, beat or rob prostitutes. Serial killers often prey on prostitutes, and often use money as a lure to try to get the prostitute to come to an isolated place. This is why Sex Workers rarely go to an unfamiliar or isolated place without a friend.

"Happy prostitute? Sure, I've heard of them, but I don't know any. Maybe it's like back when slavery was legal and the white people would have one happy slave which they would bring out to show that slavery was okay."

-M'Rick Silva, Sex Worker

When things go bad, Sex Workers must be ready to defend themselves at a moment's notice. Many wear knives in sheathes that remain strapped to their bodies at all times. To gain further protection, many Sex Workers join a revenge pact with three friends. These pacts are known by their symbol: the triangle. The triangle is a solid black tattoo visible on the prostitute's body. The triangle has the Sex Worker's personal symbol in the center (symbols are used, rather than names, because many prostitutes are illiterate). On each corner of the triangle is a smaller symbol representing the other three prostitutes that participated in the pact. The pact is an oath to avenge the death of anyone in the pact (or die trying). Sex Workers take this oath very seriously, and they get very angry with any Sex Worker caught shirking revenge duty. When a Sex Worker is found murdered, other Sex Workers comb the streets looking for people with matching symbols so they can inform those people of their duty. Many Sex Workers memorize the triangles of those working nearby them so that they can identify the triangle symbols even if a killer removes the triangle. The threat of revenge represented by a triangle is not as fearful as the threat of revenge of killing a gang member, but is a great enough threat that it makes life as a Sex Worker significantly safer.

Why Men?

Ask any Sex Worker, male or female, to tell horror stories about johns and nine out of ten stories will be about male johns. It is a statistical fact that a majority of those who seek sex for money are men and that an even greater majority of those who engage in sexual violence are men. Many Sex Workers, both male and female, come to believe that all men enjoy hurting and humiliating women. Sexologists, and others, have gone to great pains to tell people that this is not true, that only a minority of men find sexual satisfaction from violence and cruelty. Those who have used psychic skills or other techniques to experience the consciousness of both men and women say that, with exceptions, sexual desire is different between men and women. This difference in how desire "works" means that men have a greater capacity than women to find violence or cruelty sexually stimulating. Evolutionary psychologists have many theories why a difference in male and female sexual desire would be selected for, but nobody knows all the details for sure.

Social Structure- Most Sex Workers start as prostitutes working the street, and few ever see any other segment of the sex industry. Most Sex Workers don't owe anyone and they work only to gain enough money to get by. Their only allegiances, if any, are with a small group of other prostitutes with which they have a revenge pact. With other prostitutes they are usually friendly (though there may be feuds). The most common source of friction between two prostitutes is a dispute over who "owns" a particular working corner.

A few prostitutes working the streets (about 1 in 20) still have pimps controlling them from behind the scenes. These pimps must keep themselves secret or face violence at the hands of the Sexologists. Since they must stay

secret, they have less control over their prostitutes than they did a few years ago. Most pimps have 3 to 6 prostitutes working for them (usually all males or all females). There are a few pimps who have only one prostitute, and most of these are the spouses, significant others or parents of the prostitutes.

A small number of Sex Workers work as prostitutes, but do not work the streets. They advertise on the internet, receive calls on cell phones or pagers and go to wherever the potential john is. These Sex Workers have little contact with other Sex Workers.

Some Sex Workers operate out of escort services, brothels, strip clubs, pornography studios and massage parlors. Sex Workers in these establishments are typically employees of the owners of these businesses. Many of the owners are ex-pimps who expanded in to semi-legitimate business before or during the Sexologist war against pimps. A few of these are owned by Sex Workers or ex-Sex Workers. The largest and most profitable (including some of the strip clubs, most of the pornography studios and all four of the escort services) are owned by private investors from outside of the city. The Sex Workers that work in these establishments are typically free to leave whenever they want.

Even johns have some small amount of social organization. Multiple sex sites on the internet are visited by city johns, or people interested in visiting the city in order to meet a Sex Worker. On these sites, people describe experiences with prostitutes, give tips, tell what charges are reasonable, rate prostitutes and give information on how to find those prostitutes. One popular net site gives a list of street walkers who won't fight back if johns "slap them around a bit."

Advancement- The fastest and easiest way for a Sex Worker to improve his or her quality of life is to leave the business. A few Sex Workers escape with the help of friends, family or lovers and a few escape with the help of charity organizations, but most are on their own and have to teach themselves the skills they need to survive outside of the sex industry. Most people who have escaped from the sex industry are hard-working and dependable members of whatever occupation they end up in, perhaps because they feel so lucky to be doing anything other than prostitution.

There are many barriers to prostitutes leaving the life. Drug problems, distrust of people (especially men) and low-self esteem can keep a prostitute from seeking help, working for something better, and forming relationships with those who could help them.

Sex Workers can also advance within the Sex Industry. The first, biggest and hardest step is to stop working on the streets. There are many avenues available in the sex industry for street workers who are attractive and ambitious enough: they can sell sex as employees of brothels, massage parlors or escort services. Although

"Thank you drugs for keeping me numb and helping me forget a day as soon as it ended. Thank you distrust and hatred for keeping me from getting to close to anyone who might want to exploit my weakness. Thank you self-hatred for keeping hope and desire for something better from tearing me apart. Thank you all for helping me survive. Go now, in peace, to help someone else, for I no longer need you."

-"Prayer of the Ex-Prostitute" by Latina Kumatsa, Sexologist

they still have sex with johns for money, they are paid more and work in a safer environment. These workers often have an income nearly equivalent to that of a well (\$75/wk.). Very attractive Sex Workers can get jobs in strip clubs or pornography studios. The safety and pay here is even higher, and many make more than the average well (\$150/wk.). A few prostitutes in the city become "kept" by some rich person, which means they are given a steady income (which they can supplement with other forms of prostitution) but they are constantly "on-call" for sexual services. Kept prostitutes can make from \$100 to \$200/wk.

As a Sex Worker advances in the sex industry, the Sex Worker is increasingly likely to reach a point where he or she does not meet the physical requirements to advance any further. Exercise and artfully applied makeup can help, but only a little. Most Sex Workers who feel a strong need to advance end up getting plastic surgery. Some are able to save up enough money for plastic surgery, but most must get someone else to pay for it for them (which leaves them in another person's debt, sometimes a debt they can never get out of). Those who have had tens or hundreds of thousands of dollars worth of plastic surgery done to them can make up to \$300/wk. as high-class escorts, kept men and women or porn stars.

