

DAREdevil CHAMPIONS



Steven S. Long

DARK CHAMPIONS

A Genre Book for the *Hero System*

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DEDICATION

To my good friend John Grigni, the Mad GM, who put up with my early efforts to explore the vigilante side of Champions and made them as fun as possible.



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INTRODUCTION



Action-adventure has always been one of the most popular genres for fiction, comic books, and movies. The writings of Ian Fleming and Tom Clancy, the exploits of heroes like Batman and the Punisher, and countless action movies transport the reader (or viewer) to a world that's just like the real world... only more exciting, more filled with danger and glamor, and more in need of heroes — men and women willing to fight the good fight to protect society from the predators ever eager to exploit and harm it.

Naturally, gamers who enjoy this sort of genre fiction want to emulate it in roleplaying games. They can envision all sorts of characters they want to play — from comic book vigilantes, to spies, to elite soldiers, and more — and adventures they want to have. That's where this book, *Dark Champions*, comes in. It provides all the resources you need to use the *HERO System* to create modern-day action-adventure characters and scenarios every bit as exciting as those you read or watch.

Chapter One, *Action And Adventure: The Dark Champions Genre*, reviews the genre as a whole, including its subgenres (such as espionage and technothriller), general character creation guidelines, and how it interacts with other genres and metagenres. If you don't know much about the genre, or you're looking for some inspiration for a character or campaign, this is the place to start.

Chapter Two, *Vigilantes, Spies, And Special Forces: Character Creation*, covers the broad topic of creating characters for *Dark Champions* games. It has four sections. The first includes an extensive selection of Package Deals from law enforcement, espionage, the military, and other sources appropriate for the genre. The second reviews the *HERO System's* game elements — Skills, Powers, and the like. It explains how they function in *Dark Champions* campaigns, and provides optional, variant, or expanded rules for them to better simulate the genre. The third section provides over 100 “super-skills” — special abilities often possessed by characters in the *Dark Champions* genre. The fourth section introduces a new rule, Resource Points, to help players and GMs better manage the amount and type of equipment and other resources characters have.

Chapter Three, *Traces Of Crime: Forensics*, is a basic but fact-filled discussion of the subjects of criminalistics and forensic pathology. Trace evidence of crime, determining the cause of death, and other forensic matters factor into many different types of *Dark Champions* adventures, and this chapter provides players and GMs with enough information to introduce those elements into their games.

Chapter Four, *Firefights And Fists: Combat And Adventuring*, expands the *HERO System* combat rules to help players and GMs run the most exciting gunfights and action encounters possible.

Chapter Five, *The Arsenal: Weapons*, lets you equip your character to fight his battles. It has rules for creating firearms, ammunition, and gun accessories in the *HERO System*, plus information about creating other types of weapons. It also includes extensive lists of real-world weapons in *HERO System* terms so you can pick the gun your character needs to get the job done.

If your character needs something other than weapons, check out Chapter Six, *Field Gear*. It includes body armor, communications and reconnaissance gear, spy gadgets, and many other types of equipment for modern-day adventurers.

Chapter Seven, *The Enemy*, describes the adversaries who confront *Dark Champions* characters. It covers organized crime, terrorist groups, and other opponents your heroes have to fight and defeat.

Chapter Eight, *Running The Gauntlet: Gamemastering Dark Champions*, is for the GM's eyes only. It provides general guidelines and advice for running modern-day action-adventure games, ranging from campaign style and tone to how best to use villains and NPCs.

Chapter Nine provides some sample characters to inspire the players and give GMs some resources to work with. It includes five heroes — members of LIBRA, a secret army devoted to taking back the streets from the criminals — and five villains. Players are free to read the sample PCs, but should not read the villains unless they have permission to do so from their GM.

AUTHOR'S NOTE: WHAT HAS GONE BEFORE

Writing this book really makes me feel like I've come full circle in the gaming industry. *Dark Champions* was what got me started as a game designer and writer.

Way back in the misty depths of time — 1986, to be precise — I was becoming vaguely dissatisfied with the usual *Champions* four-color approach to crimefighting in my group's games. As a “Builder” (someone who likes to make positive, lasting changes to the campaign setting), I found the whole “fight them, lock them up, they escape, fight them again” cycle frustrating. Intrigued by characters with a darker, harder, more “practical” edge — DC Comics's Batman and the Vigilante, Marvel Comics's the Punisher and the Scourge of the Underworld, and others like them — I set out to create

OTHER RESOURCES

In addition to *Dark Champions*, Hero Games publishes many other books gamers playing in or running modern-day action-adventure campaigns may find useful. These include:

The HERO System Bestiary, which includes many real-world animals that will provide any GM with plenty of adversaries for the PCs (guard dogs, sharks, scorpions...).

The Ultimate Martial Artist, which not only contains dozens of real-world martial arts styles suitable for *Dark Champions* games, but a long list of Asian melee weapons.

The Ultimate Vehicle, which has expanded rules for creating and using Vehicles in the *HERO System*. It includes dozens of sample vehicles, many suitable for modern-day games. Its companion volume, *The HERO System Vehicle Sourcebook*, contains over 140 vehicles, most of them from the modern day.

Gadgets And Gear, which is intended for *Champions* characters but includes many weapons and devices that would be appropriate for certain types of *Dark Champions* characters.

such a character. The result was a PC I named the Harbinger of Justice.

I played Harbinger for years, under several GMs, no doubt driving some of them crazy as I ruthlessly whittled down their rogues' galleries of carefully-prepared villains. I loved every minute of it. Not only was I scratching my itch to have a positive impact on the campaign world, the character was like a morality play in miniature: everything he did had to be evaluated according to his precise and rigid standards, with the least mistake likely to lead to disaster. It was a fascinating exploration of the topics of Justice, heroism, and civic duty. As I played him, I accumulated a lot of ideas, information, and potential rules variants for playing "vigilante" characters. I also had a front-row seat to observe how several different GMs, all highly talented, reacted to having such a character in their games.

In the early 1990s, several hundred Experience Points into playing Harbinger, I did a little bit of writing for Hero Games. With that under my belt, I decided, "Hey, I could write a whole book!". The subject that naturally suggested itself to me was a sourcebook for "dark heroes": vigilantes like the Harbinger, whom it seemed to me had gotten short shrift in the existing *Champions* product line. Furthermore, as far as I knew, no one had ever written about the subject for *any* roleplaying game before — and the timing was perfect, given the increasing popularity of such heroes in comics and other media.

I sent Hero Games a proposal for a book I called *Heroes Of Vengeance*. As I envisioned it, it was more like what today I'd call a "genre book": it related to *Champions*, but was intended as much as anything to let people run various types of modern-day campaigns and characters, including campaigns that might not involve superhumans. The proposal was accepted, but with one change: the company wanted it to specifically relate to and be for *Champions* — a sort of subgenre book, similar to current books like *Galactic Champions* and *The Mystic World* which take an in-depth look at a specific type of superheroing. That's why they eventually called it *Dark Champions*, retaining my original title as a subtitle. With that in mind, I got to work. Six months' worth of writing on the evenings and weekends later, I had a finished book, which I submitted to the company. Hero published it in 1993.

It quickly became apparent that the book was a hit. It sold extremely well, and the fans really seemed to enjoy it. Before too long, gamers were talking about running or playing in "Dark Champions campaigns." While many of these were just variations on the Champions theme, what interested me the most were people who created games and characters with no real connection to superhumans or comic books. I heard things like "I'm running this Dark Champions campaign where all the players are cops" or "I'm using Dark Champions to revive my old Danger International campaign." In effect, I'd accomplished what I'd set out to — write a book that stood on its own as a sort of genre book — despite the inclusion of "Champions" in the title. The term "Dark Champions" came to stand for a lot more than just characters like Batman or the Punisher; it encompassed the whole modern-day action-adventure genre, even though the book wasn't written that way.

So, thanks ultimately to my having created and played the Harbinger, I was now an established author. I wrote two more Dark Champions-related books, and then several books on other topics, for Hero Games. *Dark Champions* got noticed by other gaming companies, some of which offered me writing work. Within a few years I had a thriving side career as a game writer — and by 1997, I was able to quit my job as an attorney to become a full-time game designer. Eventually that led to salaried jobs with various gaming companies... and, in 2001, to my being in a position to join together with several partners, buy the Hero Games assets, and take the job I'd always wanted in gaming: *HERO System* Line Developer. Sometimes it's hard to believe it all grew out of that game back in 1986 where I nervously tried to figure out how I could maneuver my cool new vigilante character into position to shoot a couple of crimelords without the other PCs being able to stop me.

And now I get to delve back into the genre that brought me to game writing, with a dozen years of experience and the authority and resources to do the book the way I want to. Man, I have a great job.

—Steven S. Long
July, 2004

chapter one:



ACTION AND ADVENTURE
THE DARK CHAMPIONS GENRE

WHAT IS DARK CHAMPIONS?



Before you can think about modern-day action-adventure games and characters, you have to define what “modern-day action-adventure” *is*, or else the breadth of the overall genre terms may make it difficult to focus on what you’re doing. Generally speaking, three elements define the genre as a whole: the “real world” setting; the modern-day time period; and the action element in the stories told.

The Real World

Dark Champions games are set in the “real world,” or at least something very close to it. The nations, technology, customs, and other aspects of the setting are all identical (or nearly so) to those of the real world.

Similarly, most *Dark Champions* games make some effort to be “realistic” — though realism must, as in any adventure story, give way to drama at some times (see pages 176, 200, and 317). For example, there are no miracle cures or healing powers; if characters get hurt, it probably takes them a long time to heal up fully. If they break the law, the police and other law enforcement agencies pursue them. If they’ve got a car, it requires fuel and regular maintenance to run; there are no super-tech engines that operate forever without the need for refueling.

However, the genre’s emphasis on the “real world” and “realism” doesn’t prevent the GM from altering things slightly in the interest of improving his game, provided he fits his changes into the overall “real world framework” in a plausible manner. For example, it’s perfectly reasonable for the GM to create a fictitious city or country as a setting for a campaign or an adventure — but it should resemble and function like a real city or country. It shouldn’t be a city of mole people deep beneath the Earth, or a nation of African tribesmen who’ve used their new-found mystic powers to carve out a country for themselves. That harms the verisimilitude of the setting.

Depending on the subgenre (see below), some *Dark Champions* games may even involve weird powers, mysticism, enigmatic aliens, or the like — things that don’t exist in the real world (or, at the very least, whose existence can’t be scientifically proven and whose powers aren’t nearly as effective as they’re depicted in a gaming context). Again, this can work quite well, as long as the GM makes some effort to fit them into the “realistic” campaign framework. Unless the GM wants a really unusual

setting, weird powers and the like have to be rare, unknown to most people (and doubted by most who have heard of them), and unable to have the sort of earth-shaking effects that true superpowers or Fantasy-style magic can. (See page 314 for more information.)

The Modern Day

Dark Champions games take place in the “modern world.” They involve modern technology, modern culture, and modern events. But “modern” in this context doesn’t mean just the late twentieth/early twenty-first centuries. Depending on the subgenre and style of the campaign, “modern” could mean just about any time from the end of World War II until the mid-twenty-first century. For example, an espionage campaign might focus on the heart of the Cold War period in the 1950s and ’60s.

If the GM chooses to set his campaign in an unusual time period, he should adjust the technology and other resources available to suit the setting. Most of the equipment in this book is primarily for the late twentieth/early twenty-first centuries (since that’s the time period most campaigns use). A game set in the 1960s would have different lists of weapons, vehicles, and gear for characters to choose from. For games set a decade or more in the future, the GM may have to define all the technology himself after examining modern technological trends and guesstimating what things will be like then.

Action

Last but not least, *Dark Champions* stories and adventures feature action and excitement — everything from gunfights, to car chases, daring stunts, battles, and more. While some subgenres, such as the mystery/private investigator subgenre, may focus a little more on suspense, inevitably there’s some fast-paced action involved at some point during the adventure.

One aspect of this element is that *Dark Champions* worlds tend to be more violent and conflict-prone than the “real world.” Special ops organizations and mercenary units can thrive because there are always half a dozen brush wars (or worse conflicts) going on throughout the world. An elite, shadowy subculture of professional freelance assassins exists, because assassination is a much more prevalent “tool” of statecraft and business than in the real world.

DARK CHAMPIONS SUBGENRES



Like Fantasy, Science Fiction, or any other major genre, the modern-day action-adventure genre isn't just one monolithic type of storytelling. It has many "subgenres," each sharing the common features of the overall genre (see above) but approaching them from a unique perspective.

Included with each of the subgenres below are suggestions about Character Point totals and other guidelines for character creation. But the suggested starting Character Point totals are just that — suggestions, nothing more. What matters for *Dark Champions* purposes is what the characters spend their points on, not how many they have to spend. If you want to, you can easily create *Dark Champions* characters built on 500, 800, or 1,200 Character Points — as long as they only spend those points on abilities and equipment appropriate for *Dark Champions* characters.

VIGILANTE CRIMEFIGHTING

The purest form of the modern-day action-adventure genre is vigilante crimefighting, which draws from and mingles together aspects of all the other *Dark Champions* subgenres. Some elements of this subgenre, such as the enemies fought, often owe as much to comic books as to the "real world."

VIGILANTE CRIMEFIGHTING ELEMENTS

The following conventions tend to define the Vigilante Crimefighting subgenre:

Like, And Yet Unlike: Many Vigilante Crimefighting characters owe their look and *modus operandi* to comic book influences — they're not just vigilantes, they're "costumed vigilantes." Comic book characters like Batman and the Punisher inspire the creation of many *Dark Champions* campaigns and characters. For example, Vigilante Crimefighting characters may wear costumes like those of traditional superheroes (though usually not as brightly-colored!), have secret headquarters, and possess other familiar comic book trappings.

But at the same time, even those Vigilante Crimefighting characters most strongly influenced by comic book conventions are unlike four-color superheroes (such as the ones depicted in most *Champions* sourcebooks and supplements). Some of the main differences include:

1. Traditional superheroes have superhuman powers — they can fly, walk through walls, shoot beams of energy, teleport across the world in the blink of an eye, read minds, create fire or ice out

of thin air, pick up and throw tanks, and so forth. Some of them do this naturally; others use super-technology that defies the laws of science and engineering. But costumed vigilantes are more-or-less "normal" people using skills, knowledge, and weapons to defeat their enemies. They may have some unusual skills or talents, and in some settings perhaps even an odd "power" or two (such as psychic "flashes" that help them track down missing people), but for the most part they're just normal (albeit highly-trained and well-equipped) people.

2. Traditional superheroes tend to be bright, flashy, and larger than life (as implied by the term "four-color" that's often used to describe them). Costumed vigilantes favor more somber and ominous tones for their costumes (since they're concerned about camouflage, stealth, and protection) and usually try to keep a relatively low profile. In many cases they act as much like elite soldiers or spies as superheroes.

3. Traditional superheroes often (though not always) have distinctive motivations and psychology. They're "true-blue heroes" in the grand comic book fashion: they wouldn't think of killing their adversaries (even when those adversaries clearly deserve it); won't take advantage of their enemies' weaknesses; obey the proper civilian authorities as much as possible; and so forth. Most Vigilante Crimefighting characters take a more practical, hard-nosed approach. While they're not all killers, they're not necessarily unwilling to use lethal force when it's called for, and often employ weapons that four-color heroes abhor. They fight ruthlessly, knowing their enemies will kill them if they fail to get the upper hand. They tend to distrust authority, believing their own opinions about Justice (and methods of obtaining it) are superior to bureaucratic procedures and moral relativism.

4. Traditional superheroes often form teams, with their own team headquarters, signal rings, code words, and membership cards. Costumed vigilantes rarely do any of these things in the source material, though the nature of most gaming campaigns means they probably will in a *Dark Champions* game.

5. Traditional superheroes fight costumed opponents who possess superpowers much like their own. Costumed vigilantes face different, but no less deadly and sinister, foes. While some of their enemies are their opposite number — costumed criminals, if you will — others are the "villains" you can see on the six o'clock news, making them all the more frightening for being so real: thirteen-year-old street gang members who settle arguments

with submachine gun fire; mob assassins who callously murder other human beings for money; and sociopathic serial killers who brutally assault and murder young women.

6. Traditional superheroes often fight battles in strange and wondrous places: the glittering, high-tech confines of a master villain's hidden base; exotic foreign cities; lost lands hidden from mankind for centuries or millennia; outer space or other dimensions; deep beneath the surface of the Earth. Costumed vigilantes, on the other hand, typically fight their battles on the streets, alleys, docks, and offices of a modern urban metropolis (such as New York or Hudson City). Similarly, while a typical *Champions* battle features superpowers and super-technology, and results in the heroes carting the defeated villains off to jail, Vigilante Crimefighting battles usually involve guns and other realistic weapons, and defeated enemies (or fallen heroes) are as likely to be taken to the hospital or the morgue as to jail.

Mostly Black-And-White Morality: While very few modern-day action-adventure campaigns are completely black and white in moral tone, compared to some subgenres Vigilante Crimefighting has relatively stark moral parameters. The heroes may sometimes have difficulty determining who's a bad guy and who's not, but they're generally certain that they're on the side of righteousness and Justice, and that their enemies are criminals and thugs who deserve to die (or suffer punishment).

Inclusiveness: Vigilante Crimefighting mixes together elements from all the other modern-day action-adventure subgenres in glorious profusion. In a single group of characters you could have one who has Special Forces training, one who's an espionage agent, one who hunts monsters and has minor mystic powers, one who's an ex-cop, and one who's a costumed vigilante. Or they could all be costumed vigilantes, but each with a different type of training. Any element or aspect from another subgenre can show up in a Vigilante Crimefighting game without much trouble.

VIGILANTE CRIMEFIGHTING CAMPAIGNS

In most cases, Vigilante Crimefighting characters are Powerful Heroic characters, with 100 Base Points plus up to 100 Character Points from Disadvantages. Vigilante Crimefighting PCs tend to be highly competent, and this starting point level reflects that. Some GMs prefer even higher point totals (such as the 125 + 125 of Very Powerful Heroics), while others want a grimmer or more "realistic" game with less powerful PCs (typically 75 + 75 Standard Heroic characters).

Regardless of the starting point total, Vigilante Crimefighting characters usually must follow Normal Characteristic Guidelines as a campaign ground rule (*i.e.*, they don't get any Disadvantage points because of this). They get their equipment (or at least standard equipment) for "free," without paying Character Points for it (though the GM may use the Resource Points rules on page 150 to keep characters from abusing this rule). If they want a

unique piece of equipment, one that's particularly powerful, or one that's not so easy to take away from them, they may have to pay Character Points for it.

CAPER

Caper campaigns turn the tables on standard *Dark Champions* games a little: instead of playing vigilantes, cops, or other heroes trying to uphold the law and Justice, the players create characters who are thieves. Their adventures involve locating targets for daring, high-tech robberies, planning the crimes, and then pulling them off and getting away with the loot.

CAPER ELEMENTS

The following conventions tend to define the "Caper Hero" subgenre:

Likeable Thieves: Despite the fact that they're criminals, the PCs in a "Caper Hero" campaign are likeable — thieves with hearts of gold, if you will. They tend to be nonviolent; in fact, many (if not all) of them have the Psychological Limitation *Code Versus Killing*. They're highly-trained, highly-competent professionals who get the job done with cleverness and skill; they're not muggers or killers. Sometimes they're not really even criminals: their adventures might involve getting revenge on someone who richly deserves it (such as a vicious criminal who betrays and kills one of their friends); correcting a problem they caused through greed or a momentary lapse of judgment or skill; or working for an employer who turns out to be one of the Good Guys.

Of course, not every group that pulls a caper has to be criminals. Sometimes spies, vigilantes, or other characters get involved in caper-like adventures.

Team Effort: Unlike many *Dark Champions* subgenres, Caper Hero lends itself well to team play. Pulling off a caper requires a group of skilled professional thieves, each with his own specialty. For example, maybe one character's an expert at defeating security systems, one is the team's best safecracker, a third is an ace getaway driver, and so on (see page 305).

Hey, Big Spender: Despite the fact that they pull off crimes that may net them millions of dollars, Caper Hero characters always seem to be in need of money. Some of this is ordinary business expenses: planning and executing a caper requires a large investment of money (for equipment, bribes, gathering information, and so on). But beyond that, the PCs often seem strapped for cash. The in-game reasons for this vary: one PC may be a compulsive gambler; one may give a lot of money away to charity (or set up a big trust fund for a dead partner's kids); one may have a really extravagant lifestyle. The meta-reason for it is that it gives the characters a reason to keep pulling capers — if they ever got so much money they could retire, they probably would.

CAPER CAMPAIGNS

In most cases, Caper Hero characters are Standard Heroic characters, with 75 Base Points plus up to 75 Character Points from Disadvantages. This gives players enough points to build characters who are pretty good at one or two aspects of thieving, but not enough to become criminal polymaths (which reduces their need to work with other characters). Gamemasters who want their Caper Hero PCs to be even more competent and skilled can upgrade to 100 + 100 Powerful Heroic characters.

Regardless of the starting point total, Caper Hero characters usually must follow Normal Characteristic Guidelines as a campaign ground rule (*i.e.*, they don't get any Disadvantage points because of this). They get their equipment (or at least standard equipment) for "free," without paying Character Points for it (though the GM may use the Resource Points rules on page 150 to keep characters from abusing this rule). If they want a unique piece of equipment, one that's particularly powerful, or one that's not so easy to take away from them, they may have to pay Character Points for it. Because getting just the right gear for a particular crime is a feature of Caper Hero stories, the GM may require characters to obtain some types of equipment in-game.

DARK CHAMPIONS: THE ANIMATED SERIES

The Dark Champions: The Animated Series ("DC:TAS") subgenre is a sort of cross between a standard Vigilante Crimefighting game and traditional four-color Champions. The characters are costumed vigilantes, but ones whose attitudes tend to resemble traditional superheroes, and who may have minor superpowers. The name of the subgenre comes from the way that *Dark Champions*-style costumed vigilantes are often depicted in modern animated television shows.

DC:TAS ELEMENTS

The following conventions tend to define the DC:TAS subgenre:

Dark Champions M.O., Champions Attitude: While they look, fight, and sometimes even act like typical *Dark Champions* costumed vigilantes, DC:TAS characters usually don't share all their attitudes and beliefs. In particular, they're much more inclined to subscribe to traditional comic book morality: they don't kill their opponents (even those who deserve it); believe they have to act "better" than their foes as a way of setting an example; and so forth. They also tend to act more like traditional superheroes, with a penchant for bombastic speeches and grandiloquent gestures.

Black And White: Even moreso than standard Vigilante Crimefighting campaigns, DC:TAS games have a black and white moral tone. The PCs (and their allies) are obviously the heroes, the villains are obviously the villains, and no one has any trouble telling the two apart (except for the inevitable "my

enemy frames me by putting on my costume and committing crimes" story).

Variations On A Theme: DC:TAS characters often develop codenames, costumes, and gadgets based around a theme or concept of some sort. For example, the crimefighter DarkAngel has an "angelic" theme to her costume and weapons — her throwing darts are shaped like tiny flaming swords, her blunt throwing weapon like an angel's golden halo, and so on. Her adversary Serpentine has an ophidian motif to his costume and weapons.

In the case of the villains, who tend to embody the "theme" element more strongly than heroes, the concept or theme also influences the crimes they commit. The supervillainess Anagram uses wordplay and puzzles as part of her crimes, often deliberately leaving clues for the police and crimefighters... if only they can unravel them. Her sometime comrade-in-crime Rhapsody not only uses music in her crimes, she tends to steal things related to music: Stradivarius instruments; rare antique sheet music; the box office receipts from concerts; all the members of the rock group Firebreak.

Superpowers And Supertechnology: Unlike standard Vigilante Crimefighting costumed characters, who are usually limited to more or less "realistic" abilities and technology, DC:TAS characters sometimes verge into the superhuman. This is much more common for villains than for heroes, but it's not necessarily forbidden for PCs. For example, Rhapsody might have musical instruments that emit "brain-altering waves" when played so she can take over peoples' minds or make them fall asleep; a character with insect-themed powers might have the ability to walk on walls (Clinging) or to call and control insects (Summon). However, even in campaigns that allow this sort of thing, the superpowers and technology tend to be relatively low-key; characters still don't fly, walk through walls, or fire beams of energy from their eyes.

DC:TAS CAMPAIGNS

In most cases, DC:TAS characters are usually Low-Powered Superheroic characters, with 150 Base Points plus up to 100 Character Points from Disadvantages. Some GMs prefer lower point totals (such as the 125 + 125 of Very Powerful Heroics, or even the 100 + 100 of Powerful Heroics) so that the PCs have to be more like typical Vigilante Crimefighting characters and can't afford much in the way of superpowers or supertechnology.

Regardless of the starting point total, DC:TAS characters usually must follow Normal Characteristic Guidelines as a campaign ground rule (*i.e.*, they don't get any Disadvantage points because of this). They get their equipment (or at least standard equipment) for "free," without paying Character Points for it (though the GM may use the Resource Points rules on page 150 to keep characters from abusing this rule). If they want an item of supertechnology, or some other piece of equipment that's unique or unusually powerful, they may have to pay Character Points for it.

ESPIONAGE

Espionage campaigns (sometimes referred to as “Danger International” games) focus on the “Great Game” of intelligence gathering, double agents, assassination, political intrigue, and government secrets. Of all the types of *Dark Champions* campaigns, they’re the ones most likely to take place in a time period other than the late twentieth/early twenty-first century, since the Cold War of the mid-twentieth century offers countless opportunities for Espionage adventure. But the uncertain world of the 1990s and early 2000s also makes for great Espionage campaigns.

The level of “realism” can vary tremendously from one Espionage campaign to another. Most GMs and players favor a style of play influenced as much by James Bond and other fictional spies from novels and movies as by real-life intelligence agents. In these games characters use lots of high-tech gadgetry, visit exotic locations, and fight villains who are often as much like comic book villains as spies (see *Cinematic Masterminds* on page 303). Gamers preferring greater “realism” run lower-powered characters and adventures drawn more from historical accounts of intelligence-gathering activities than from adventure fiction.

ESPIONAGE ELEMENTS

The following conventions tend to define the Espionage subgenre:

Exotic Locations, Exotic Activities: In many Espionage games, particularly those in the James Bond style, characters travel around the world, visiting all sorts of thrilling locales. These range from the relatively mundane (glittering cities like Paris, Monaco, or Hong Kong), to luxury resorts, to the truly unusual (a villain’s hidden headquarters behind Victoria Falls, an experimental space station, or a drug dealer’s private Caribbean island). While in these places, they participate in equally glamorous activities — casino gambling, skiing, attending lavish parties — as a way of drawing their quarry out of hiding or finding out what they need to know.

High Stakes: Many *Dark Champions* characters work on a relatively small scale: they’re trying to protect a city from crime, or to accomplish specific mission goals set forth by their commanders. Espionage agents, on the other hand, often play for very high stakes (particularly in more “cinematic” campaigns, where the villain of the piece may threaten the world with his latest super-weapon). At the very least, the outcome of their activities may save (or take) hundreds of lives — and sometimes what they do in the shadows can determine the fate of entire countries or regions of the world.

High Tech: Espionage adventures tend to involve the latest technology — the newest weapon or vehicle designs, the most advanced computer chips currently available, and so on. The race for world supremacy (or at least predominancy) depends on technology, so stealing and protecting technological secrets is one of a spy’s most important activities.



Similarly, spies tend to use high-tech weapons and gadgets in their work. Even in the real world, spies often have unusual “tools of the trade”: cameras concealed in tie-tacks; guns hidden in pens or canes; hollowed-out coins for carrying microfilm. In a James Bond-style Espionage campaign, these gadgets verge almost into supertechnology: watches that fire laser beams; hand-held X-ray viewers; wrist-mounted mini-dart launchers; and more. See page 286 for some examples of spy-tech.

Shades Of Grey: It’s often hard to tell who’s a friend, and who’s a foe, in an Espionage game — and the more realistic the game, the harder it becomes. Trusted, long-time friends turn out to be double agents, loyal operatives betray the agency when offered enough money by the enemy, and an agent’s own government may lie to or manipulate him to accomplish its goals. An Espionage PC’s life often becomes a complex web of conspiracy, lies, and doubt.

ESPIONAGE CAMPAIGNS

The amount of points used to build Espionage characters typically depends on how “realistic” the GM wants the game to be. For a more “realistic” style campaign, characters are probably built on no more than 75 Base Points plus up to 75 Character Points from Disadvantages — and it’s entirely possible that they’ll be built as Competent Normals (50 + 50) or even Skilled Normals (25 + 25) instead.

On the other hand, for a James Bond-style campaign, you need characters who are extremely skilled and competent, with lots of personal resources to call on. In these games, Standard Heroic characters (75 Base Points plus up to 75 Character Points from Disadvantages) are usually the minimum — and Powerful (100 + 100) or Very Powerful (125 + 125) Heroic characters aren’t beyond the pale.

Regardless of the starting point total, Espionage characters usually must follow Normal Characteristic Guidelines as a campaign ground rule (*i.e.*, they don’t get any Disadvantage points because of this). They get their equipment (or at least standard equipment) for “free,” without paying Character Points for it. However, they may have to go through the agency they work for to get any unusual equipment or spy-tech gadgets, giving the GM a way to control their access to gear (he can also use the Resource Points rules on page 150). As always, they have the option of paying Character Points for a piece of equipment to ensure they always have access to it, or because it’s unique or difficult to take away from them permanently.

LAW ENFORCEMENT

In some *Dark Champions* campaigns, the heroes fight crime — but not as costumed vigilantes. Instead, they’re part of the “thin blue line” of police officers (and/or national law enforcement officers) who help to keep society safe from the criminals who prey upon it. These games are sometimes known as “Cop Hero,” “SWAT Hero,” “FBI Hero,” or the like, depending on the nature of the campaign and who the PCs work for.

LAW ENFORCEMENT ELEMENTS

The following conventions tend to define the Law Enforcement subgenre:

Police Procedural: Since the characters are cops, they have to act like cops. Unless they work for a national law enforcement agency (like the FBI), they can only work within a defined jurisdiction (such as a particular city or county) — and national agencies usually only have jurisdiction over certain types of crimes. When they deal with suspects and crime scenes, they have to follow departmental regulations and the law. For example, they have to read arrestees their rights, limit themselves to reasonable use of force, and so on.

Renegade Cops: Despite the above, one staple of “police fiction” is the *renegade cop* — the officer who’s not so good at obeying the regs. He thinks results matter more than procedure, so he’s something of a maverick within the department (and often holds a much lower rank than his accomplishments merit). Only the fact that he gets those results, and possibly the tolerance of an understanding superior officer, keep him from getting thrown off the force. A team of “Cop Hero” PCs might all be renegade cops, grouped together because no one else wants to work with them.

Red Tape And Intolerant Commanders: A Cop Hero PC’s most persistent enemies aren’t necessarily drug dealers or thieves — they’re departmental bureaucrats. In his efforts to get his job done and keep the streets safe, the heroic cop runs afoul of Internal Affairs, equipment officers who want him to sign for everything he takes from the equipment locker, and so on. His worst adversary is the Uptight Commander — a by-the-book superior officer who thinks the hero’s renegade ways are nothing but trouble, and who’s looking for any excuse to fire him. Usually the character’s immediate superior (a lieutenant or captain), who understands how he works, has to run interference and put his own career on the line to keep “the brass” off the character’s back.

Unusual Criminals: Cop Hero characters don’t usually spend their time dealing with ordinary street crime or run-of-the-mill investigations. They usually belong to a special squad — SWAT, Robbery-Homicide, Special Crimes Unit, Violent Crimes Unit, or the like — and that means they go after special criminals. They pursue, fight, and capture highly-skilled robbery crews, terrorists, serial killers, organized crime groups, or other adversaries worthy of their time.

LAW ENFORCEMENT CAMPAIGNS

In most Law Enforcement campaigns, player characters are Standard Heroic characters, with 75 Base Points plus up to 75 Character Points from Disadvantages. That's enough to make a "Cop Hero" PC stand out from the rest of the force, without making him unrealistically skilled and powerful. For more over-the-top games, the GM may prefer for characters to be Powerful Heroics, built on 100 + 100 points.

Regardless of the starting point total, Law Enforcement campaign characters usually must follow Normal Characteristic Guidelines as a campaign ground rule (*i.e.*, they don't get any Disadvantage points because of this). They get their equipment (or at least standard equipment) for "free," without paying Character Points for it. However, they may have to go through the department to get some types of unusual equipment, giving the GM a way to control their access to gear (he can also use the Resource Points rules on page 150). As always, they have the option of paying Character Points for a piece of equipment to ensure they always have access to it, or because it's unique or difficult to take away from them permanently.