Compared to working on the streets, the jobs a Sex Worker can advance through are vastly more comfortable, safe and well-paying. Yet few Sex Workers find lasting satisfaction in these jobs. Some find themselves in a worse state: they are still plagued by drug and self-esteem problems but they do not have the day-to-day job of staying alive to keep them distracted. Many Sex Workers advance very high in the city sex industry only to end up committing suicide.

It Can Always Get Worse

Just as there are ways to advance or to leave prostitution, things can always get worse. There are still pimps in the city and an unlucky prostitute can find himself or herself under the control of a pimp. Another way to slide down is to keep working the streets but to lose physical attractiveness (due to injuries, age or other problems). These prostitutes make even less money and have to do even more dangerous and degrading things to survive. Worse still, there are small groups of people in the city who capture men and women and keep them complete prisoners, using their bodies to make money. These groups prefer to prey upon immigrants who know nothing of city ways, but prostitutes are considered the next best thing when immigrants can not be found.

Population- There are about 650 Sex Workers in the city (500 females, 150 males). About 130 (20%) are transgendered. The average age is 18. Of the 650, at any given time about 330 (51%) are walking the streets, 15 (2%) are working on-call via the internet, 55 (8%) work in brothels and massage parlors, 110 (17%) work for escort services, 75 (12%) work in strip clubs, 35 (5%) work in pornography studios, and about 30 (5%) are kept prisoner in three or four secret brothels throughout the city.

External Relations- Most people on the street see Sex Workers as another group of street people who have been forced to do something dangerous and unpleasant in order to survive. Only a small percentage of the population of people out on the streets are johns (about 2%, or 1,800). There are also a number of shut-ins who leave their homes in order to visit Sex Workers.

Freaks: Many Sex Workers come to Freak territory

during the quarterly Festival of the Freak hoping to make money. The Freaks tolerate their presence. There are some Freaks, however, whose "shows" appeal to mostly prurient interests and who might be considered by some to be Sex Workers. These Freaks often see Sex Workers as unwelcome competitors, and Sex Workers often feel that the Freaks set too high a standard with their kinky acts.

Sexologists: The opinions of Sexologists towards Sex Workers are complex and voluminous. Several net sites owned by Sexologists expound on these opinions and could fill whole paperback volumes. Most Sexologists feel that Sex Workers are victims of a "plague". That plague is an unhealthy relationship with sex, a relationship that is spiritually and psychologically destroying the Sex Workers (and everyone else involved with the sex industry). Sexologists believe that Sex Workers can never be healthy and happy until they can leave the sex industry and spend significant time repairing the damage that has been done to their relationship with sex. Sexologists can be seen wandering around the red light district, looking for pimps and other exploiters to beat up and trying to talk Sex Workers in to leaving the sex industry. Some Sex Workers have left the industry with the help of Sexologists, and many have even become Sexologists. The majority of Sex Workers, though, don't think they can leave the sex industry at this time. They are annoyed by Sexologists coming around telling them to do something they can't or won't do.

Hunters: A few Hunters have preyed upon Sex Workers, thinking of them as unclean things that need to be cleansed from the city. Sex Workers are understandably afraid of anyone who looks or acts like they might be a hunter.

Night Shift: Since most things that Sex Workers do is a crime, the Night Shift feel an obligation to harass them. However, prostitution is fairly low on the list of crimes the Night Shift are out to stop and most Sex Workers have little to fear from Night Shift officers. A few older Sex Workers even like the Night Shift (they remember the corrupt cops that used to come around threatening to put Sex Workers in jail if they would not have sex with the cops). Night Shift officers will try to grab Sex Workers who are clearly underage (to send off to child welfare), and so these typically hide whenever they see a Night Shift officer.

Typical Weapon- Sex Workers like small thin knives which can be strapped to the body and be mostly inconspicuous. A few who advance in the sex industry even pay for Skin Knives.

Turf- A majority of Sex Workers operate within the area known as the red light district. The red light district has loose boundaries and tends to encroach on other city areas. The red light district lies South of the hole and goes as far South as 34th street. It is generally bounded on the West by 8th Avenue (where Tea Drinker and Sexologist turfs begin) and on the East by 5th Avenue (where Risen turf begins). Broadway, a major thoroughfare in the city, angles Northwest through the red light district and is where a majority of the action of the red light district can be found. The streets are crawling with johns, Sex Workers, cult recruiters, muggers, Sexologists and others. The businesses along Broadway are mostly pornography stores, strip clubs and liquor stores. Most sex takes place in alleys off of Broadway, though there are a few cheap hotels nearby that give hourly rates. Off Broadway are

old buildings currently being used as pornography studios, strip clubs, massage parlors, etc. Somewhere in the red light district there is known to be at least one secret brothel where people (mostly young immigrant women, smuggled in to the US) are kept prisoner.

Distinguishing Features- When working, Sex Workers wear clothing as revealing as they can get away with considering the weather. They wear clothing which is often quite uncomfortable: ultra-tight jeans for men, tight short skirts and high-heels for women. Many prostitutes wear black tattoos showing they are in revenge pacts. Recognizing an on-duty prostitute is not difficult, since they shout offers at nearly everyone who passes them.

Symbols- Black triangles are the most common (and the nicest) symbol used to represent sex workers.

Slang

Around the World: v., a sex act that Sex Workers may be asked to engage in.

Business, The: n., prostitution or the sex industry in general..

Half-and-Half: v., a sex act that Sex Workers may be asked to engage in.

Hustler: n., male prostitute (who typically gets male customers).

John: n., a customer who wants to pay for sex.

Pimping: v., forcing someone to have sex for money (through psychological manipulation and physical violence) and taking some or all of that money.

Trick: n., a transaction of sex for money.

Bad Trick Sense (Uses AWR)- There are a lot of very dangerous johns in the city, if a Sex Worker goes with the wrong one her or she can get killed. Sex Workers who survive for long are either very lucky or have learned to make split second decisions about a john. This skill is a snap judgement on a person, about whether there is a possibility that they are dangerous, based on how the person is dressed, how they look, how they carry themselves and how they speak.

Easy (10)- After chatting with a john for a few minutes, tell whether he or she might be dangerous.

Moderate (20)- After being greeted by a john, tell whether he or she might be dangerous.

Hard (30)- After looking at a john, tell whether he or she might be dangerous.

Legendary (40)- Tell exactly what kind of kinky stuff a john is in to just by looking at him or her.

Skills

Skill Costs: ATH 7, BIO 9, CMBT 7, CRTV 9, INFO 13, MIL 11, PSY:M 20, PSY:S 20, TECH 14, THIE 5, SOC 10, STRT 5.

Special Skills: The special skill Bad Trick Sense costs only 10 skill points per level.

Income- \$100 +\$10/wk.

Special Bonus Characteristics

Pimped: (Optional Disadvantage) Gives 10 Bonus Points. The PC is unlucky enough to be under the control of one of the few pimps still operating in the city. The PC is dependent on the pimp, who takes all the money the PC makes and provides for all the PCs needs. The pimp survives because the PC is completely ignorant about how to survive on his or her own (PC starts with no levels of the City Knowledge skill). The pimp uses physical violence and psychological abuse to keep the PC down. The only benefit to being pimped is that the pimp has a financial motivation to protect the PC, and the PC may get in a situation where the pimp will use force to protect the PC.

PK: (Optional Advantage) Costs 5 Bonus Points. Some prostitutes have joined the Sexologists in their war on pimps, helping chase away or even kill pimps. Prostitutes who are believed to have killed their own pimps are afforded extra respect by the prostitution community, and most get a "PK" or "Pimp Killer" tattoo to help advertise their new status. A PC with this advantage is widely known to have killed his or her pimp.

Triangle: (Optional Advantage) Costs 5 Bonus Points. The PC wears the black tattoo of a triangle representing a mutual revenge pact entered in to with three fellow Sex Workers. The triangle is worn where it is visible as a deterrent against would be murderers. Although it acts as a valuable deterrent, it carries with it a dangerous duty: if one of the other Sex Workers is murdered, the PC will probably be tracked down and expected to avenge that death (or die trying).

Suggested Skills- Bad Trick Sense, Drug Resistance, Light Sleep, Seduction, Street Fighting: Unarmed.

Suggested Equipment- Dagger, Outfit: Clubwear, Pheromones.

Suggested Reading- Body Modification, Serial Killers.

Who is Better Off: a Sex Worker or a Drug Addict?

The distinction between the two is not always easy to make. Most Sex Workers use drugs at some point and most addicts resort to prostitution sometimes. Here is a general comparison of the average life of a starting member of these two groups:

Sex Workers meet friendly johns regularly.	Addicts meet good drug dealers occasionally.
Sex Workers are often beaten up or killed by johns or pimps.	Addicts are occasionally beaten up or killed by drug dealers or other addicts.
Sex Workers are common targets for cults.	Addicts are poor targets for cults because their addiction is usually stronger than the cult brainwashing.
Sex Workers can't trust johns or pimps, can usually trust other Sex Workers.	Addicts can't trust drug dealers or other addicts.
Many Sex Workers have mutual revenge pacts.	Few addicts have mutual revenge pacts.
Some Sex Workers advance by getting a better and safer job.	Addicts have few routes to advancement (becoming an errand runner for drug dealers is one of them).
The war on pimps by the Sexologists has been mostly successful.	The war on the Drug Lords by various city groups has been mostly unsuccessful.
Average life expectancy for a Sex Worker: 22.	Average life expectancy for an addict: 22
Percentage of people who escape from the sex industry (by a means other than death): 38%	Percentage of people who escape from addiction (by a means other than death): 11%

Thieves

In Brief- A member of one of many small street families that have survived, for generations, by stealing.

Favorable Stereotypes- Nonviolent, skillful, crafty, honest survivors.

Unfavorable Stereotypes- Devious, cowardly, remorseless victimizers.

Other Names- Burglar, Catburglar, Pickpocket, Sneak.

Origin- There is now, and always has been, two types of theft. The first is theft by force or threat of force, the second is subtle theft, stealing without the victim knowing about it. The second takes skills and techniques that are best developed over the course of several lifetimes. This requires a stable underclass of people who will be forced to resort to crime from one generation to the next.

The skill of thieves peaked in the cities of Victorian England. The state of society created a permanent criminal class. This class, generation after generation, perfected the arts of thievery and broke theft down in to multiple specializations, including pickpockets, "attic thieves," shoplifters, horse thieves and even dog thieves. The criminal class even had its own slang language which nobody else could understand. The Victorian thieves were some of the most skilled thieves ever, trained almost from birth in their particular arts. A wealth of knowledge was destroyed when social changes caused the criminal class to become unstable.

Welfare was one thing that kept cultures of theft from developing in many industrialized countries. Not everyone in the welfare age could or would live by welfare alone and many did turn to theft. Not every member of a family line turned to theft and thus there wasn't enough inter-generational stability to create a true criminal culture. The closest thing to Victorian criminal culture that the 20th century would see was prison culture. People in prisons and juvenile halls would receive training in criminal arts. Prison culture was brutal and dangerous and the best and brightest of the poor classes tended to avoid it.

In the first half of the 21st century, Several changes in American law, meant to combat illegal aliens and identity theft, made it progressively harder for people to prove they were US citizens and made it harder for people to get any kind of job at all without furnishing that proof. Shortly before the Freedom Wars, a new type of underclass began to show up in large inner cities: people born on the streets with no birth certificates. They would come to be known (after the Freedom Wars) as the Unborn, and they would become an underclass more likely to stay poor than even the Victorian criminal class. As early as the 2030s, families in New York have been making a living from theft and have been teaching the arts of theft to their children. The third or fourth generation members of these families are known simply as "Thieves".

Timeline

1837- Queen Victoria comes to the throne.
 1838- Oliver Twist, by Charles Dickens, published
 1901- Queen Victoria dies.
 1932- Great depression in US, 1st major federal funding for welfare.
 2030s- First thief families that still exist today.
 2040s- First appearance of an "unborn" class.

2060- 320 children born this year in NY to homeless midwives.

2079- 1000 children born this year in NY to homeless midwives.

Becoming- Most Thieves were raised to be Thieves. As small children, they were taught to provide distractions to help their parents and older siblings steal without getting caught. As young as five they were encouraged to learn to shoplift from stores. As young as seven, they might have been trained to pick pockets (and do quick hand-offs to their siblings in case the victim noticed). At around adolescence the young thief will have been taught the real tricks of the trade: picking locks, jimmying open windows, recognizing and turning off alarms, finding valuables hidden inside a house or apartment. When they reach their teenage years, Thieves are expected to be able to support themselves. At around fifteen, most Thieves leave home and soon start building their own families.

At adventure one, level one, the PC is an accomplished thief who has just left home. The PC still gets some support from his or her family (and supports them when they are in need) but the majority of time the PC is stealing only to feed himself or herself. The PC has not yet started his or her own family.