MONSTER HUNTERS

Technically a cross between *Dark Champions* and the "Urban Fantasy" subgenre of Fantasy, a Monster Hunter campaign (sometimes known as an "Occult Investigators" game) pits the PCs against various sorts of mystic threats: vampires; werewolves; evil sorcerers; demons; curses run amok; and more. The heroes fight to protect society from a menace most people don't even believe in, and often the only thanks they get is to be shunned by an ignorant populace.

MONSTER HUNTERS ELEMENTS

In addition to the central theme of "fighting a shadow war against malign mysticism," the following conventions tend to define the Monster Hunters subgenre:

Not Your Run-Of-The-Mill Action Heroes: While in many Monster Hunter games the PCs are just ordinary (albeit well-trained and -equipped) characters fighting decidedly extraordinary menaces, in some campaigns the PCs tend to be as unusual as the beings they fight. One or more of them may be a "chosen one" fated to fulfill some important destiny, the descendant of an ancient line of monster hunters, a person who has sorcerous powers of his own that he uses for Good instead of Evil, or the like. This may allow PCs to buy abilities (such as Danger Sense) an "ordinary" human wouldn't have.

Prophecy: Prophecies of various sorts crop up frequently in Monster Hunter campaigns. The PCs are fated to protect the world from a specific menace. A few lines in an ancient tome foretell the coming of the latest threat the PCs have to defeat. Sensitive mystics vaguely warn the PCs of dangers to come later in the scenario. Many of these prophecies seem nonsensical or contradictory at first; it's only as the story unfolds that the PCs can understand their full significance.

MONSTER HUNTERS CAMPAIGNS

In most cases, Monster Hunter characters are Standard Heroic characters, with 75 Base Points plus up to 75 Character Points from Disadvantages. In campaigns where the GM wants the PCs themselves to have mystic powers (or the like), he may prefer to start them as Powerful or Very Powerful Heroic characters (100 + 100 and 125 + 125 points, respectively), or even as Superheroic characters.

Regardless of the starting point total, Monster Hunter characters usually must follow Normal Characteristic Guidelines as a campaign ground rule (*i.e.*, they don't get any Disadvantage points because of this). They get their equipment (or at least standard equipment) for "free," without paying Character Points for it (though the GM may use the Resource Points rules on page 150 to keep characters from abusing this rule). If they want a unique piece of equipment — such as an enchanted weapon of some sort — they may have to pay Character Points for it.

SPECIAL OPS/ MILITARY ACTION

It's not uncommon for *Dark Champions* characters in many subgenres to have military backgrounds. In this particular subgenre, *all* the characters have military training — and in most cases they're still active duty members of their nation's military forces. As the subgenre's name indicates, this type of campaign most commonly takes the form of a "special ops" game in which the PCs all belong to some elite military unit, such as the U.S. Army's Green Berets or the U.S. Navy's SEALs. As a squad of "best of the best" soldiers, the PCs get sent on missions no one else can perform... often with the fate of the nation (or the world) resting on their shoulders.

"Elite soldiers" isn't the only option for a Military Action campaign. Some other possibilities include:

- **Regular Joes:** the PCs are a unit of regular soldiers involved in a war (either a real one researched by the GM, or a fictitious one created for the campaign).
- **Swords For Hire:** the PCs are a group of elite mercenaries who hire out to fight in various conflicts around the world.
- **The Wild Blue Yonder:** the PCs are all elite fighter pilots who fly missions together.

SPECIAL OPS/MILITARY ACTION ELEMENTS

The following conventions tend to define the Military Action subgenre:

Counterterrorism: Special Ops characters often find themselves pitted against terrorists and similar threats to world peace and security. It may be intelligence agents who gather and analyze the data on terrorists, but once they've got concrete information it's the Special Ops troops who go in and capture or kill the enemy.



Globetrotting Action: While many *Dark Champions* campaigns focus on a single city or country, Special Ops campaigns almost never do. The characters could find themselves in just about any location — even the remote wilderness — as they pursue the enemy. In fact, one of the things Special Ops characters train for is conducting military operations in unusual environments; they’re more likely than other *Dark Champions* characters to buy Skills like Animal Handler, Riding, Survival, and Tracking.

Military Hardware: When they need it, Special Ops characters can get their hands on better equipment than most *Dark Champions* characters have access to. In addition to the best personal weapons and body armor, they may have artillery, state-of-the-art combat helicopters, military-grade computers and software, third-generation nightvision goggles, shoulder-fired weapons like Stinger missiles, and the like. Special Ops games are more likely than any other type of *Dark Champions* campaign to fall into the “Technothriller” meta-subgenre (see below).

SPECIAL OPS/MILITARY ACTION CAMPAIGNS

In most cases, Special Ops characters are Powerful Heroic characters, with 100 Base Points plus up to 100 Character Points from Disadvantages. Special Ops PCs tend to be highly competent, and this starting point level reflects that. Some GMs prefer even higher point totals (such as the 125 + 125 of Very Powerful Heroics), while others want a grimmer or more “realistic” game with less powerful PCs (typically 75 + 75 Standard Heroic characters) — though note that the high cost of the Elite Forces Package Deals (pages 52-55) sets a “starting points floor” for most Special Ops games.

Regardless of the starting point total, Military Action characters usually must follow Normal Characteristic Guidelines as a campaign ground rule (*i.e.*, they don’t get any Disadvantage points because of this). They get their equipment (or at least standard equipment) for “free,” without paying Character Points for it. However, the GM may restrict what they can take based on operational parameters, their military’s budget, and other factors — after all, it’s not much fun if the PCs can simply go down to the quartermaster’s building, pick up a truckful of heavy ordnance, and blow the scenario to smithereens with a few well-placed missiles or artillery shells. (The GM can also use the Resource Points rules on page 150 to restrict characters’ equipment.) If a PC wants a unique piece of equipment, one that’s particularly powerful, or one that’s not so easy to take away from him, he may have to pay Character Points for it.



TECHNOTHRILLER

Technothrillers are modern-day action-adventure stories that focus on specific technologies or devices (particularly military ones, such as submarines or new weapons systems), or which involve the impact of modern technology (such as the Internet) on the protagonists. The novels of Larry Bond and Tom Clancy are perfect examples of this subgenre. Actually, it's really a *meta*-subgenre rather than a true subgenre, since any of the *Dark Champions* subgenres could also be technothrillers: you could have a Technothriller game with costumed vigilantes, Espionage agents, or the like. Most Technothriller campaigns are Special Ops/Military Action, with Espionage a close second.

Technothriller campaigns are sometimes difficult to run and play in. To really emulate the feel of the inspirational source material, the GM needs a wealth of technological background detail, and the players have to understand the implications of the technologies they're using/encountering and what to do about them (or at least, their characters have to be able to gather such information via Skill Rolls and the like). Since that's more effort than most gaming groups want to go to (or have the capacity to go to), Technothriller games usually simplify things by just having the characters go after technological targets. If they're elite soldiers, they have to blow up new weapons in the hands of the enemy, steal a prototype combat helicopter from a rival nation, or field-test their military's new weaponry. If they're spies, they have to get the blueprints for new technologies being developed by the enemy (and keep him from doing the same to their nation), or gather information so that their own nation can respond to new technological challenges.

WEIRD CONSPIRACY

Another "meta-subgenre" found in *Dark Champions* games is *weird conspiracy* — games that focus on investigating and/or fighting conspiracies related to all sorts of unusual (even paranormal) subjects. Most Weird Conspiracy games are Law Enforcement or Espionage games to begin with, but soon the characters find themselves enmeshed in a web of eerie events whose full outlines they can, at best, glimpse briefly.

In a Weird Conspiracy game, characters become involved with subjects such as UFOs/aliens, cryptozoology, secret societies at the highest reaches of government, bizarre military research projects, parapsychology, and so forth. They may even verge a bit into the Monster Hunter subgenre, encountering foes like vampires and lycanthropes (or perhaps just beings who *seem* to be vampires and lycanthropes...). Their foes aren't run-of-the-mill criminals — instead, they're serial killers who have visions of the future (or past), cultists mutated by strange alien viri, and the like. But by the end of the scenario, the loose ends have been wrapped up (one way or another...) and the characters don't have any definitive proof of the paranormal events they witnessed or beings they encountered.

As mentioned below, Weird Conspiracy sometimes means mingling elements of *Fantasy Hero* or *Horror Hero* into a *Dark Champions* game — but there's nothing wrong with that. As long as the GM and players are having fun, get as weird as you want!

MIXING GENRES



Dark Champions comes in many flavors, as described above. But beyond “pure” expressions of the modern-day action-adventure genre there are many types of stories (and game campaigns) involving the use of meta-genres, or which combine *Dark Champions* and some other genre.

META-GENRES

A *meta-genre* is a style or theme of storytelling/game play/campaign conception that could apply to any genre. Comedy, horror, romance, and tragedy are all meta-genres, whereas Dark Champions, Fantasy, Science Fiction, and Westerns are genres. Thus, you could have a horror Western, or horror Dark Champions, or horror Fantasy — horror isn’t a genre, it’s a *meta-genre*. A meta-genre can apply to an entire campaign, or just to specific adventures or story arcs within an otherwise normal *Dark Champions* game.

In most cases, a campaign’s or scenario’s meta-genre evokes (or is intended to evoke) a particular mood in the characters: dread, compassion, suspense, or what have you. The GM should do his best to enhance the mood by encouraging players to have their characters engage in *dramatically appropriate actions* — such as deliberately putting them in situations where they’ll look ridiculous in a Comedic Action campaign. In some cases, this may involve granting Skill Roll bonuses (or the like) for actions which fit or improve the mood; in others it may mean giving the players advance warning about what’s expected and letting them concoct a proper response on their own.

Comedy

Comedy and whimsy definitely have their place in the realm of *Dark Champions*, provided you treat them with caution. Many of the subjects covered in modern-day action adventures are extremely serious ones, and joking about them may seem insensitive or cruel. Murder, crime, drug abuse, terrorism, serial killers, and the like generally aren’t humorous subjects. However, when you treat the Comedy element carefully, often by spoofing or parodying character types, it can add a lot to the game. After all, a touch of humor sometimes helps to relieve the tension, keep the characters focused, and build bonds between the PCs.

Comedic Dark Champions works best in sub-genres where the morality is relatively black-and-white, such as in a DC:TAS campaign or some Law

Enforcement games. Otherwise, it becomes difficult for players to get into a humorous mood, since they’re always going to be wary for the double-cross and the moral dilemma (neither of which are ever very funny).

Example: Bruce convinces Steve to run a Law Enforcement campaign premised, in part, on the “Lethal Weapon” movies: police action with a heavy touch of humorous banter and odd situations. Steve decides the PCs all belong to the Special Violence Task Force — a group of renegade Hudson City cops so dangerous, unpredictable, and violent that the brass has organized them into one unit it can easily keep its eye on. The players create appropriate characters, including a unit commander who dislikes guns and doesn’t know how to drive, a sergeant who thinks explosives are the solution for just about any law enforcement problem, a constantly-on-suspension detective who moonlights as a cab driver, and a tough-as-nails DEA liaison who serves as the straight man for some of the jokes. The players run their characters as much for laughs as anything else, willfully “misinterpreting” orders and getting themselves in over their heads... but in the end, they always manage to catch the bad guy somehow.

In a gaming context, the GM can often rely on the help of the players to establish a comedic (or at least whimsical) mood. Players rarely do quite what the GM expects them to, and if placed in a ridiculous or absurd situation, frequently just dig themselves in deeper, with hilarious results. The trick to this is not to always use the PCs as fall guys, patsies, or the butt of jokes; no one likes to be made fun of all the time. Instead, put them in the driver’s seat sometimes, letting them take advantage of the other guy’s pratfalls.

Just about any type of character works for Comedic Dark Champions, though such characters should rarely, if ever, be powerful or competent. Examples include a cop who drops his gun every time he draws it, a costumed crimefighter who approaches every task (no matter how trivial) with deadly seriousness and deadpan dialogue, a gun-toting vigilante who’s allergic to gunpowder, and so on.

OTHER SOURCES OF INSPIRATION

Pages 35-43 of *Champions* contain advice on applying meta-genres to superhero campaigns. Much of that advice is general, and could certainly work in *Dark Champions* campaigns as well. Similarly, you might want to look at pages 17-19 of *Star Hero*, pages 17-19 of *Ninja Hero*, and pages 19-22 of *Fantasy Hero*.

DUNITS

Basically speaking, mysteries can be organized into three types:

Howdunits, in which all of the suspects had a motive, but it appears impossible that any of them (or possibly anyone else) could have committed the crime (this includes the classic “locked room” mystery). Solving the mystery involves figuring out how the crime was committed; this in turn tells the investigator who did it.

Whodunits, in which all the suspects had a motive, and the method of committing the crime is obvious. Solving the mystery involves figuring out who committed the crime. This is the most common type of mystery.

Whydunits, in which none of the suspects seems to have had a motive, and the method of committing the crime is obvious. Solving the mystery involves figuring out why someone would commit the crime; once the investigator knows that, he knows who’s guilty.

Of course, some mysteries combine features of two or all three types. For example, a whydunit might reveal that more than one suspect had motive; at that point the mystery converts into a whodunit.

Horror

Horror and *Dark Champions* can relate closely to one another (as the television show *The X-Files* so often shows). The elements of fear and suspense factors into both genres, though they’re less prominent in *Dark Champions*.

Horror stories take place in the “real world,” but often involve dark secrets, hidden terrors, and lurking evils the average person knows nothing of. In most of them, ordinary, and usually sympathetic, protagonists begin investigating some strange situation, only to discover the true horror behind it. One by one, the main characters die, go insane, become corrupt, lose loved ones and possessions, and suffer other disasters and terrors as the story wends its way to a conclusion (usually, but not always, a happy or hopeful ending, as the heroes stop the threat and restore normalcy).

The primary “disconnect” between Horror and *Dark Champions* is that *Dark Champions* characters tend to be tough, skilled, and proactive. They’re not likely to sit meekly and wait for their fate to come upon them; they take up weapons and go out to confront it. The GM has to arrange the situation so the players think they’re making progress opposing the “enemy” at first... only to discover that their efforts have been in vain, and they’ve got to find the right approach or they’re all doomed.

Most Horror stories use one or more of several mechanisms to create suspense, fear, and dread in the characters (and thus, in the readers/players as well). The first is *isolation*. If characters can radio for help, or escape, that lessens their feelings of terror. A proper Horror story traps them somewhere — a deserted island, an isolated mansion during a driving thunderstorm, a prison — and keeps them there until they resolve the situation. The second is *ignorance*. People tend to fear the unknown, so Horror stories often place characters in situations where they’re unaware of the true facts. As the story unfolds, the characters slowly learn what’s going on... often to their own detriment. The third is *powerlessness*. Characters who have the ability to cope with adversity often also have the confidence to confront that which scares them. It creates a better Horror effect if they have to struggle against the lurking terrors instead of just attacking them as if they were any other adversary.

It’s difficult to achieve Horror effects in a gaming context, with the lights on and plenty of snacks at hand, but it is possible. Even the toughest of *Dark Champions* character becomes less cocksure when stripped of his weapons and put in a deadly situation he cannot control. Just about any type of character is appropriate, though the characters should never have the power to confront the lurking horrors effectively (at least, not at first).

Mystery

Mystery is one of the most suitable meta-genres for *Dark Champions*. In many of the sub-genres, characters spend a large amount of their time investigating serious crimes and trying to figure out who committed them. The forensics information and rules in Chapter Three are used primarily in mystery-solving.

It’s even possible to run a mystery-oriented *Dark Champions* campaign. In this sort of game, the PCs are all investigators (possibly “private eyes,” possibly detectives on the police force) confronted with a new mystery every scenario. This sort of campaign tends to require a lot of work on the part of the GM. First, he has to concoct a new, plausible mystery for each game, and that can be difficult — despite the plethora of mystery novels on bookstore shelves, good, solid mysteries that work as gaming adventures aren’t easy to come by. Among the things the GM needs to know (and be prepared to reveal to the PCs at the appropriate time) are:

- the identity of the criminal, and his motives for committing the crime
- the identities of other suspects, and their possible motives
- the identity of the victim (and any other relevant details about him, such as his personal history, job, family, and the like)
- how and when the crime occurred
- what happened when the criminal committed the crime, and what (if anything) he did afterwards
- other events that might affect the characters’ ability to gather and correctly analyze the clues

Second, unlike a novelist, who can have a character suddenly realize the significance of a clue, the GM doesn’t control the protagonists in his game (the PCs). This may lead to situations where (a) all of the players overlook a clue, or the significance of a clue, (b) the GM has to make a clue so obvious that there’s no suspense, and/or (c) the players end up using a lot of die rolls to gather and analyze information, rather than solving the mystery on their own (often with the entirely fair, but game-wrecking, excuse that “my character is better at these things than I would be”). The GM has to deftly manage the release of information, dropping (sometimes blatant) hints to the players (“What Bob just suggested really seems to make sense to you”), the use of die rolls, and the pacing of the story to keep the suspense alive and prevent the players from reaching the right conclusion too early or too late.