Lifestyle- For a Thief, everything is well-planned and well thought out in advance. Every contingency is thought of and a plan made for each. If they are seen, most Thieves have an escape route pre-planned, where they can run until out of sight and hide in a place they can not easily be found. Obstacles, from a confederate pretending to be a stumbling drunk to a tripwire, can be left behind to slow a pursuing victim. When a thief has confederates, valuables are almost always handed off to a confederate as soon as they are stolen. If there is no confederate, Thieves often hide the things they have stolen. That way, if the thief is caught he or she can protest innocence and show that he or she doesn't have the stolen item.

There are two places that people store their valuables: on their person, and locked up at a residence, business-place or storage facility. When Thieves go after valuables stored on someone's person, they use various forms of pocket picking. When Thieves go after valuables stored in a building or vehicle, they use burglary.

Pocket Picking: Most people in the city know to check their pockets after anyone bumps in to or brushes up against them. Some people will grab or hit anyone who touches them in any way. So, thieves usually look for less recognizable forms of pocket picking. Some Thieves cut holes through the seats on subway cars so they can stick their hands through and pick the pockets of someone in a seat in front of them. Some Thieves simply follow people around, waiting them to get careless and set down a valuable item for just a second. In winter, Thieves often steal jackets left lying around in restaurants and bars. Crowds are also a favorite of Thieves, who can usually pick pockets without anyone checking their pockets. There are few crowds in the city. The largest public event is the quarterly Festival of the Freak, and Thieves are out in force at this event. Thieves may even try to manufacture their own crowds by doing things like staging fights. Thieves also have tricks to distract people so that those people don't realize that someone else is brushing up next to them. A common ploy is for one Thief to loudly accuse someone of some crime while another picks the accused's pocket.

Some Thieves hang out near ATM machines, waiting to see someone put in their pin number. When the person leaves, the thief (or a different thief) picks their pocket and uses the ATM card to take out as much as they can (most banks have a \$200 per day limit).

Burglary: They key to a successful burglary is casing the place to be burgled. Casing allows Thieves to establish when the building will be unoccupied (or, save that, when the people occupying it will be asleep or in VR) and what security measures exist.

Getting in to a building is often the most hazardous part of burglary, because at that point the Thief is in danger of being noticed both by people outside and by people inside. A good approach is vital for a Thief, and Thieves love hedges and fences that can mask their approach to a building. Second best is a dark alley or a poorly lit street. The city is slow at replacing street lights and many security conscious building owners have their own lights installed on the sides of buildings. A thief might break one or two of these lights during the day to prepare for an unseen entry at night.

Some thieves have been known to cut holes in walls, ceilings or floors to gain entrance to a building. This is especially useful when an in-use building has a shared wall with an abandoned building. Most times Thieves enter through a door or window or skylight. Doors can be jimmied open, forced open or the locks picked, but are most likely to be alarmed. First floor windows are the most heavily protected (solid bars and alarms) and skilled Thieves usually try to enter through a window on an upper floor or a skylight on the roof. Even these windows have bars, but they are likely to be old bars that can be sawed or pulled off easily.

Once a thief gets in to a building undetected, the next trick is to grab as much valuable stuff as possible as quickly as possible. Thieves know the weight-to-black-market-value ratio of everything they might run in to. They know where people like to hide things and they have a standard search pattern. They know the quickest ways to break in to lock boxes. Some Thieves have the expertise that will let them get in to safes, but most ignore safes and focus on things they can grab easily.

Social Structure- The Black Meds were once separate families that practiced street medicine. These families eventually coalesced in to one large family. The same thing happened to the Crackers and Insomniacs. Thieves, on the other hand, have shown no signs that they are coalescing. Instead, there are hundreds of families spread throughout the city, most aware of the existence of only a few other families. This independence and anonymity suits the Thieves: they can live somewhere without their

neighbors knowing that they are Thieves, and there is no place for an angry victim to go looking for revenge.

It does benefit a thief to get to know a few other Thieves. Fellow Thieves can get together to act as confederates or lookouts. Small teams of Thieves may assemble to take on very lucrative jobs where there is a lot of security to deal with. Despite the fact that they sometimes work together, there are no Thief "hangouts", no shared language (except among Thieves from the same family) and since they don't advertise that they are Thieves, meetings are uncommon. Thieves may even pay black market traders to hook them up with other Thieves.



Advancement- The easiest way to advance as a thief is to reinvest money in to better equipment which can help the thief take on bigger and better jobs. Having some money saved up can also let a Thief take a break from the normal day-to-day jobs while he or she plans something big. Money also allows Thieves to hire non-Thieves (especially Crackers) and to bribe security guards and people working inside a building. Thieves who have saved up some money usually try to rob from the homes of the city's wealthiest people (black market traders, hunters, Drug Lord kings) and from corporate offices. A very tiny minority of Thieves will gain enough money, skills, equipment and dependable confederates that they can become international super-thieves, stealing from institutions around the world. Many Thieves who gain enough money and experience to take on jobs in other cities are so tired of the stressful life of a Thief that they prefer to retire and live like a well.

Population- There are about 1,700 Thieves and members of small Thief families in the city.

External Relations- Thieves rarely steal from other street people: the potential profit is very low and the potential trouble they would get in to if caught is as high as if they robbed some Indie. Thus most street people feel relatively safe around people who they know are Thieves.

Con-Artists: For the last decade there has been a known rivalry between the Thieves, who steal by skill and stealth, and con artists, who steal by tricking people. Jacks sometimes con people, and Thieves sometimes go after them, but Thieves most love to go after wells and indies who run big moneymaking scams. There are many stories (probably exaggerated, possibly false) of Thieves ratting out con artists out of a philosophical objection to conning people. No one is quite sure how this rivalry started, but many Thieves have been happy to take on the rivalry: it improves the public's feelings towards Thieves and thus helps a caught Thief talk his or her way out of a beating.

Crackers: Thieves may hire other Street People to help them with jobs (and visa versa). The most commonly hired are Crackers. In some cases, the relationship is so strong that Thieves have married or been adopted in to the Crackers.

Night Shift and Security Guards: Thieves are the bane of the Night Shift and of private security guards. The Night Shift are only embarrassed by the huge number of unsolved crimes that Thieves cause. Security guards, on the other hand, can lose their jobs if a thief gets by them. For this reason, security guards are often very violent when they do catch Thieves.