Romance

Romance as a meta-genre refers to campaigns or storylines involving, or focusing on, the romantic attachments, entanglements, and relationships of the main characters. Most *Dark Champions* campaigns are “romantic” in the broad, dramatic sense of that term — they’re filled with adventure, excitement, and appropriate but unlikely actions — but that’s not quite the same thing.

Romantic *Dark Champions* campaigns generally require two things. First, the characters have to stay put in one location. If they’re in an Espionage or Special Ops campaign that features a lot of travel, creating good, long-lasting Romance subplots may prove difficult, if not impossible. If the GM wants to emphasize Romance, he should base the campaign in a single city (or other static location). Of course, the GM can always introduce a minor romantic sub-plot or two without making the whole campaign revolve around Romance, and that even works in campaigns featuring lots of travel.

Second, and more importantly, the characters must have potential romantic partners to choose from (and perhaps fight over). A Romance campaign won’t go far without enough “fish in the sea” for the characters to take an interest in. The GM has to design intriguing NPCs who attract one or more PCs through some qualities, and yet have other qualities the PC(s) find troublesome or off-putting. For example, perhaps DarkAngel, a female NPC costumed vigilante, finds one of the PCs, Shadow, attractive — but they don’t see eye-to-eye on all aspects of their “jobs,” creating strain between them. After all, what fun is a Romance story if the romances are smooth sailing all the way?

Romance works well in conjunction with the Comedy meta-genre. What makes people look more foolish, or more likely to do things they ordinarily wouldn’t, than love?

Tragedy

Traditionally, a Tragedy tells the story of a hero or heroes, doomed by some personal flaw or circumstance to loss, diminishment, or death. Most action-adventure stories, modern-day or otherwise, feature happy endings that aren’t compatible with Tragedy — at most, they contain a minor note of Tragedy related to the death of a beloved character or the passing of a way of life.

In a gaming context, Tragedy works even less well as a campaign theme, since most people want to have fun when playing a game. However, a GM can easily introduce a few tragic elements or subplots by using a character’s Disadvantages against him. Choose a Disadvantage — Psychological Limitations such as *Proud*, *Greedy*, or *Overconfidence*; an undeserved Reputation the character cannot overcome — and bring about the character’s downfall by exploiting it. For example, perhaps a character who’s Proud comes to a tragic end because he can’t walk away from a situation where his enemies bait him into a trap by insulting him. In short, have the character’s flaws lead to the tragic ending.

OTHER GENRES

The tropes, themes, and character types of modern-day action-adventure are easily mingled with those of other genres. Doing so can create fascinating campaigns and stories.

Champions

Dark Champions obviously relates closely to, and mingles easily with, the traditional superheroic action of *Champions*. Many *Dark Champions* characters, particularly costumed vigilantes and DC:TAS heroes, are largely just superheroes in an unusual setting or viewed from a different perspective.

Mixing the two genres usually leads to one of three results. The first is the Dark Champions: The Animated Series subgenre discussed on page 11. Its defining element is the addition of traditional superhero attitudes (and sometimes powers) to costumed vigilante-type characters.

Iron Age Champions

The second is the opposite of DC:TAS: *Iron Age Champions*, which could in many ways be described as the addition of Dark Champions attitudes (and sometimes methods) to true superpowered characters. Iron Age heroes often scoff at the “truth, Justice, and the American Way” philosophy of earlier superheroes; they live in a darker, deadlier, more cynical world, and oftentimes they fight fire with fire when it comes to the use of deadly force.

In addition to that, the defining elements of most Iron Age Champions stories include:

“Realism”: If a *Champions* game or story addresses, refers to, or otherwise involves the “realistic” implications of having superpowers, using superpowers, or the existence of superpowered beings, it’s probably an Iron Age Champions game (or at least Bronze Age Champions). Golden and Silver Age Champions characters don’t think about issues like “How does VIPER build all these secret bases without being seen on satellite photos?” or “What would *really* happen if someone with super-strength hit an ordinary person?” Similarly, superhero stories dealing with “realistic” (or “dark”) issues, such as drug abuse or date rape, usually fall into the Iron or Bronze Ages.

The Deconstructed Hero: Another aspect of “realism” is to challenge the entire concept of the Superhero. If a *Champions* campaign tries to change heroes to make them more “realistic,” to show that they’re not really all that heroic, to demonstrate that they have lots of all-too-human flaws, or the like, it’s definitely getting into Iron Age territory. In short, Iron Age Champions often takes a *cynical worldview* of superheroes. Compared to Golden and Silver Age audiences, Iron Age audiences don’t really have many heroes anymore — the modern mass media has made modern people all too willing to think the worst of heroes and leaders, and this leads to the idea of “re-examining” superheroes and making them seem as dirty, corrupt, or flawed as “everyone else.”



Street-Level Champions

Third, mingling *Champions* and *Dark Champions* can lead to “street-level superheroes” games where the PCs are low-powered superheroes who use their powers more to fight street crime and low-powered supervillains than to take on the world-threatening menaces fought by more powerful superheroes. Characters such as Marvel Comics’s Spider-Man (in various times/incarnations) and Daredevil provide excellent examples of this sort of campaign.

In most cases, the PCs in Street-Level Champions campaigns don’t show the full range of superpowers “typical” superheroes do. They’re less likely to have flashy powers like Energy Blast and Teleportation, and more likely to have “personal” powers such as Enhanced Senses, augmented DEX, Clinging, low-level Healing Regeneration, minor super-Strength, and the like. They’re unquestionably superhuman, but their powers aren’t so overwhelming or impressive that they can ignore the attacks of ordinary human opponents. In particular, Street-Level Champions PCs shouldn’t have so much Resistant Defense that they can ignore gunfire; otherwise they won’t regard street thugs as a threat.

In most Street-Level Champions campaigns, the PCs are built as Low-Powered Superheroic characters, with 150 Base Points and up to 100 Character Points from Disadvantages. The Normal Characteristic Maxima rules do not apply, but most characters will have few, if any, Primary Characteristics above 25 (STR is sometimes an exception). Characters do not receive equipment for free; they have to pay Character Points for any equipment they want to have and use regularly.

MIXING DARK CHAMPIONS AND CHAMPIONS CHARACTERS

Some GMs may prefer to use street-level elements in their regular campaign rather than running a full-blown *Dark Champions* campaign, or they may want to have characters from a costumed vigilante campaign “cross paths” with traditional superheroes. This isn’t difficult, but the GM should consider several things.

Potential Problems

Several potential problems can arise when you include *Dark Champions* and “four-color” *Champions* characters in the same campaign. The first is personality. Unless your *Dark Champions* characters are all of the DC:TAS variety, their viewpoints and methods of crimefighting probably differ from those of the four-color superheroes. This can easily create conflicts between the characters, which may even go as far as outright fighting if the superheroes attempt to capture the *Dark Champions* vigilantes. This sort of inter-character conflict upsets some gamers, and often results in bruised egos on one side or the other. Some gaming groups can roleplay this sort of conflict without having it affect real-world relationships between the players, and they enjoy it; but others can’t and hate it. Unless the GM and players can deal with this sort of conflict maturely and responsibly, it’s best avoided. However, it does have its rewards — opportunities for roleplaying and exciting scenes — so don’t be too quick to dismiss its possibilities.

One way to deal with this sort of clash of personalities, if the GM is up to it, is to “separate” the group. This means the GM shifts back and forth from the *Champions* superheroes to the *Dark*

Champions action heroes, as each group (or character) attempts to deal with whatever happens in the scenario in its (or his) own way. However, this requires the GM to do a lot of extra work when running the scenario. Another possible solution is to give each group something the other needs or wants (such as crucial clues), thus forcing them to work together even if they despise each other.

A second problem with integrating *Dark Champions* and *Champions* campaigns is power levels. Even if all the characters are built on the same amount of Character Points (which is unlikely), four-color superheroes will probably be more effective at some things (such as combat) because of the way they spend their points. The GM can deal with this in two ways. First, he can direct his efforts at the lowest common denominator. That means he must devise ways to limit the superheroes so they can be challenged by NPCs who are already a challenge to *Dark Champions* characters. The second, and perhaps better, way to balance power levels is the “smorgasbord” approach — something for everybody. This means the GM has to tailor the scenario so each type of character has something meaningful to do (especially in combat, because many players will be upset if their character fails to “keep pace” with the other PCs in a battle). For example, maybe the *Champions* PCs take on the superpowered guardians of a secret military installation, while the *Dark Champions* vigilantes sneak inside, disable the guards, and find the information needed to defeat the master villain and save the day.

Potential Benefits

There are two major benefits to mixing *Dark Champions* and four-color *Champions* characters. The first is character development. By seeing the way “the other half” lives, both types of characters can learn how their characters react to different situations, and perhaps alter their characters’ personalities to take these new experiences into account. Superheroes might learn something from being brought “back down to earth” for a while; *Dark Champions* characters could learn new ways to fight crime, or might “soften” harsh and sometimes irrational attitudes. Similarly, each group of characters will probably have the opportunity to learn new Skills and abilities from the other.

A second benefit is the roleplaying opportunities presented. The clash between *Dark Champions* and four-color points of view provides some of the best opportunities that exist for complex, in-depth roleplaying. Elements of both debate and diplomacy combine as both types of characters try to “convert” the other without provoking a major fracas. Sure, your character knows what to say to Dr. Destroyer when he begins yet another world-conquering scheme, but could he talk the Harbinger of Justice out of killing some anonymous gangbanger? Would he be willing to risk his life, and the punk’s, to try to capture Harbinger at the same time? How would he defend his views on crimefighting against Harbinger’s? Does he even *have* a defined philosophy of crimefighting? Why not? These are the sorts of things you can learn about your character when the two genres are properly mixed.

Fantasy Hero

Modern-day action-adventure mixes well with the “Urban Fantasy” subgenre of Fantasy. In fact, the *Monster Hunters* subgenre described above is essentially that — a form of Urban Fantasy with a generous helping of *Dark Champions* elements. Other possibilities abound. For example, a group of vigilante PCs might use their mystic powers (be they spellcasting, vampiric or lycanthropic abilities, or enchanted talismans) to fight traditional crime. If you make the PCs a group of government agents investigating mystic events, you’ve got a game something like the television show *The X-Files*. If they’re espionage agents or military personnel using mystic powers and recruiting Fantasy-type beings for use in covert operations, your game becomes something like Brian Lumley’s book *Necroscope* or the Tim Powers novel *Declare*.

For a slightly different spin on the two genres, create a vigilante crimefighting campaign set in a Fantasy world. The characters, armed with the best weapons and magic they can obtain, take on the Thieves’ Guild, assassins, renegade wizards, and corrupt government officials in a Fantasy city like Lankhmar or Minas Tirith. If you make the setting a Low Fantasy “swashbuckling” sort of place, you can use *The Scarlet Pimpernel* and Zorro as inspiration for your game.

Another possibility is to focus on the Espionage subgenre as it would exist in Fantasy settings. Spies, codes, and assassination were a fact of political and military life for millennia before James Bond, and an espionage-oriented *Fantasy Hero* campaign has a lot of potential. When you add magic into the mix to take the place of Bondian gadgets like laser watches and sportscar-mounted concealed rockets, the heroes’ adventures can become *really* wild!

Ninja Hero

Dark Champions campaigns frequently feature martial arts and martial artists — everyone from costumed vigilantes, to spies, to special ops soldiers receives training in the combat arts. By emphasizing that element over others, the GM can create a hybrid *Dark Champions-Ninja Hero* campaign that mixes action-adventure with martial arts mayhem! When they’re not fighting crime, gathering intelligence, or fighting their nation’s enemies, the heroes participate in martial arts competitions and help keep the streets of Chinatown safe.

Even if the GM doesn’t want to go that far, he can easily incorporate *Ninja Hero* elements into most *Dark Champions* campaigns. For example, any setting including Asian organized crime (such as the yakuza) will certainly feature characters with expertise in the martial arts. The GM can add a great deal of color and depth to such groups with a judicious application of certain genre elements. Virtually all of the classic *Ninja Hero* genre bits adapt well to *Dark Champions* settings (except perhaps for those involving the supernatural and/or over-the-top cinematic abilities).

One Dark Champions subgenre — Espionage — meshes with martial arts particularly well. Realistic and Cinematic martial arts campaigns often have heavy Espionage ties, and dashing spies usually receive some hand-to-hand combat training. On a team of PC spies, one may serve as the “martial arts expert,” using both his fighting skills and knowledge of Asian cultures to help the group complete missions.

Pulp Hero

On the surface, at least, Pulp adventures and modern-day action adventures have a lot in common. They both feature fast-paced action, gunfights, car chases, travel to exotic locations, and so on. Some subgenres of *Dark Champions*, such as Espionage and Vigilante Crimefighting, are alive and well during the Pulp era.

On the other hand, the two genres have some significant differences. At its heart *Dark Champions* tends to be relatively grim, gritty, and “realistic.” *Pulp Hero* is more lighthearted and fantastic. Where *Dark Champions* characters tend to distrust the government and authority figures, Pulp characters regard them much more favorably. Even the darkest Pulp campaign tends to seem bright and open compared to most *Dark Champions* games — the morality is starkly black and white, with few (if any) shades of grey. And while many Pulp heroes ruthlessly gun down the evil foes they face, others prefer merciful attacks or other methods to capture and reform criminals. Thus, while the two genres can influence and inform each other to some degree, in the end their dissimilarities typically prevent them from fully mixing together.

It’s possible to have a sort of Pulp-style *Dark Champions* campaign featuring the sort of serialized adventures and over-the-top heroes common to the pulps — just with a *Dark Champions* tinge. For example, serial adventure novels such as those about Mack Bolan the Executioner, Phoenix Force, and their ilk are, essentially, “modern-day pulp adventures.” But in this case, the heroes of those adventures are *Dark Champions* vigilantes.

Star Hero

The stereotypical *Dark Champions* grim vigilante may not have much place in most Science Fiction settings, but the Espionage subgenre is definitely an appropriate one to cross with SF. Call it *Danger Interstellar*.

Spy stories and Science Fiction blend seamlessly into one another. Often the distinction between an Espionage “technothriller” and near-future or cyberpunk SF is nothing more than a matter of marketing. Certainly James Bond has spent an awful lot of his career facing villains with secret bases and super-weapons straight out of Science Fiction. The crossover goes the other way, too: Poul Anderson’s Ensign Flan-dry, Harry Harrison’s Slippery Jim DiGriz, and Robert Heinlein’s Friday accomplish feats of espionage and deception Mr. Bond would surely have approved of.

Crossing *Star Hero* with *Danger International*

can simply be a matter of setting the campaign a few decades in the future. This lets the GM rearrange international politics without worrying about next week’s headlines, and allows the agents to visit Earth orbit or even Mars. Most of the weapons and gadgets are present-day tech, but a few next-generation prototypes like chemical laser rifles or remotely piloted combat vehicles can liven things up.

On the other hand, the GM can take things a step further, setting his “Great Game” of spycraft and assassination in the distant future. This presents some of the same problems as SF crimefighting — high-tech gadgetry may make some forms of spying too easy, or too difficult, which spoils the fun. The campaign may need to fall back on the Human (alien?) element, with scenarios which focus on the characters’ ability to gather information on their own, without spy-tech.

Star Hero also mixes well with Special Ops/Military Action games — there’s a long and proud tradition of “military SF.” The characters might be a special force of “space marines” (as in the movie *Aliens*), the crew of a warship assigned to patrol a dangerous border, or the like.

Victorian Hero

Victorian Hero and *Dark Champions* tend to mingle in the same ways, and to the same degree, as *Pulp Hero* and *Dark Champions* — there are plenty of similarities, but just as many differences. Once again, Espionage is a good crossing point. “Danger Intercolonial” characters could be Kiplingesque spies trying to ferret out the secrets of rival Great Powers. For a more military bent to things, maybe the characters are soldiers posted to a restless colony and instructed to maintain the peace by any means necessary. A “Victorian Vigilantes” game might take place on the foggy streets of London and pit the PCs against eerie criminals like Jack the Ripper.

Western Hero

Combining *Western Hero* with *Dark Champions* leads to a campaign not all that different from many Western movies and novels: the heroes are the town marshal/county sheriff/U.S. Marshal and his deputies, and it’s their job to track down and capture (or kill) notorious outlaws and gunslingers like Jesse James and Butch Cassidy. For a game that hews a little more toward typical *Dark Champions* urban crimefighting, make the PCs Pinkerton detectives in Chicago or New York.

Another possibility for campaigns set a little earlier than the classical Western period would be an Espionage campaign set during the Civil War. Both sides had plenty of spies — ranging from grizzled frontier scouts who watched troop movements, to society matrons who used their social skills and feminine wiles to wheedle information out of enemy officers, to the first “electronic warriors” who tapped into telegraph lines — and the whole situation is rife with scenario possibilities.

DARK CHAMPIONS ELEMENTS



No matter what the subgenre, certain elements and features — or “bits,” in gamer parlance — occur from setting to setting in *Dark Champions* campaigns. Here’s a brief review of some of the most important ones.

AMAZING ESCAPES

Action movies and novels often feature a daring escape as a story element. Typically the escape is performed by a captured or incarcerated criminal and involves ruthless violence, exquisite timing, great skill, and/or the Devil’s own luck. Occasionally it’s the hero who has to escape from unjust imprisonment or the clutches of a villain.

CAR CHASES

Just about every major *Dark Champions* story seems to feature a car chase, if not two or three. Car chases combine the excitement of speed, danger, and often the most advanced automotive technology in one sleek adventure package. Sometimes you can vary the scene by including unusual vehicles (tanks, dump trucks, buses...), or by moving it to the water and making it a speedboat chase.

In *HERO System* terms, you can run car chases using the basic vehicle combat rules on pages 471-72 of the *HERO System 5th Edition, Revised* rulebook, or the more detailed rules on pages 168-216 of *The Ultimate Vehicle*. The *Ultimate Vehicle* rules include a system of tables for randomly rolling the events and obstacles of a car chase, Hit Location tables for cars and other vehicles, and a lot of other information that will make your car chases even more exciting.

CAR GO BOOM

In more cinematic *Dark Champions* subgenres and campaigns, cars and similar vehicles explode with a distressing regularity. In some cases, the slightest amount of damage to a car, even if it’s nowhere near the gas tank, can cause it to detonate like a large bomb.

CONSPIRACIES

Some subgenres of *Dark Champions*, particularly Espionage, are rife with conspiracies and conspirators. Sometimes it seems as if the only thing the character can rely on is that nothing is as it seems! Just when he thinks he’s got a particular scheme figured out, he discovers there’s even more to the vast web of crime and treachery than he thought.

From a gaming perspective, the wonderful thing about conspiracies is all the roleplaying and scenario creation opportunities they provide. What the characters first think is a relatively straight-

forward crime or event turns out to be connected to another one... and then to a person who seems completely innocent... who apparently belongs to a strange fraternal organization... that has ties to an unscrupulous corporation... whose CEO used to be a highly-placed Department Of Defense official... A clever GM can turn that one conspiracy into half a dozen adventures of various sorts. As the PCs negotiate this morass of shadowy relationships and secretive conduct, they come into contact with a lot of people, many of whom are very close-mouthed. Getting information out of them requires both tactical planning and skilled roleplaying.

CONTACTS

No matter what the subgenre, it seems like every *Dark Champions* character knows a lot of important, skilled, and/or generally useful people — Contacts, in game terms. In some settings and stories, no matter how unusual the location or bizarre the circumstances, at least one protagonist “knows someone” who can help out.

Although they’re helpful for the PCs, Contacts are really tools for the GM, not the heroes. They give him a way to provide information to the characters when he needs them to have it... or not give it, if he doesn’t want the PCs to know it. The hero’s relationship with the Contact is a hook the GM can use to draw the PC into an adventure — and of course the Contact has his own background, personality, and relationships, and these might generate stories as well.

For games in which the GM wants characters to have wide circles of Contacts, but they can’t afford to buy them individually, he can use Follower/Contact Points. See page 154 for more information.

CRISIS MANAGEMENT

Many *Dark Champions* scenarios begin when the characters find themselves in the wrong place at the wrong time, and then have to cope with the situation. The *Die Hard* movies are classic examples of this sort of adventure.

From the GM’s perspective, the benefit to this sort of scenario is that it’s largely self-contained: the PCs can’t surprise him by going someplace unusual or calling in reinforcements because they’re in a situation where they can’t escape or get word to the outside. Even better, it’s probably a situation where they didn’t go in heavily armed. For example, they might be vacationing on a cruise ship when terrorists take it over, trapped in a shopping mall when a costumed criminal locks it down and threatens to kill everyone inside, or someplace

similar. All the GM needs is some detailed maps of the location, a way to keep the PCs from leaving, and some opponents for them to fight, and he's got a tense and intriguing scenario ready to go.

Similarly, some *Dark Champions* scenarios draw in the characters by establishing that they're the only ones who can get to the scene of the action in time. For example, a group of special ops PCs training in jungle warfare in Honduras may suddenly get sent to deal with a crisis in Managua because there are no other forces who can reach the city before deadly events unfold.

DEAD RELATIVES

Action heroes' wives, children, significant others, and parents often seem to die with a distressing regularity. From a dramatic perspective, this serves two purposes. First, it motivates the character — he's determined to get revenge on whoever killed his loved ones, or perhaps on the general class of people who killed them. Second, it cuts his ties to the "civilized world," freeing him to act without restraint when he has to (and to develop a romantic relationship with an NPC during the course of the story).

GUNS

Firearms are a staple of the *Dark Champions* genre, regardless of subgenre, time period, or setting. From the easily-concealed pistols carried by spies in the field, to the precisely-manufactured rifles used by snipers, to the assault rifles issued to soldiers and the silenced weapons employed by assassins, guns are omnipresent in the genre. See Chapters Four and Five for extensive information about building and using guns in the *HERO System*.

HE'S NOT DEAD YET

The adversaries in action-adventure stories often take a *lot* of killing. They can survive falls, gunshot wounds, and other injuries that would easily put any normal man in his grave. And just when the hero *thinks* they're dead, they stir to life for one last attempt to kill him... or to make their escape so they can return for a sequel.

In game terms, you can simulate this in several ways. The easiest is to give the main bad guy a lot of BODY, PD, and REC so he can withstand all sorts of grievous injuries. Another possibility is to provide him with a "dramatic healing" ability defined as Regeneration (such as the *Rapid Healing* Talent on page 91). Last but not least, the GM should be willing to ignore the damage and Recovery rules when necessary for the antagonist to make a final, dying attack against the hero.

HIGH TECHNOLOGY

While the Technothriller subgenre emphasizes cutting-edge technology, other *Dark Champions* subgenres also make use of it. Gun-toting vigilantes want the latest firearms tech to improve their pistols and rifles, spies need all sorts of gadgets to accomplish their missions, and cops have to stop high-tech thefts.

In addition to making the game more fun to play (who doesn't like to have his character tricked out with the latest gear?), technology is a major plot hook for the GM to use. Possible technology-related adventures include:

- obtain a piece of technology the characters need for another mission
- recover a piece of technology (or plans for it) that was stolen from the characters' government or boss
- field-test a new type of equipment
- steal a new technology (or plans for it) that the enemy has developed
- destroy a technological item

Much of the technology that factors into *Dark Champions* scenarios falls under the rubric of "militaria." This definitely includes guns and military vehicles, but it can also include less obvious military systems: software to run missile guidance devices; formulae and processes for improving the strength of tank armor; high-efficiency batteries for various devices; and so forth.

HYPER-COMPETENCE

Regardless of subgenre, *Dark Champions* characters tend to be highly skilled and competent at their chosen adventuring professions. It's not uncommon to find a somewhat clumsy or unskilled character in Fantasy or Science Fiction (as comic relief if nothing else), but such characters are mostly unheard of among the ranks of *Dark Champions* protagonists. In some subgenres, this extends to fighting prowess as well; many a *Dark Champions* vigilante or soldier is a deadly combatant no matter what the circumstances.

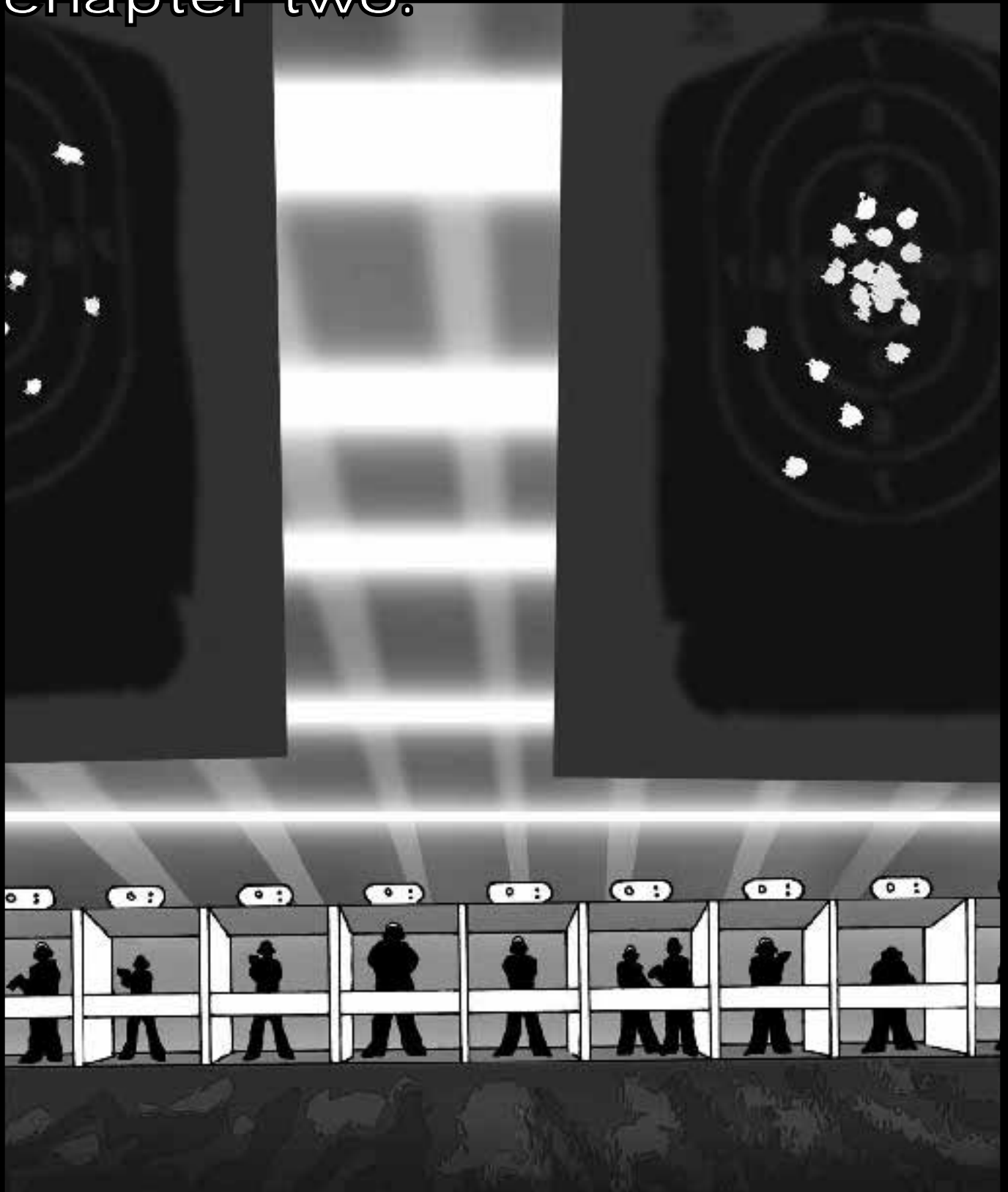
This high level of skill presents unusual challenges for the GM. Stopping *Dark Champions* characters with obstacles to their abilities — Skill Roll penalties, in other words — often fails to work unless the penalties are severe. Establishing realistic severe penalties involves carefully tailoring the circumstances of a scene to do things like force the PCs to perform Skills more quickly than normal, deprive them of their equipment (or its benefits), injure or inconvenience them, and so forth.

REVENGE

The primary motivating factor for many *Dark Champions* scenarios and characters is revenge: someone's done a PC or NPC wrong, and now that character wants vengeance. The typical wrongs include the murder of a friend or loved one, the humiliation of themselves or someone close to them, or the theft of something valuable (even if the value's only sentimental).

Of course, the PCs aren't the only people seeking revenge. Villains may be out for vengeance as well, typically against one of the PCs or someone they have to protect.

chapter two:



VIGILANTES, SPIES & SOLDIERS
CHARACTER CREATION

CHARACTER BASICS



Before you dive into the nuts and bolts of creating your *Dark Champions* character — the buying of Skills and abilities, the selection of weapons and equipment, and so forth — it's important to give some thought to the (sub)genre you're playing that character in, and to the character's background concept and motivations — which are far more important, in the long run, than what type of gun he carries or what he can do. The heart of any *Dark Champions* game is *why* the characters do what they do, not how they do it; once you establish that, you can build a richer, fuller, more enjoyable character.

DARK CHAMPIONS BACKGROUNDS

One of the first things you should consider when designing a *Dark Champions* character is his background — his “origin,” if you will. While this does involve figuring out things like where he was born and raised, for character design purposes often the most important thing is to decide how (and if necessary, where and by whom) he was trained in the skills and abilities he'll use in the game. Here are some of the most common backgrounds for *Dark Champions* characters, but this is a non-exhaustive list of suggestions — feel free to change them, mix them, or come up with your own.

INTELLIGENCE TRAINING

The character received his training from an intelligence agency or intelligence operative. Typically this means the agency recruited him as a spy and sent him to an appropriate training school. He probably has one of the Espionage Package Deals from pages 38-41. However, he might be the child of an espionage agent who learned his skills at his parent's feet. Or he could be a talented civilian who somehow got involved in an intelligence operation and received some quick training (or even “on the job” training) to supplement his natural abilities.

LAW ENFORCEMENT TRAINING

The character is, or was, a member of some law enforcement organization, and that organization trained him. He took classes at a police academy (or the FBI's academy at Quantico, or the like), practiced on the shooting range with other trainees, and developed his skills through drills and simulation exercises. Eventually he made it onto the force and got some actual street experience using his new abilities. He probably has one of the Law Enforcement Package Deals from pages 45-50.

MARTIAL ARTS TRAINING

The character doesn't have any formal training at crimefighting, tradecraft, or the like... but what he lacks in such sophistication, he makes up for in hand-to-hand fighting skills. He's spent years studying the martial arts (either a specific fighting style, or multiple styles), and he's learned his lessons well. Along the way he may have picked up other useful skills — an intimate familiarity with the streets and people of Chinatown, KSs pertaining to Asian organized crime, various Asian languages, and so forth.

There's no specific Package Deal that represents martial arts training; the character simply buys a selection of Martial Arts maneuvers and any related Skills he wants. If appropriate for the campaign, he might buy one of the Package Deals from *Ninja Hero* (and/or special martial artist abilities from that book or *The Ultimate Martial Artist*).

MILITARY TRAINING

This popular background represents a character who served in some branch of his nation's military before becoming an adventurer (or, in a Special Ops/Military Action campaign, during his career as an adventurer). Depending on character conception, he may have done a regular tour of duty as an ordinary soldier, or he may have been a highly-trained member of an elite force such as the U.S. Navy SEALs or the Special Air Service of the United Kingdom. The Military Package Deals (pages 51-55) are set up so that a character can take as many as he needs to represent the extent of his military training.

In the genre source material, characters who once served in the military often go on to civilian careers in law enforcement, the intelligence services, or security work. Thus, it's perfectly appropriate for a character to take both a Military Package Deal and a second Package Deal reflecting his civilian career.

(REFORMED) CRIMINAL

The character was once a criminal, but some experience — going to prison, having a (potential) victim save his life, the death of a loved one, an encounter with a charismatic hero, or the like — inspired him to change his ways and use his skills for a higher purpose. He could be a grifter or hacker who learned the tricks of the trade from veterans in the field but has gotten tired of taking money from suckers, a terrorist who's seen the light, a former freelance assassin who no longer wants to kill, a street punk who's grown up and wised up, or any of dozens of others.