Roofers and Siders: In their constant patrols, Siders and Roofers often come across Thieves climbing buildings or sneaking around rooftops trying to get in to buildings. Roofers typically beat up Thieves they find trespassing on their rooftops. Siders often alert the owners of the building the Thieves are trying to break in to. Although they would never admit it, Siders and Roofers are often pissed off to see someone moving on their turf at a level of

skill and ease approaching their own.

Traders: Thieves work intimately with black market traders, selling stolen goods and procuring burglary tools. Some Traders have Thieves who they call to help with special jobs.

Typical Weapon- Knife.

Turf- Thieves are spread throughout the city, living in mostly in abandoned buildings.

Distinguishing Features- When they are not out stealing (or are out picking pockets), Thieves look just like normal street people. Many Thieves have a nice suit (probably stolen) hidden in their belongings in case they need to try to bluff their way past the front desk of an office building. When they are out for burglary, they tend to wear dark colored clothing that lets them hide in the shadows (but never full-black jumpsuits, which could make them look too suspicious if someone was to notice them hanging around).

Symbols- A keyhole with a lockpick sticking in it is a common symbol used by graffiti artists to denote a Thief.

Skills

Free Skills: Alarm Systems (1), Lock Picking (1), Pocket Picking (1).

Skill Costs: ATH 5, BIO 9, CMBT 7, CRTV 6, INFO 9, MIL 9, PSY:M 18, PSY:S 18, TECH 7, THIE 3, SOC 9, STRT 5.

Income- \$300 +\$25/wk.

Suggested Skills- Alarm Systems, Auto-Theft, Climbing, Escape Artistry, Forgery, Internet Browsing, Lock Picking, Microelectronics, Pocket Picking, Prowling.

Suggested Equipment- Crowbar, Bolt Cutters, Lock Picks: Professional, Nightvision Goggles: Cheap, Rope and Grapple.

Suggested Reading- Alarm Systems (p.181), Black Market, Criminals.

WELL GANGS

Animalists

In Brief- Use mental programming to experience animal-like consciousness, believe that intelligence is only one tool for achieving instinctual desires.

Favorable Stereotypes- Passionate, willful, fast-reflexes, intense, self-aware, emotionally balanced, down-to-earth.

Unfavorable Stereotypes- Primitive, barbaric, thoughtless, violent, oversexed, unpredictable, amoral.

Distinguishing Features- Animal-ists wear affectations that remind them of their favorite animal. They wear clothing adorned with patches of (vat-grown) fur, feathers or scales. They have weapons that approximate the natural weaponry of animals: fangs, claws, horns. Some of these weapons are built in to armor (e.g. a glove with built in claws) while other weapons are actual biological implants. These affectations are not purely a matter of

fashion: Animalists spend so much time in a simulation of being their animal that they feel more comfortable when they can feel the fur on their arms or scratch at a wall with their claws.

Bleeders

In Brief- Exert psychic influence on others by using samples of peoples' blood.

Favorable Stereotypes- Ambitious, powerful, cautious.

Unfavorable Stereotypes- Devious, back-stabbing, Machiavellian extortionists and assassins.

Distinguishing Features- Bleeders wear dark red and black clothing, covering as much of their bodies as possible (long sleeves, turtlenecks). Besides identifying them as Bleeders, this style of clothing also hides Blood stains so that when two Bleeders are fighting, one will not know when the other one is injured and bleeding.

Freaks

In Brief- Members of a chaotic freak show troupe that make money by holding wild carnivals.

Favorable Stereotypes- Wild, entertaining, creative, truly odd with incredible willpower.

Unfavorable Stereotypes- Immoral, immature con-artists and wanna-be-psychopaths. Sycophants to Habey Cox (a narcissist windbag).

Distinguishing Features- Freaks come in a wide variety of shapes and sizes. While a few look completely normal, most have changed their appearance with bizarre forms of dress, tattoos and scarification, piercings and implanted spikes and bizarre surgical modification. Those with extremely bizarre body modifications, however, often keep their modifications hidden (only paying customers are allowed to look). "Fetish" clothing (leather straps, chains, corsets, masks, etc.) is also common among Freaks.

Humankalorie

In Brief- Students of an alien culture and martial arts system, have adopted the lifestyle of and become part of the society of the Clowdian (Kalor) aliens.

Favorable Stereotypes- Proud, wise, believe strongly in duty, justice and order, always looking to prove and improve themselves.

Unfavorable Stereotypes- Sad wannabes, pretend to be something they aren't, obtuse and inflexible.

Distinguishing Features- Humankalorie get tattoos under their eyes of vertical parallel black lines going down to the cheekbone. Humankalorie carry Kalor weapons with them at almost all times. The Humankalorie also wear straps around their necks, upper arms, and thighs. These straps can be of any material, though they are usually black leather, and most contain round holes. The Clowdian straps are also often worn in other places: on wrists, as belts, sewn to the cuffs of shirts and pants, etc. Some Humankalorie wear red colored contact lenses.

Hummingbirds

In Brief- Dance-club attendees who take drugs to enhance their metabolism and let them dance harder and faster.

Favorable Stereotypes- Athletic, artistic, passionate, energetic, attractive, life-loving.

Unfavorable Stereotypes- Hyperactive, drug-addicted, impulsive, randomly violent, inattentive, sensation seeking, shallow, lookist.

Distinguishing Features- Few other groups in the city spend more effort on their appearance. Hummingbirds wear clothing appropriate for much warmer temperatures. Exposed shoulders, backs and midriffs are common. Hair is usually short, both on men and women. Hummingbirds typically have water bottles and candy on their persons, usually visible. Hummingbirds tend to be skinny and muscular. Hummingbird style is usually a senseless mishmash of goth, gutterpunk, mod and old school gang. Some hummingbirds wear bright colors, mirrored clothing or patches, or flexible LEDs which show psychedelic patterns. Others wear all gray and semi-permanently dye their hair and skin gray.

Hungry

In Brief- Victims of a drug overdose causing permanent anhedonia (inability to feel pleasure), keep themselves going with artificially implanted hunger to seek revenge on the Drug Lords that created them.

Favorable Stereotypes- Strong, determined, well organized, singular in purpose, self-controlled, willful, hard to kill.

Distinguishing Features- The most prominent feature of the Hungry is their size: they are all huge and muscular. Many have old signs of addiction: bad skin, missing teeth, needle tracks. They all have a tendency to wear black leather.

Immortals

In Brief- Young students who speed their acquisition of psychic skills by absorbing the memories of powerful psychics. Achieve "immortality" by passing down their memories through generations.

Favorable Stereotypes- Wise, always concerned with the bigger picture, unafraid of death, broadly experienced with many psychic skills.