Of course, in a *Caper Hero* campaign or the like, the character may not actually be a *reformed* criminal



— he might still make his living from crime. Alternately, he may have “reformed,” but only because he’s forced to, which makes for some interesting group dynamics among the PCs. For example, the cops might blackmail a skilled thief into becoming a “hero” with threats of revealing his doings to underworld compatriots whom he’s cheated, or sending him to jail. In that case the character goes along as much as he has to, but he might still commit crimes on the side, and he’s almost certainly looking for a way out of the dilemma... until, perhaps, he realizes he kind of likes doing good deeds.

SELF-TRAINED

The character has no formal training — he taught himself using books, the Internet, and any other source of information he could get his hands on. As a result, his skills and information may be sketchy at best (he probably has a lot more Familiarities than most characters), and eclectic when compared to the focused training of someone who’s attended a spy school or belonged to the military. He probably doesn’t have any Package Deals; instead, he buys his Skills and abilities individually.

STUDENT

The character didn’t just have one trainer — he had a *lot* of trainers. For whatever reason, he’s spent time training with all sorts of experts. Usually this means he had the time and money to devote himself to such training (*i.e.*, he’s got 10 or more points’ worth of the *Money Perk*), but it’s possible he found a way to trade his services for training, or had a wide array of skilled individuals who owed him (or his family) a favor.

Like the Self-Trained character, a Student probably doesn’t have any Package Deals (unless maybe a general one, such as Vigilante [page 57]). He either buys his abilities separately, or he buys bits and pieces of the Package Deals possessed by the people who trained him. For example, if his teachers included a former Green Beret, a con artist, an ex-Stasi assassin, and a CIA field operative, he might buy one or two Skills each from the Green Berets, Grifter, Assassin, and Field Agent Package Deals.

SURVIVOR

One of the few *Dark Champions* backgrounds that doesn’t focus on training, the Survivor is a character whose enemies left him for dead, but who survived, retrained and regrouped, and is now ready to get revenge and correct injustices. Typically he also has some other background, such as Military Training or Intelligence Training — it was the skill and perseverance with which he did his job as a spy, cop, or the like that attracted the attention of the enemies who tried to kill him.

DARK CHAMPIONS PERSONALITIES

Just as *Dark Champions* characters often have archetypal backgrounds, gamers often associate certain personalities with them. Listed below are some of the most common, with suggested Disadvantages appropriate to each one; see the Disadvantages section (beginning on page 101) for further discussion of some of the suggested Disadvantages.

THE AVENGER

The Avenger seeks vengeance for some wrong done to him or to others. For a costumed vigilante, this typically means the character saw his loved ones gunned down before his very eyes, and the experience has driven him to try to prevent the same thing from happening to anyone else. For a soldier, it may mean a desire to kill as many of the enemy who killed his buddy or destroyed his homeland as possible.

You should ask two questions about an Avenger. First, does he seek vengeance on one man (for example, the assassin whose bullet confined him to a wheelchair for life), or on an entire group (such as the yakuza)? This has a big effect on how you play the character. If the target's just one man (or a small group), the Avenger can be more focused and more reckless. If he's after an entire organization, he has to take a long-term view, racking up one small victory after another rather than trying to destroy the entire organization in one fell swoop.

Second, what does the Avenger plan to do to the target once he finds him? Kill him quickly? Make him suffer? Make him confess his crime and go to jail for it? Let him go, in a fit of self-pity at the way he (the Avenger) has totally warped his own life? Deal with him and move on to other targets? There are many possibilities, and the answer usually determines how long an Avenger is part of the campaign. If all he wants to do is eliminate one man (or organization), after he succeeds he may retire, dropping out of the "adventuring scene" altogether; the player has to create a new character if he wants to continue playing in the campaign. If the Avenger decides to maintain his war on crime, he may need to buy off or change one or more Psychological Limitations. Completing his "quest" may have other effects on his personality and his life, but this will vary from character to character.

Typical Disadvantages for an Avenger include:

Enraged: when confronting the people against whom he seeks vengeance (Common), go 14-, recover 11-: 25 Character Points

Psychological Limitation: Hunting [defined person or group] (Common, Strong): 15 Character Points

Psychological Limitation: Must Protect [persons specifically like the loved ones he lost] (Common, Total): 20 Character Points

Psychological Limitation: Obsessed With Obtaining Vengeance Against [defined person or group] (Common, Total): 20 Character Points

Psychological Limitation: Vengeful (Uncommon, Strong): 10 Character Points

THE COMPANY MAN

The Company Man is a loyal employee of, member of, or operative for, a specific organization, such as the CIA, the NSA, or the IRA. He faithfully does whatever he's told (even if it means risking his own life) and wouldn't think of betraying the organization (though he might have personality or power conflicts with other members of the group). While the name suggests powerful, legitimate organizations, members of gangs and organized crime groups often fall into this personality type.

Typical Disadvantages for a Company Man include:

Psychological Limitation: Loyalty To [organization] (Common, Strong): 15 Character Points

Psychological Limitation: Fanatically Loyal To [organization] (Common, Total): 20 Character Points

Social Limitation: Subject To Orders (Very Frequently, Major): 20 Character Points

THE GUN NUT

The Gun Nut has a strong interest in (perhaps even an unhealthy obsession with) firearms (and possibly other military hardware). He knows all about them, has a large collection of them, and loves to use them. He can have long, detailed conversations with other experts about the subject — and will, every chance he gets. Despite the name, he's not necessarily mentally unbalanced... but he *might* be, and since he's got all those guns, why take chances?

Typical Disadvantages for a Gun Nut include:

Psychological Limitation: Fascinated By Firearms (Uncommon, Moderate): 5 Character Points

Psychological Limitation: Triggerhappy (Common, Strong): 15 Character Points

THE IDEALIST

This character (who's most commonly found in costumed vigilante or DC:TAS campaigns) lives by a higher standard that he's set for himself. He thinks that to fight crime, oppose the enemy, or confront evil, one has to be *better* than one's enemy. He rejects the "ends justify the means" and "fight fire with fire" mentality adopted by his more ruthless or murderous compatriots. This isn't to say that he might not be a skilled and vicious fighter, just that he won't use lethal force. The upside to this is that he usually has a better reputation with the authorities and the public, giving him a resource to draw upon that his comrades may lack.

Typical Disadvantages for an Idealist include:

Psychological Limitation: Code Versus Killing (Common, Total): 20 Character Points

Psychological Limitation: Hatred Of Killing Attacks (Common, Strong): 15 Character Points

Reputation: soft-hearted, 11- (Limited Group [the underworld]): 5 Character Points



THE MAVERICK

The Maverick belongs to an organization, such as a police department or military unit, but he's not a quietly efficient, loyal member like the Company Man. Instead, he's a troublemaker and rabble-rouser. He doesn't care much for procedure, protocol, or the chain of command — he's concerned with results, and if that means he has to step on a few toes while he does his job, so be it. His attitude may make it a little difficult for him to work with his teammates, since they're concerned his reckless ways will get them in trouble (or killed).

Usually the Maverick is found in the presence of several supporting characters. First, there's his partner (if anyone else can stand to work with him at all), who usually tries to get him to calm down and take it easy. Then there's his immediate superior, who constantly chews him out but secretly admires him and the results he achieves, and who defends him to the higher-ups. Lastly, there are the high-level commanders who can't stand him, consider him a bad example of how people in his position should act, and try to punish him or get him thrown out of the organization.

In Law Enforcement campaigns, the Maverick usually works in Homicide (or a related branch, such as Robbery-Homicide), Narcotics, SWAT, or a special task force of some kind. In a Military Action story, he's most often a member of some elite unit or a hotshot fighter pilot. In an Espionage game, he's a field operative with a reputation for risk-taking and bold moves.

Despite his attitude, the Maverick is firmly a part of "the system," even if he often pushes the

system to its breaking point. On the other hand, vigilantes, cops gone "bad," and the like no longer believe in the system and have started working outside it.

Typical Disadvantages for a Maverick include:

Psychological Limitation: Thinks Results Are More Important Than Procedure (Common, Strong): 15 Character Points

Psychological Limitation: Likes To Mock/Fool/Annoy The Brass (Common, Moderate): 10 Character Points

Reputation: maverick, 11- (Limited Group [character's organization]): 5 Character Points

Social Limitation: Subject To Orders (Very Frequently, Major): 20 Character Points

THE MERCENARY

The Mercenary's in it for the money. Usually he's a soldier who sells his services to the highest bidder, but he might also be a freelance spy or assassin, a vigilante who steals from the crooks and gives to himself, a thief, a corrupt cop, or the like.

In the *Dark Champions* genre, Mercenaries usually fall into one of two categories: honorable and dishonorable. The honorable mercenary sticks to his contracts once he takes them; he doesn't entertain competing offers, and can't be bought off with more money (in game terms, he has the *Code Of The Mercenary* Psychological Limitation). The dishonorable Merc is just plain greedy. He'll sell out his employer if he thinks he can get a better deal from the other side. He may pretend to follow the mercenaries' code, but he doesn't if he can get away with breaking it.

Typical Disadvantages for a Mercenary include:

Psychological Limitation: Casual Killer (Very Common, Strong): 20 Character Points

Psychological Limitation: Code Of The Mercenary (Common, Strong): 15 Character Points

Psychological Limitation: Greedy (Common, Strong): 15 Character Points

Psychological Limitation: Looks Out For Number One (Common, Strong): 15 Character Points

Social Limitation: Subject To Orders (Very Frequently, Major): 20 Character Points

THE PATRIOT

The Patriot is a believer — often an ardent one — in the purposes, cause, and/or supremacy of a particular nation. (Taking the term more broadly, it might also signify loyalty to any sort of organization or cause, such as the goals of a band of terrorists or the tenets of a religion.) For the most part, this doesn't inconvenience the character too much; at most it may dictate his choice of employment (for example, he might join the military or intelligence agency of his country) and other activities (like flying the flag outside his house). But on occasion it causes problems, such as when someone makes an unflattering comment about his nation and the Patriot starts a brawl.

Typical Disadvantages for a Patriot include:

Psychological Limitation: [Nation] Patriot (Uncommon, Strong): 10 Character Points

Psychological Limitation: Fanatic [Nation] Patriot (Uncommon, Total): 15 Character Points

THE PROFESSIONAL

The Professional is all business. He's got a job to do, and he's going to use all his skills and resources to get it done. He shrugs off sentiment and distractions that sidetrack other characters so he can concentrate on doing his duty. He may get upset with characters who aren't as dedicated as he is.

Typical Disadvantages for a Professional include:

Psychological Limitation: All Business (Common, Strong): 15 Character Points

Social Limitation: Poor Social Skills (-1 on all Interaction Skill Rolls) (Occasionally, Minor): 5 Character Points

Social Limitation: Subject To Orders (Very Frequently, Major): 20 Character Points

THE SOCIOPATH

The Sociopath (also referred to as a psychopath) has a mental condition known as *antisocial personality disorder*. Roughly speaking, this dulls his ability to experience emotions (thus forcing him to engage in extreme behavior to obtain emotional fulfillment), prevents him from feeling guilt, and makes it difficult for him to associate consequences with actions (*i.e.*, to relate punishment to bad behavior). Serial killers suffer from this disorder (see page 305 for more information).

Typical Disadvantages for a Sociopath include:

Psychological Limitation: Casual Killer (Very Common, Strong): 20 Character Points

Psychological Limitation: Antisocial Personality Disorder (Very Common, Strong or Total): 20-25 Character Points

THE THRILLSEEKER

The Thrillseeker is an adrenaline junkie. He may like helping people, performing important missions for his country, or the like — but what he *really* enjoys about adventure is the danger and the thrills. He's a risk-taker, and that may make him unpopular with his comrades.

Typical Disadvantages for a Thrillseeker include:

Psychological Limitation: Thrillseeker (Common, Strong): 15 Character Points

Psychological Limitation: Takes Unnecessary Risks (Common, Strong): 15 Character Points

THE VIGILANTE

A common personality type in costumed vigilante and DC:TAS campaigns, the Vigilante is a person who's set himself up as judge, jury, and possibly executioner. He believes the authorities can't or won't control the crime problem, and so it's up to him (and other right-minded individuals) to do the job. Ordinary citizens and law enforcement officers consider him a murderer, a serial killer, a psychopath, or all of the above. He considers himself to be a man doing a job the way it's supposed to be done — no more mercy for the criminal scum.

Many *Dark Champions* PCs can be considered vigilantes in the broad sense of the word — someone who takes the law into his own hands — and many action heroes are willing to kill criminals if need be. What sets the Vigilante personality type apart is his outright desire to hurt and kill criminals. The Vigilante doesn't just fight crime, he deliberately hunts criminals down and forces them to answer for their misdeeds. Besides their lethal tendencies, most Vigilantes will break the law in other ways that aid their war on crime — they burglarize criminals' houses, assault street punks, and so forth. Some Vigilantes go even further and do things like kidnapping enemies' DNPCs to put pressure on them.

Typical Disadvantages for a Vigilante include:

Psychological Limitation: Devoted To Justice (Common, Strong): 15 Character Points

Psychological Limitation: Obsessed With Crimefighting (Very Common, Strong): 20 Character Points

Psychological Limitation: Vigilante Mentality (Very Common, Strong): 20 Character Points

DARK CHAMPIONS ARCHETYPES

Among the various *Dark Champions* sub-genres, certain archetypal characters stand out. Some could appear in many different types of campaigns, while others really only fit into one. But they're all classic characters, and a lot of fun to play... or to play against type, if you prefer.

Don't think of these archetypes as written in stone. The *HERO System* is all about character design flexibility, so there's no need to stick to a stereotype unless you want to — feel free to modify the archetypes to suit yourself and the campaign you're in.

As you'll see below, a *Dark Champions* character's background often relates closely to his archetype: Cops Gone "Bad" and Renegade Cops have the Law Enforcement Training background, for example. But again, don't think of these descriptions as a straitjacket — it can be fun to go against type and create, for example, a cop character who got his training in the military (where he served as a military policeman).

Conspiracy Theorist

'I'm telling you, there are gators in the sewers! — cops use 'em to dispose of bodies of suspects who die "resisting arrest".'

— Thomas Foster, *Freetown Gazetteer*



This character believes a whole host of wild theories about what's *really* going on in the world. He thinks that what people believe about society is a sham — a false front maintained by the people who have *real* power and use it to manipulate events behind the scenes. He comes across like a nut — largely because he *is* a nut — but every now and then he gets something right. More importantly, as part of his crusade to expose "Them" and document his beliefs, he's learned a whole lot of trivia (which sometimes comes in handy) and some useful skills. For example, his KS: Conspiracies And Conspiracy Theories covers (albeit sporadically and superficially) a wide range of historical and social information, his PS: Photography can help the PCs gather and analyze evidence, and his wide circle of Contacts among like-minded individuals may offer some unorthodox sources of assistance from time to time.



The Cop Gone 'Bad'

'I tried it their way for years. Now let's try the right way.'

— Rene Carter, *Hudson City Police*

This character is an adventurer or vigilante in policeman's clothing. He's gotten fed up with the way "the system" treats criminals and has decided to take the law into his own hands. He could be a cop by day and a vigilante by night, or he may try to combine the two roles and dispense a little "curb-side justice" when he feels he can get away with it.

He may even have quit the force to pursue his vigilante goals. If he's still on the force, the Cop Gone "Bad" spends a lot of time and effort concealing his "double identity" — if he were caught, it would mean the end of his career as well as a lengthy jail sentence.

The Cop Gone "Bad" doesn't necessarily have to be a policeman. He can be any member of the justice system — a district attorney, a judge, the police department's filing clerk, you name it. The primary feature of this archetype is his dual role as a member of "the system" and as someone who has become a crimefighter because he feels that the system isn't doing the job properly.



The Disgusted Vet

'Same war, different battlefield.'

— Sgt. Roscoe Jackson, *USMC (ret.)*

This character, typically a former soldier from an elite or "special forces" unit, has just moved "back home" or to the big city. He's become disgusted with the state of society (or run afoul of the criminal element) and has set out to put things to rights. Alternately, he may be a former mercenary who had a change of heart, developed altruistic motives, and became an adventurer. Maybe his conscience finally kicked into overdrive after he almost killed a little girl. Perhaps he wants to settle down but discovers that the underworld or his old enemies have other ideas. Whatever his background, he's still a well-trained killer who can be brutal at times — but at least now he's on the side of the angels.

The Disgusted Vet brings a lot of combat skills and other useful abilities to his war on crime. He may also have a lot of heavy weaponry left over from his earlier career, and the skill to build still more guns. Last but not least, mercenary activities may have left him a wealthy man, capable of financing an entire team of like-minded adventurers.