Unfavorable Stereotypes- Living vicariously through others, pretend to be wise, enslaved to hundreds of debts, promises and grudges.

Distinguishing Features- Some immortals wear cloaks, others wear normal street clothes. Most wear jewelry made from bones, and a few have bone weapons.

Math Addicts

In Brief- Use mental programming to become human calculators with incredible powers of prediction, accuracy and analysis in everything from politics to combat.

Favorable Stereotypes- Intelligent, insightful, spiritual, precise, analytical, logical, full of useful info.

Unfavorable Stereotypes- Mystical, eccentric, obsessive compulsive, head-in-clouds, intellectual snobs.

Distinguishing Features- Math Addicts vary greatly in appearance. Math Addicts tend to be either very in to fashion and style (very precise mod/corp style) or not in to it at all (homeless/grunge style, often with sandals). Lately, light brown has become an unofficial gang color of the Math Addicts and many wear beige clothing. Math Addicts almost always wear something (patch, tattoo, broach) with an infinity symbol on it.

Mem Junkies

In Brief- Addicts to mental programs that enhance the emotional recall of memories. Mem-junkies seek out emotional experiences as if they were drugs.

Favorable Stereotypes- Unfortunate addicts, yet wise about memories and emotions.

Unfavorable Stereotypes- Damaged, desperate, dangerous addicts; aliens in the real world.

Distinguishing Features- Mem Junkies are a decade older than other gang members. They tend to be thin and pale. Many wear a style that went out of fashion years ago (a military goth look with a lot of olive colored military dress coats with pointy shoulders). Many tattoo on their bodies or write on their clothing the names of emotions. Many have long hair, beards and other signs of poor attention to personal grooming. Many wear sunglasses.

Needle Punks

In Brief- Gang of young pharmaceutical artists who experiment on themselves with drug cocktails and have learned to deal with potentially lethal side-effects.

Favorable Stereotypes- Creative, fearless pharmaceutical geniuses with encyclopedic knowledge of drug interactions and effects, who can push their bodies to do almost anything.

Unfavorable Stereotypes- Reckless, self-destructive, suicidal junkies and criminals with no respect for health, longevity or nature.

Distinguishing Features- Younger Needle Punks can be recognized by rows of pre-filled syringed strapped to their bodies. The syringes are often color-coded. Needle Punks have pale skin with acne, sunken eyes, are skinny, have missing teeth, thinning hair and slightly cloudy eyes. When the Needle Punks show much skin, needle marks all over their bodies (especially at the veins) can be seen.

Night Shift

In Brief- Young cops with gang-attitude. Refuse to become corrupt. Break the rules in order to punish criminals.

Favorable Stereotypes- Brave, honorable, willing to take on evil no matter how powerful it is, with a strong sense of justice.

Unfavorable Stereotypes- A hypocritical, xenophobic, arrogant, self-important lynch mob.

Distinguishing Features- Night Shift members wear cheap dark blue uniforms with chrome buttons and yellow "NYPD" lettering, black leather boots, and gold-colored badges in clear plastic envelopes on hips, chests or on a chain around the neck. Night Shift officers also adorn their uniforms with other add-ons, mostly military surplus: camo jackets and hats, non-issued armor and helmets, web belts, etc.

Orphans

In Brief- Once kids in an orphanage who revolted against abusers, now adults sworn to protect children.

Favorable Stereotypes- Wise, wary, brave, dutiful, at every age they are willing to die to protect those younger.

Unfavorable Stereotypes- Paranoid, cultish, homophobic, unreasonably afraid of adults, willing to turn small children in to soldiers.

Distinguishing Features- Younger orphans wear the cheap uniforms provided by the state: two piece, grey, with a red trim. These uniforms are often ripped, stained, scrawled with graffiti and patched up. Even young adult still have old shirts, threadbare and mostly patches, which they wear as jackets over their normal clothes. All "adult" Orphans have the end of the little finger from one hand chopped off, as a sign of loyalty to the other Orphans.

Roofers

In Brief- Own the rooftops, which they can travel quickly and leap between fearlessly. At constant war with the Siders.

Favorable Stereotypes- Proud, fearless, party-loving daredevils and expert acrobats.

Unfavorable Stereotypes- Arrogant, territorial, selfish, warlike, think that might-makes-right.

Distinguishing Features- Roofers like to wear things that will flap in the breeze when they jump: capes, trinkets on strings, ribbons, etc. They also distinguish themselves by wearing checkerboard-patterned patches or clothing.

Risen

In Brief- Violent gang with much infighting. Many members faked their own death, many get implants, all are infected with mitochondrial vampirism.

Favorable Stereotypes- Hard-to-kill, fearless, lustful, seeking intense experiences and willing to change.

Unfavorable Stereotypes- Amoral, violent, remorseless, bloodthirsty criminals and fugitives.

Distinguishing Features- Most wear tight black clothing, often with holes from battles and other injuries. Most have low-light vision implants and wear sunglasses even at night. Most have visible implants such as fangs and claws.

Siders

In Brief- Split off from Roofers, now at war with them. Expert climbers with high-tech gear who travel on the sides of buildings.

Favorable Stereotypes- Brave, innovative, pioneering, self-reliant, highly-skilled, proud.

Unfavorable Stereotypes- Vengeful, myopic, obsessed, impractical, stubborn, violent gang with an inferiority complex.

Distinguishing Features- Siders wear clothing with black and white stripes. They are also usually seen wearing climbing gear: from the most primitive (ropes, pitons, hammers) to the most complex (gloves and shoes that use secondary nanotech gels to climb walls). Almost every Sider carried a crossbow.

Skin Borgs

In Brief- Warlike, expansionist gang. Wear multiple layers of high-tech armor. Social structure of violence and intimidation.

Favorable Stereotypes- Strong, unashamed, willful, honest, know what they want, don't justify their actions with ideologies.

Unfavorable Stereotypes- Violent, brutal, stupid, prejudiced, ignorant, paranoid, small-minded throwbacks and conquerors.

Distinguishing Features- The Skin Borgs wear one or more skins: high-tech armors made of materials so thin that they resemble jumpsuits. Some Skin Borgs wear helmets, others wear armored masks (looking much like ski masks) and some let their heads go unprotected. Powerful Skin Borgs wear several layers of armor on top of each other. The outer skin is usually spray-painted black with personal decorations and symbols in brighter colors. Some Skin Borgs wear old leather belts wrapped around waists, biceps and thighs. Many have taken steroids or gotten muscle implants and are physically large.