The Ex-Spy

'I ran into a situation like this in Moscow in 1981....'

— Spencer MacBryde, *CIA (ret.)*



The Ex-Spy is an espionage agent who's come in from the cold and decided to put his skills to use on the streets. Like the Disgusted Vet, he may have retired, only to find out that society went downhill while he was fighting the Cold War. Or he may have come to town to set up shop and discovered some problems he can use his skills to deal with. In a less vigilante-esque vein, he may find out his savings weren't what he thought they were, so now he puts his skills to work to make some money.

Either way, the Ex-Spy is well-equipped for life as a vigilante or adventurer. His skills at sneaking, subterfuge, and infiltration work as well against the



Mafia or a corporate target as they did against enemy governments. His friends back at the Agency can feed him information and maybe even supply him with equipment from time to time. His self-confidence and aplomb are assets anywhere he goes.

The Fed-Up Normal
 'I'm not a vigilante. I'm just sick of being a victim all the time. The decent people of this city need to be protected!'

— Mr. McG, Hudson City Teacher



This character is mad as hell about crime, and just isn't gonna take it anymore. He's got himself a gun, and he thinks he knows what he's doing, so the criminals had better watch out!

The Fed-Up Normal is an ordinary guy, such as a storekeeper, who's seen too much crime to sit by quietly anymore. Perhaps he or his loved ones were victims of crime, or his store was robbed one too many times. Since the cops aren't doing the job, he's decided to take the law into his own hands.

This character may or may not have any real crimefighting skills. He may have learned a few things during time spent in the military or as a cop, but he's just as likely to have little or no training. If this is the case, the player should consider saving a large portion of his beginning points to spend when the Fed-Up Normal has a chance to learn some useful Skills. He should also take Disadvantages such as *Psychological Limitation: Naive* that the character can buy off later on, if he survives his baptism by fire.



The Investigator

'He's Yat Sing, crime-lord of Chinatown, that's who — don't you read the FBI Law Enforcement Bulletin?'

— Stephen S. Long, Author/LMD

This character is the intellectual of the action-adventure set. He prefers to think his way through a scenario instead of fighting his way through it. This may be something he can't help (for example, an old war injury may keep him from being a good combatant), or it may simply be a matter of personal preference. An Investigator doesn't necessarily have to be the stereotypical hard-boiled private eye; he could just as well be a police detective who's "gone bad" (see above), or a nosy little old lady who knows a lot about crime. He sometimes tends to "look down" on characters who aren't "in the know" like he is; he realizes information is the best weapon on the streets, even if they don't.

An Investigator character may also think he knows a lot about combat. He may be right... or not. Just because he knows how to shoot a gun doesn't make him a gunfighter.

The Mystic Hero

'There are scarier things on the streets than drugged-out punks with Uzis. Believe me.'

— KL George, *Talisman Dealer*



In DC:TAS campaigns and other games that don't attempt to emulate "realism" strictly, it's possible that magic, or at least mystic powers, exist. If so, heroes might have and use them to fight crime. Examples of this type of character include: an ordinary person with an interest in the occult; a vampire trying to do good instead of evil; a man who has a contract with Satan to provide evil souls to keep Hell "stocked;" a person possessed by a "spirit of Justice" which gives him special powers; or even a demon with severe personality problems (for a demon, that is). Alternately, the character might just *think* that he's got arcane powers, which could certainly lead to some interesting dilemmas... especially when true mystic threats come gunning for him.

Crimefighting isn't the only thing a mystic action hero could do with his abilities. A Law Enforcement campaign could focus on weird and eerie events and crimes, or a GM could craft an Espionage campaign around a "mystic Cold War" going on between various occult factions. And of course the Monster Hunters subgenre tends to assume a certain level of mysticism in the world, making Mystic Heroes a definite possibility.



The Reluctant Warrior

'All right. I guess I don't really have a choice.'

— Eric LeGood, *Living Bodhisattva*

Similar to the Disgusted Vet in some ways, the Reluctant Warrior is a former soldier or spy who retired for some reason, but has now been called back to duty by his superiors or his conscience. Part of him doesn't really want to go back into the field, to all the blood and death and danger, but part of him knows he has to — it's his responsibility to use his abilities to protect people who can't protect themselves.

The Reluctant Warrior brings a lot of skills and experience to the table, and probably a generous helping of Contacts as well. Depending on the nature of the adventures he gets involved with, he may seem a little like a fish out of water at first — he needs time to adapt his training to a new situation and new type of missions.



The Techspert

'If I run a computer analysis of Card Shark's recent crimes, we should be able to get some idea of where he'll strike next.'

— Online, *Hudson City Vigilante*

This character employs high-tech skills and gadgets in his adventuring career. He may be a wealthy dilettante who's developed his skills on his own, a reformed computer hacker, or a (former) military "information warfare" expert. He often eschews the physical skills developed by other adventurers for technical skills and devices. For example, rather than training to become extremely accurate with guns, the Techspert builds an aiming system that has the same effect; rather than learning how to "Jimmy Valentine" a lock, he relies on electronic lockpicks and viewing devices. However, if using his equipment requires a physical skill (such as Combat Driving with his high-tech car), he'll have that Skill.

In game terms, the Techspert usually carries a lot of equipment, including some special devices he paid Character Points for. If the campaign uses the optional Resource Points rules, he almost certainly buys extra Equipment Points with his Character Points.



PACKAGE DEALS



CHARACTERISTICS AND PACKAGE DEALS

Some of these Package Deals include additions to Characteristics. This reflects common levels of STR or other Characteristics found among members of those professions. However, with the GM's permission, a player may change or eliminate that part of the Package Deal if he has an idea for a character who defies or transcends the general stereotype.

If the campaign uses the Normal Characteristic Maxima rules, those rules apply to Characteristics gained from Package Deals. This may in some instances require a character to spend additional points to buy a Characteristic affected by the Package Deal up to a proper level. For example, imagine a Package Deal that provides +15 CON, for 30 points. The first 20 points of effect increase the character's CON to 20. After that the Normal Characteristic Maxima doubling applies, so the next 10 points only add 2.5 points' worth of CON. Since a character can't have a 22.5 CON, the character has to spend 2 more Character Points to increase his CON to 23. Alternately, with the GM's permission a character can reduce the points a Package Deal adds to a Characteristic to avoid this problem.

The following Package Deals, organized into five broad categories (Criminal, Espionage, Law Enforcement, Military, and Miscellaneous) represent common professions, occupations, or careers for *Dark Champions* characters. In addition to the listed Skills and abilities, each Package Deal includes suggestions on several related subjects: the goals and motivations of characters who belong to that profession; Characteristics and other abilities members of that profession might have; Disadvantages appropriate to the profession; and how the character might advance and progress during the campaign. But these are just suggestions — ignore them and choose something else if that suits the character you have in mind.

Professional Package Deals are just organizational tools. They group together Characteristics, Skills, and abilities commonly associated with a given organization or type of training to make the creation process quicker, easier, and more realistic. Unless the GM requires them, you don't have to use one. You can instead buy all of a character's abilities separately, or "customize" the Package Deal by taking only the parts of it you want and discarding the rest. Package Deals should enhance your creativity, not stifle it.

REALISM AND DRAMA

Many of these Package Deals represent, in *HERO System* terms, the training and abilities possessed by members of real-world organizations, such as the FBI or the U.S. Army Rangers. While these are based on research and make every effort to accurately portray the agencies involved, where necessary decisions have been made from the perspective of dramatic action — which is what *Dark Champions* and other *HERO System* roleplaying campaigns are all about! If you're interested in learning more about these organizations and perhaps adapting the Package Deals to your own preferred style of *Dark Champions* campaigning, the Bibliography has several good reference sources to get you started.

CRIMINAL PACKAGE DEALS

While *Dark Champions* is not about playing criminals or villains (generally speaking), it features a lot of characters who are criminals, have training as criminals, are regarded as criminals, or use the methods of criminals against them. These Package Deals represent a few common criminal archetypes that might give rise to interesting PCs or NPCs in your game.

CAT BURGLAR PACKAGE DEAL

Perhaps the most skilled member of the criminal pantheon, the Cat Burglar specializes in daring robberies, often against targets that seem impossible: second story (or far higher) residences and offices; well-guarded mansions; military or intelligence facilities. Between his consummate skill and high-tech equipment, he can steal just about anything.

Typical Goals And Motivations: For most Cat Burglars, the motivation is greed, pure and simple. Other people have beautiful, valuable things, and the Cat Burglar (or the Cat Burglar's employer) wants them. However, in addition to that many Cat Burglars are thrillseekers who enjoy not only the danger of their chosen career, but the challenge of matching their wits and skill against those of law enforcement and security professionals.

Typical Abilities: DEX, first and foremost, is the Cat Burglar's most important Characteristic — it's the basis for most of the Skills he relies on (Climbing, Lockpicking, Stealth, and the like). He also needs a decent INT (which also helps with some Skills, not to mention PER Rolls), and given the physical nature of many of his activities a few extra points of STR would be appropriate.

In addition to the Skills listed above, Security Systems and Streetwise are musts — without them, the Cat Burglar can't defeat security devices, properly fence his loot, and the like. Many others are appropriate, but not crucial: Acrobatics, Breakfall, and Contortionist to assist with getting into places; Concealment to find hidden valuables; Electronics and Mechanics so the Cat Burglar can build his own thieving equipment; and so forth.

Suggested Disadvantages: Psychological Limitations reflecting the character's greed, desire to prove himself cleverer or more skilled than anyone else, or the like are nearly mandatory. A Cat Burglar with the latter Psychological Limitation might also have a Rival — another Cat Burglar whom he con-

stantly strives to out-do. Hunteds by various law enforcement agencies or crimefighters would also make sense. If the character's been arrested before, he might have a criminal record you could represent with a Social Limitation.

Progression: Cat Burglars primarily spend their Experience Points improving their existing Skills and buying new ones. But there's only so far they can go with that career before becoming bored or running the risk of unbalancing the game. At that point, they may branch out by improving their combat abilities, or emphasizing the social/con artist aspect of their abilities.

CAT BURGLAR PACKAGE DEAL

Abilities

Cost	Ability
2	+2 STR
12	+4 DEX
3	+3 INT
3	Climbing
3	Concealment
3	Lockpicking
3	Security Systems
3	Stealth
3	Streetwise
9	9 points' worth of Skills from the following list: Acrobatics, Breakfall, Bribery, Computer Programming, Contortionist, Demolitions, Disguise, Electronics, Fast Draw, Forgery, Gambling, High Society, Martial Arts, Mechanics, Persuasion, Skill Levels, Sleight Of Hand, Trading, Weapon Familiarity, any Background Skill

Total Cost Of Package Abilities: 44

Disadvantages

Value	Disadvantage
None	

Total Value Of Package Disadvantages: 0

Options

Value	Ability
var	Hunted (by law enforcement or a crime-fighter)
-15	Psychological Limitation: Greedy (Common, Strong)
-15	Psychological Limitation: Must Prove That He Is The Best (Common, Strong)
-15	Psychological Limitation: Thrillseeker (Common, Strong)
-5	Rivalry: Professional (with another Cat Burglar)

GANGSTER PACKAGE DEAL

A "gangster" is any criminal who belongs to a gang, syndicate, mob, organized crime group, or the like. He could be a street-smart kid from Compton, a legbreaker for the Mafia or yakuza, an "agent" in a master villain's private army, or any of a hundred other types of criminal. All that matters is that he's part of a larger whole that's devoted to lawbreaking in some way.

Typical Goals And Motivations: The motivations of Gangsters vary incredibly. Many simply want all the money, drugs, cars, women, and power they can get their hands on. Others have a more long-term perspective, seeing their group as a road to influence and power in society. Virtually all of them want the respect, even deference, of others — "disrespecting" a Gangster may quickly lead to a fight or retribution.

Typical Abilities: Besides certain basic Skills — the ability to fire a gun, a knowledge of the streets, and so on — Gangsters don't have much in common Skill-wise. They range from thugs who rob convenience stores at gunpoint to sophisticated crooks able to mingle with the cream of society. In some cases, one of the reasons to join a group of criminals is to take advantage of the fact that the group has abilities the new member doesn't (and vice-versa).

Suggested Disadvantages: Most criminals have at least one Psychological Limitation relating to their "profession" — anything from *Casual Killer*, to *Greedy*, to *Loyal To The Gang*, and beyond. A member with a criminal record may have a Social Limitation; whether he's a convicted felon or not, the police may Hunt him (even if only to Watch him).

Progression: A Gangster who starts out as a relatively crude and unsophisticated criminal may learn more advanced larcenous arts by spending time with more experienced criminals. If he falls in with a group of adventurers, he could broaden his Skill set and knowledge base so he can more easily fit in with them and their world.

GANGSTER PACKAGE DEAL

Abilities

Cost	Ability
3	Streetwise
2	WF: Small Arms
1	Fringe Benefit: Criminal rank (member in gang, organized crime group, or the like)
12	12 points' worth of Skills from the following list: Bribery, Combat Skill Levels, Concealment, Demolitions, Disguise, Fast Draw, Forgery, Gambling, High Society, Language, Martial Arts, Mechanics, Persuasion, Skill Levels, Sleight Of Hand, Stealth, Weapon Familiarity, any Background Skill, Contacts

Total Cost Of Package Abilities: 18

Disadvantages

Value	Disadvantage
None	

Total Value Of Package Disadvantages: 0

GRIFTER PACKAGE DEAL

A grifter is a con artist — a criminal who steals money through fraud, subterfuge, clever scams, and perhaps a little sleight of hand. He's a master of misdirection, trickery, and playing on the hopes and fears of innocent people.

Typical Goals And Motivations: As with many other criminal types, greed is the Grifter's motivating factor — he wants money, and he's smart enough to get it illegitimately instead of having to hold an honest job. In his eyes, suckers don't deserve to keep their money; it's his right to take it. Many are proud of their skills and can't resist a challenge... or the chance to put one over on a rival or enemy.

Typical Abilities: PRE, INT, and DEX are the key Characteristics for a Grifter. He has to be able to present himself well, think fast on his feet, and convince his victims he's on the up-and-up. Acting is almost mandatory for Grifters; depending on the types of scams he likes to pull, an individual Grifter may also use Disguise, High Society, Gambling, Sleight Of Hand, or various Interaction Skills to get what he's after.

Suggested Disadvantages: Most Grifters have Psychological Limitations reflecting their criminal nature and preferred *modus operandi*, such as *Greedy*, *Coward*, or *Must Prove Himself To Be The Smartest*. Those who are known criminals might be Hunted by the police (at least to Watch them) or have a Social Limitation.

GRIFTER PACKAGE DEAL**Abilities**

Cost	Ability
9	+3 DEX
3	+3 INT
5	+5 PRE
3	Acting
3	Persuasion
3	Streetwise
15	15 points' worth of Skills from the following list: Bribery, Computer Programming, Concealment, Conversation, Cramming, Deduction, Disguise, Forgery, Gambling, High Society, Language, Lipreading, Mimicry, Oratory, Seduction, Shadowing, Skill Levels, Sleight Of Hand, Stealth, Trading, Weapon Familiarity, any Background Skill, Contacts

Total Cost Of Package Abilities: 41

Disadvantages

Value	Disadvantage
None	

Total Value Of Package Disadvantages: 0

Options

Value	Ability
var	Hunted (by law enforcement or a crime-fighter)
-15	Psychological Limitation: Greedy (Common, Strong)
-15	Psychological Limitation: Never Give A Sucker A Break (Common, Strong)
-5	Rivalry (Professional; with another Grifter)
-10	Social Limitation: Criminal Record (Occasionally, Major)

Progression: Most Grifters spend years honing their Skills. In game terms that means they can spend a lot of Experience Points buying up the rolls on their Skills, or buying new Skills as they expand their ability to scam others. If they decide to get out of "the game," they might focus on gambling, cat burglary, or similar careers; they rarely switch to more dangerous or combat-oriented activities. On the other hand, some would make ideal spies, assuming the nation or organization they work for could find a way to overcome their inherently selfish natures.

HACKER PACKAGE DEAL

A "hacker" is a person who uses his skills with computers and programming to commit various computer-oriented crimes, such as creating and unleashing viri, electronic theft, and so on. (Strictly speaking, the more accurate term would be "cracker," for someone who "cracks into" secured files and the like, but most people use the better-known term "hacker.")

Typical Goals And Motivations: Many, if not most, Hackers are motivated as much by the desire to show off their own cleverness and skills as they are by greed or maliciousness. They want to prove they can penetrate computer systems no one else has, go where the authorities say no one can go, and obtain data no one else has access to. But the money they can obtain — either through electronic theft, or by hiring their services out — isn't something they ignore, either, especially since keeping up with the "bleeding edge" of computer technology costs a lot of money.