Technophiles

In Brief- Small, loose group, obsessed with the art of technology, favoring a hands-on approach to tech.

Favorable Stereotypes- Smart, funny, altruistic, knowledgeable, intuitive, always looking for a challenge.

Unfavorable Stereotypes- Physically and emotional weak, impractical, obsessive, easily distracted geeks with poor social skills.

Distinguishing Features- Some technophiles like to make their own clothes. Natural fabrics, undyed, are common. The clothing is fairly simple, much of it looks like something peasants might have worn during the renaissance or middle ages. Those who do not wear homemade clothing usually wear old ripped jeans and torn t-shirts from thrift stores with a lot of grease stains on them. Technophiles rarely go anywhere without either tools or a portable computer. Many wear patches with gears or wrenches to let people know that they are technophiles.

NON-GANG WELLS

Cornerpunks

In Brief- Members of gangs too small to make a name for themselves on the citywide gang scene.

Favorable Stereotypes- Unambitious, humble, with simple needs and strong friendships.

Unfavorable Stereotypes- Ignorant, lazy, small time bullies, thugs and drug addicts with delusions of grandeur.

Distinguishing Features- Most cornerpunks are easy to recognize because they are seldom seen on the street without a small group of friends with them. Corner gangs may use an abbreviation for their corner to identify them, others may choose some affectation, like a red and green ribbon sewn on the arms of a jacket, or a brown dragon patch.

Freelancers

In Brief- Young Wells with no particular allegiance to any gang, philosophy or lifestyle. Commonly security guards or mercenaries.

Favorable Stereotypes- Tough, self-sufficient, unique, free from attachments and willing to experiment with just about anything.

Unfavorable Stereotypes- Greedy, unintelligent, un-empathetic, un-loyal, morally flexible bullies living pointless "unexamined lives."

Distinguishing Features- Since they have no symbols of gang membership to make people think twice about messing with them, Freelancers are forced to display whatever they do have in full view: weapons, armor, implants and even muscles are purposefully exposed.

Goods

In Brief- Drug dealers who believe that they are making the world a better place by offering addicts cheaper and safer drugs than the Drug Lords do.

Favorable Stereotypes- Compassionate, humble, utilitarian, realistic, brave, friendly, knowledgeable, helpful, non-preachy.

Unfavorable Stereotypes- Selfish, greedy, cowardly, exploitative, hypocritical, two-faced criminals.

Distinguishing Features- Most Goods hide the fact that they are Goods and do not wear distinctive clothing. A few Goods wear the style of wealthy drug dealers from the Old Times: nice suits with glowing clothing (made from electroluminescent fibers). Glowing ties are the most common affectation, often with happy faces on them.

Neos

In Brief- Visitor from neo-cultural commune (a commune that tried to revive elements from ancient cultures).

Favorable Stereotypes- Wise, healthy, self-sufficient, living by values of honor, compassion and responsibility.

Unfavorable Stereotypes- Unpredictable, eccentric, anachronistic, cultish, impractical.

Distinguishing Features- Neos wear a mix of modern and traditional clothing, choosing whatever parts of the two appeal to them. They may wear modern clothing (pants, shirts, jackets) for convenience but will adorn themselves with traditional jewelry, tattoos or ritual scarring. They may carry traditional weapons when in the city. Many Neos are not oriented to material goods and will wear whatever they can buy cheapest at a thrift store.

Workers

In Brief- Work hard for a day's pay in legitimate city industries and don't do much else.

Favorable Stereotypes- Honest, committed, hard working, mature people who enjoy doing a good job and earning a week's pay.

Unfavorable Stereotypes- Sub-average intelligence, ignorant and prejudiced, corporate wannabes, exploited by the capitalist system.

Distinguishing Features- Industrial workers on their way home from work are typically muscular, tired looking and dirty, wearing dirty jeans or coveralls. Government workers typically wear either ill-fitting and fraying suits, or agency uniform jumpsuits (often with florescent orange safety jackets on-top of them). Service industry workers typically travel to and from work wearing whatever silly uniform and name badge is required of them.

INDIE GANGS

Arcadians

In Brief- Indie gang whose lives revolve around playing games. They have great knowledge of strategy, quick reflexes and have been known to manipulate events within the city.

Favorable Stereotypes- Brilliant and invaluable consultants, strategists and manipulators.

Unfavorable Stereotypes- Obsessed gamblers, heartlessly toy with human lives, think they are smarter and therefore better.

Distinguishing Features- Black clothing seems to be the universal style of the Arcadians, occasionally accented with fluorescent colors. Most Arcadians wear expensive gloves and tinted glasses.

Boarders

In Brief- Thrill seekers on high-tech slipboards, speeding through the city doing tricks and ignoring boundaries of turf.

Favorable Stereotypes- Fun, easygoing, independent, forgiving, highly skilled, apolitical.

Unfavorable Stereotypes- Immature punks, marijuana addicts, vandals, disrespectful, clowns, full of false bravado and delusions of immortality, oblivious to the rest of the city.

Distinguishing Features- Boarders tend to wear baggy clothing. They like to wear thick fabrics, like denim, flannel and leather. They dislike, however, any armor that impedes their movement. Many wear gloves and some wear goggles. Stickers and patches given out as promotional items by board and board-part manufacturers are applied liberally to themselves and their boards. The best distinguishing feature of a Boarder is a tricked out slipboard.

Dragons

In Brief- Believe they are the destructive force of nature (the “dragon” of mythology) incarnate in a human form.

Favorable Stereotypes- Spiritual, wise, creative, intense, powerful, wild, respectful of nature.

Unfavorable Stereotypes- Destructive, deluded cultists, under the control of an egomaniacal poet.

Distinguishing Features- The easiest way to recognize a Dragon is by his or her armor: when a wild hunt is possible, Dragons have a green-plastic insulation armor that includes a hood, gloves and special shoe inserts. Over that is usually worn some other form of armor, usually with plates made to look like reptile scales. Clothing tends to be green and made of “natural” fabrics (silk, cotton, leather). Many Dragons wear jewelry, clothing or tattoos that they designed personally. Claws and fangs are a common implants among Dragons.

Omniscients

In Brief- A group of obsessed technology hobbyists who use technology to expand their senses.

Favorable Stereotypes- Thoughtful, insightful, cutting edge techies, always gathering and sharing knowledge.

Unfavorable Stereotypes- Fat, lazy, disinterested voyeurs.

Distinguishing Features- Many Omniscients live a sedentary lifestyle and this shows in their physique. Omniscients are very meticulous in their grooming and like to wear very comfortable clothing: silks, velvets, felt, etc. The most notable feature on Omniscients is the presence of the external protrusions of sensory implants.

Purists

In Brief- Members of a cult/gang who believe that their physical, mental and spiritual health is dependent on their keeping themselves free from chemical, emotional and psychic pollution.

Favorable Stereotypes- Ambitious, healthy, self-controlled, vice-free, monk-like.

Unfavorable Stereotypes- Paranoid, cultish, vengeful, miserable, prejudiced pollution-phobics.

Distinguishing Features- When they are outside, the Purists always wear shiny-grey biohazard suits with a mask over their face. The suit lets moisture and oxygen in and out but nothing else. The suits are skin tight and Purists wear clothing over their suit when it is cold out.

Sexologists

In Brief- Use sex to facilitate psychic bonding for physical and psychological therapy.

Favorable Stereotypes- True altruists with genuine love for every person, fighting for the psychological and spiritual health of city residents.

Unfavorable Stereotypes- A cult of puritanical homophobic busybodies who think there’s only one right way to have sex.

Distinguishing Features- Some Sexologists have can be recognized by their psychically enhanced sexual attractiveness. Sexologists wear clothing which is simple and modest yet flattering. They avoid clothing that looks slutty, flashy or complicated, yet they do enjoy showing off the human shape.

Tea Drinkers

In Brief- Reviving the ancient Indian “Soma” drink which gives psychic powers.

Favorable Stereotypes- Insightful, intuitive, psychics, are respectful of the past and have knowledge of the future.

Unfavorable Stereotypes- Arrogant, rich kids, buy soma as a status symbol, minds clouded by hallucinations.

Distinguishing Features- Some Tea Drinkers wear hooded trenchcoats (often light-brown with silver buttons). Almost all Tea Drinkers carry around large steel thermoses to keep their tea in. Many Tea Drinkers wear the Bollywood style.

INDIE NON-GANGS

Eccentrics

In Brief- Older people with a lot of experience who have decided for aesthetic or philosophical reasons to be out on the streets.

Favorable Stereotypes- Wise, observant, unique viewpoint, independent, calm, principled, interesting.

Unfavorable Stereotypes- Intellectual loners, odd, extremists, incapable of being part of a social unit.

Distinguishing Features- Most Eccentrics are older than the average person out on the street. Eccentrics rarely try to keep up with city fashions and wear clothes that either were fashionable in their day or are selected just to be comfortable.

Hunters

In Brief- Make a sport out of hunting people. Some hunt innocent people, others hunt criminals, serial killers, Colins, even evil hunters.

Favorable Stereotypes- Disciplined, sophisticated, well equipped, patient, objective, cleaning the worst elements from the city.

Unfavorable Stereotypes- Cold, heartless, cowardly, sociopathic vigilante killers.

Distinguishing Features- Hunters try not to distinguish themselves, but they often wear city camouflage (dark, almost black grays, and occasionally homemade trash suits). They often have sensory tech on: telescopic, infra-red or nigh-vision goggles. They can often be seen carrying weapons that aren't common in the city, like rifles.

Night Walkers

In Brief- Roam the streets (usually at night), getting in to adventures and broadcasting their experiences live on the net for profit.

Favorable Stereotypes- Spontaneous, quick witted, funny, brave, interesting to be around.

Unfavorable Stereotypes- Hyperactive, narcissistic daredevils with no respect for privacy.

Distinguishing Features- Night Walkers make it a point to wear very comfortable clothing. Otherwise, most Night Walkers dress plainly. Gloves and either bulky clothing or some sort of hip-pack or backpack are necessary to conceal the plug and handjack. Night Walkers rarely smoke.

Sat Jumpers

In Brief- Engineers in the high-danger field of on-site satellite repair. They work for a small company in the city.

Favorable Stereotypes- Independent, self-sufficient, fearless techs with brilliant repair skills.

Unfavorable Stereotypes- Eccentric, cranky, greedy loners.

Distinguishing Features- Sat Jumpers can often be identified by the pressure suits they wear and their propensity for carrying their tools with them even when they are not on duty. When they want to be identified as Sat Jumpers, many Sat Jumpers wear polo-shirts or jackets with an SRC logo patch on them.

Traders

In Brief- The heart of the city's black market. They collect networks of resources to obtain merchandise and their homes are stores holding just about everything.

Favorable Stereotypes- Friendly, helpful, well-connected, savvy, wise.

Unfavorable Stereotypes- Profiteering, immoral, greedy, lazy, fat con-artists.

Distinguishing Features- Although some Traders are as athletic as any gang member, many others are not so fit or may even be physically handicapped. More than a few Traders have dwarfism. More than any other group, Traders tend to have death-borg implants.

Utopia Children

In Brief- Young adults who were raised in radical utopianist communes to have advanced "values" and sent in to the city to spread those values.

Favorable Stereotypes- Incredible friends, incredible community members, altruistic, compassionate, stable, highly educated, calm, well-rounded.

Unfavorable Stereotypes- Smarmy, ignorant, vain, meddling, moralistic, with a false sense of superiority and a shallow view of the universe.

Distinguishing Features- Most Utopia Children have remarkably good teeth, and skin that is free from scars and blemishes. Most Utopia Children are what the average city resident would consider physically attractive. Though they tend towards simple (humble) clothing, Utopia Children tend to be quite meticulous about their clothing and grooming, with clean clothes and perfect haircuts. A few Utopia Children wear blue gloves.

Volunteers

In Brief- Advantaged charity workers who take to the streets to help less advantaged people.

Favorable Stereotypes- Altruistic, educated, friendly, compassionate, willing to get their hands dirty and risk their own safety to help the needy.

Unfavorable Stereotypes- Arrogant, moralistic proselytizers who interfere with things they don't understand.

Distinguishing Features- Volunteers usually carry around large metal thermoses. They also often have notebooks or handheld computers. Most wear simple clothing like jeans and sweats.

Y1s

In Brief- Entrepreneurs, taking advantage of the low cost of doing business in the city to start new businesses (most of which either fail or are bought by corps within the first year).

Favorable Stereotypes- Brilliant, ambitious down to earth business people, willing to throw themselves in to a project and get their hands dirty.

Unfavorable Stereotypes- Outsiders, ignorant of city ways, obsessed with money and success. Blind to anything beyond simple capitalism.

Distinguishing Features- Y1s often wear a fancy black suit and tie, carefully groomed hair, conservative makeup and jewelry. A few go for a geekier or trendier look.