Typical Abilities: Most of the Hacker's Skills focus on technology. A high Computer Programming roll is a must, of course, but the sort of hackers who become PCs (or PCs' adversaries) usually have even broader Skill sets.

Most Hackers are sedentary and not in very good shape. However, some action-adventure stories feature Hackers who are also into biking, extreme sports, or other activities that keep them in fine physical form.

Suggested Disadvantages: Since a Hacker is a criminal, he could easily be Hunted by the FBI, local cops, or any other law enforcement authority whose attention he's attracted (and/or he could have a criminal record). If he's penetrated sensitive government systems, he might have the CIA, the Army, or the like after him instead (or as well). Given their competitiveness, many Hackers develop Rivalries with other Hackers (some of these may turn into Hunteds as well).

Progression: A Hacker has to constantly practice his Skills and learn the latest advances in computer tech, so buying up his standard Skills is a common practice. Hackers who become adventurers usually try to broaden the scope of their abilities by learning how to fire guns (WFs), infiltrate areas (buy off the Limitation on their Security Systems), and so on. Given the limited scope of their Package Deal's abilities, there are plenty of other things Hackers can learn if they want to.

HACKER PACKAGE DEAL

Abilities

Cost	Ability
7	Computer Programming +2
3	Electronics
3	Inventor
3	SS: Computer Sciences 11-
2	Security Systems (INT Roll); Only Versus Computer Security Systems (-½)
3	Systems Operation

Total Cost Of Package Abilities: 21

Disadvantages

Value	Disadvantage
None	

Total Value Of Package Disadvantages: 0

Options

Value	Ability
30	<i>What A Cool Laptop:</i> Computer built on 150 Character Points
-10	Social Limitation: Criminal Record (Occasionally, Major)

TERRORIST

A terrorist is a person (usually a member of an organization of like-minded persons) who illegitimately employs violence and intimidation in an effort to promote his opinions or ideology. His goal may be to create something (such as a new nation solely for his people), to stop something (for example, to force a nation or people to leave a particular region or to change its policies), or some combination of the two. (For information on terrorist groups; see page 307.)

With a few adjustments, you can also use this Package Deal for guerrillas, insurgents, and similar informally-trained but highly-motivated soldiers.

Typical Goals And Motivations: By definition, a terrorist is an ardent believer in his cause, whatever it happens to be. Typically his beliefs are so strong, so central to his self- or world-view, that he's willing to die for them. Everything else — family, friends, the lives of innocent people — becomes unimportant compared to “the cause.”

Typical Abilities: While terrorists come in many varieties and levels of training, this Package Deal represents one who's well-trained in various military and paramilitary skills and doctrines. They don't favor any particular Characteristic; depending on the terrorist's preferred methods, INT, DEX, PRE, or STR may be the most important to him.

Suggested Disadvantages: All terrorists have Psychological Limitations representing their devotion to the cause. Beyond that, they're probably Hunted by at least one law enforcement or military organization (and possibly more). In some terrorist groups, they may have Rivals, or even intra-group Hunteds. A terrorist who's hiding among ordinary people waiting for orders or the opportunity to strike may have a Social Limitation: Secret Identity.

Progression: Terrorists typically devote their Experience Points to improving their ability to support the cause — they buy more Skills from the optional list, increase their rolls with the Skills they already know, and buy up their Characteristics (within reason). As time goes on, they may broaden their abilities by adding relevant Talents (such as Lightning Reflexes) or the like. If their cause succeeds (or at least remains active), they may end up going into the military or politics and developing appropriate Skills for those careers.

TERRORIST PACKAGE DEAL

Abilities

Cost	Ability
2	+2 STR
6	+2 DEX
3	KS: The Cause And Its History (INT Roll)
1	KS: The Military/Mercenary/Terrorist World 8-
3	Tactics
2	WF: Small Arms
9	9 points' worth of Skills from the following list: Bribery, Combat Skill Levels, Concealment, Demolitions, Disguise, Fast Draw, Forgery, Language, Martial Arts, Mechanics, Stealth, Weapon Familiarity, any Background Skill, Contacts

Total Cost Of Package Abilities: 26

Disadvantages

Value	Disadvantage
20	Psychological Limitation: Fanatic Belief In “The Cause” (Common, Total)
20	Hunted (GM's choice)

Total Value Of Package Disadvantages: 40

Options

Value	Ability
+18	<i>Elite Terrorist:</i> Increase STR to +5, DEX to +5, and Skill choices to 15 points' worth
+4	<i>Guerrilla:</i> Replace KS: The Military/Mercenary/Terrorist World with AK: Area Of Conflict (INT Roll), add Survival (one environment category), and add Tracking to the optional list
-15	<i>Deep Cover Terrorist:</i> Social Limitation: Secret Identity (Frequently, Major)
-10	Social Limitation: Criminal Record (Occasionally, Minor)

ESPIONAGE PACKAGE DEALS

These Package Deals are for characters who work(ed) with or for intelligence agencies such as the CIA or MI6. The text following the Package Deals themselves briefly describes some of the world's major espionage agencies.

CINEMATIC SPY PACKAGE DEAL

This Package Deal represents the classic “spy” seen in movies, adventure fiction, and the like. Suave, daring, deadly, and highly skilled in a variety of fields, he’s actually very little like real-world spies: he’s too flashy, too much of a liability to his side. But he may be the perfect character for many *Dark Champions* campaigns.

Typical Goals And Motivations: For all of his urbane sophistication and cosmopolitan airs, the Cinematic Spy is usually a patriot — one so devoted to the cause of his nation that he risks his life, day after day, in its service. But occasionally a Cinematic Spy is in the job less for love of country than for the thrills and excitement the job offers.

Typical Abilities: Cinematic Spies have a wide range of Skills and abilities — one of the attributes that sets them apart from “realistic spies” is how good they are at so many things. Practically the entire range of *Dark Champions*-style abilities is open to them. In addition to the ones listed in the Package Deal, some of the most common Skills favored by Cinematic Spies include: Combat Driving; Conversation; Persuasion; Seduction; and Transport Familiarity.

Male Cinematic Spies are usually portrayed as handsome, dashing men of great confidence and ability, whether they’re infiltrating an enemy base, gambling the night away, or seducing information out of a female enemy agent. Female spies are often mysterious and seductive, but this outward demeanor masks a woman of iron will and ruthless intent.

Suggested Disadvantages: Almost by definition, the Cinematic Spy is, like most other spies, Hunted by the enemy and Watched by his own side. He may also have other Hunteds — other enemies he’s made during his career. Psychological Limitations like *Womanizer* or *Skirtchaser* are also appropriate; many (if not most) Cinematic Spies seem to spend a lot of time associating with and/or pursuing members of the fairer sex (who often turn out to be enemy spies, or in the employ of enemy spies).

Progression: Just buying most of the Skills listed in the optional list for Cinematic Spies may take a character dozens of games’ worth of Experience Points, so there’s not much need to look beyond the standard “spy skills” for ideas. A spy who gets out of the “Great Game” and into full-time adventuring may want to broaden his Skill set with military-oriented abilities or the like.

CINEMATIC SPY PACKAGE DEAL

Abilities

Cost	Ability
2	Gambling (choose one category of games)
3	High Society
3	KS: The Espionage World (INT Roll)
2	KS: The Military/Mercenary/Terrorist World 11-
3	PS: Tradecraft (INT Roll)
3	Stealth
2	WF: Small Arms
3	Fringe Benefit: Espionage Rank
3	Fringe Benefit: Security Clearance
15	15 points’ worth of Skills from the following list: Acting, Bribery, Bureaucratics, Climbing, Combat Driving, Combat Piloting, Combat Skill Levels, Computer Programming, Concealment, Conversation, Cramming, Cryptography, Deduction, Disguise, Forgery, Lipreading, Lockpicking, Martial Arts, Mimicry, Navigation, Persuasion, Security Systems, Seduction, Shadowing, Skill Levels, Sleight Of Hand, Streetwise, Tracking, Weapon Familiarity, any Background Skill, Contacts, Deep Cover

Total Cost Of Package Abilities: 39

Disadvantages

Value	Disadvantage
20	Hunted: enemy nation or espionage agency 8- (Mo Pow, NCI, Capture/Kill)
10	Hunted: his own nation or espionage agency 8- (Mo Pow, NCI, Watching)

Total Value Of Package Disadvantages: 30

Options

Value	Ability
10	<i>Trusted Agent:</i> Add Fringe Benefit: License To Kill
0	<i>Undercover Spy:</i> Choose as optional abilities Acting, Disguise, Deep Cover(s), and a selection of appropriate Background Skills for his Deep Cover(s)
-15	Psychological Limitation: Patriot (Common, Strong)
-15	Psychological Limitation: Womanizer; Can’t Resist A Pretty Face (Common, Strong)
-15	Psychological Limitation: Thrillseeker (Common, Strong)
-5	Rivalry (Professional, with another spy in his agency)

ANALYST PACKAGE DEAL

In the “real world,” the average spy isn’t anything like spies in most movies and novels. He’s a scholar and researcher who compiles and analyzes data, looking for patterns and other vital information. Compared to the Cinematic Spy (or even the Field Agent), his isn’t a glamorous job, but it’s an absolutely vital one in the intelligence community.

Typical Goals And Motivations: For the most part, the Analyst is a civilian employee who just wants to do his job and do it well. However, he may be motivated by a love of country, a desire to protect his loved ones from external threats, or other noble feelings that go beyond the simple earning of a paycheck.

Typical Abilities: The Analyst’s abilities primarily relate to gathering and analyzing information. He’s a skilled researcher, able to pore through mountains of data, condense it down to its essential points, and then determine what those essential points signify. Most Analysts have one or more areas of specialization (such as “HAMAS” or “African Politics”) which they represent with their choices of KSs and optional Skills.

ANALYST PACKAGE DEAL**Abilities**

Cost	Ability
3	+3 INT
3	Bureaucratics
3	Deduction
3	KS: The Espionage World (INT Roll)
3	KS: The Military/Mercenary/Terrorist World (INT Roll)
12	12 more points’ worth of KSs
3	PS: Researcher (INT Roll)
3	Fringe Benefit: Espionage Rank
3	Fringe Benefit: Security Clearance
6	6 points’ worth of Skills from the following list: Acting, Bribery, Computer Programming, Conversation, Cramming, Cryptography, Lipreading, Martial Arts, Persuasion, Skill Levels, Weapon Familiarity, any Background Skill (particularly Languages), Contacts

Total Cost Of Package Abilities: 42

Disadvantages

Value	Disadvantage
10	Hunted: his own nation or espionage agency 8- (Mo Pow, NCI, Watching)

Total Value Of Package Disadvantages: 10

Options

Value	Ability
-20	Hunted: enemy nation or espionage agency 8- (Mo Pow, NCI, Recruit/Obtain Information From)
-15	Psychological Limitation: Patriot (Common, Strong)
-5	<i>Blackmailed Agent:</i> Social Limitation: Harmful Secret (Occasionally, Minor) (character may also need to take one or more other Disadvantages representing what he’s being blackmailed about)
+4	<i>High-Ranking Spy:</i> Increase Security Clearance

Suggested Disadvantages: Analysts as a group don’t have any particular Disadvantages, other than being Watched by the organization they work for. Each may have his own personal foibles, of course, though these don’t necessarily rise to the level of Disadvantages. If an Analyst has any personal problems (addictions, money difficulties, or the like), he’s susceptible to recruitment or blackmail by an enemy agency.

Progression: Over time, Analysts tend to become better and better at their jobs — in game terms, they spend Experience Points to improve their Skill Rolls and buy more KSs. In a *Dark Champions* campaign, it’s likely that an Analyst who becomes an adventurer will want to buy Skills and abilities that make him more effective in the field: combat Skills; infiltration Skills; and the like.

ASSASSIN PACKAGE DEAL

An assassin is a killer for hire, skilled at performing “wet work.” While assassins can be freelancers, this Package Deal is included under the Espionage category because intelligence agencies often employ (or oppose) assassins — in adventure fiction and movies, at least, if not in the “real world” as well.

This Package Deal is slightly “cinematic,” in that it represents an assassin who’s broadly competent in his field. For a more “realistic” assassin, reduce the Characteristic purchases and focus the character on one preferred method of killing his targets — usually something relatively mundane, such as sniping or explosives, rather than making him an expert poisoner, knife-thrower, or the like.

Typical Goals And Motivations: Assassins’ motivations vary. Some are skilled professionals just doing a job. They may not even like what they do, in which case they’re probably looking for a way out but can’t find a safe one (after all, how likely is it their employer will just let them walk away and retire peacefully?). Others are sociopathic butchers who’ve found a socially acceptable outlet for their murderous impulses.

Typical Abilities: Assassins have a wide variety of Skills that help them with the (unpleasant) task of killing hard-to-reach people. They’re strong, fast, smart, and determined. They know how to use a wide variety of weapons with great skill... but they’re dangerous fighters even when unarmed. Beyond that, they usually have a generous selection of typical “spy Skills,” since they need to use many of the same wiles to get close to their targets as a spy does to gather information and make contacts.

Suggested Disadvantages: Like other espionage agents, Assassins are Watched by the organization they work for and Hunted by at least one enemy organization. They could also be Hunted by a relative of one of their victims who seeks revenge. Cinematic Assassins often “compete” with other assassins for the title of world’s greatest killer, or to see who can get to a specified victim first.

Progression: Like Cinematic Spies, Assassins have so many Skills in their optional lists that they can

spend most of their careers buying and honing them. An Assassin who wants to get out of “the business” may train himself to assume another career; one who spends time with *Dark Champions* adventurers may pick up some of their Skills.

ASSASSIN PACKAGE DEAL

Abilities

Cost	Ability
5	+5 STR
15	+5 DEX
3	+3 INT
5	+5 PRE
8	+1 with All Combat
3	Demolitions
3	KS: The Espionage World (INT Roll)
3	KS: The Military/Mercenary/Terrorist World (INT Roll)
10	Martial Arts (10 points' worth)
3	SS: Pharmacology/Toxicology (INT Roll)
3	Stealth
3	Streetwise
4	WF: Small Arms plus two more points' worth of WFs
3	Fringe Benefit: Espionage Rank
3	Fringe Benefit: Security Clearance
9	9 points' worth of Skills from the following list: Acting, Bribery, Climbing, Combat Driving, Combat Piloting, Combat Skill Levels, Computer Programming, Concealment, Conversation, Cramming, Cryptography, Deduction, Disguise, Forgery, Lockpicking, Martial Arts, Mimicry, Penalty Skill Levels, Persuasion, Security Systems, Seduction, Shadowing, Skill Levels, Sleight Of Hand, Streetwise, Tracking, Weapon Familiarity, any Background Skill, Contacts, Deep Cover, Deadly Blow

Total Cost Of Package Abilities: 83

Disadvantages

Value	Disadvantage
20	Hunted: enemy nation or espionage agency 8- (Mo Pow, NCI, Capture/Kill)
10	Hunted: his own nation or espionage agency 8- (Mo Pow, NCI, Watching)

Total Value Of Package Disadvantages: 30

Options

Value	Ability
0	<i>Undercover Killer</i> : Choose as optional abilities Acting, Disguise, Deep Cover(s), and a selection of appropriate Background Skills for his Deep Cover(s)
-20	Psychological Limitation: Casual Killer (Very Common, Strong)
-5	Rivalry (Professional, with another assassin)

FIELD AGENT PACKAGE DEAL

This Package Deal represents a typical “real-world” spy who actually spends time in the field — the “realistic” equivalent of the Cinematic Spy, if you will.

Typical Goals And Motivations: The motivations of those who spy are sometimes summarized with the acronym MICE: Money; Ideology; Compromise; and Ego. Many of these factors apply primarily to persons who betray their own country (such as Aldrich Ames or Kim Philby), but they could also apply to the typical Field Agent PC. For them, ideology (love of country or the like) is probably the most common motivator, but not necessarily the only one.

FIELD AGENT PACKAGE DEAL

Abilities

Cost	Ability
3	KS: The Espionage World (INT Roll)
2	KS: The Military/Mercenary/Terrorist World 11-
6	6 more points' worth of KSs pertaining to the character's area of expertise
3	PS: Tradecraft (INT Roll)
2	WF: Small Arms
3	Fringe Benefit: Espionage Rank
3	Fringe Benefit: Security Clearance
9	9 points' worth of Skills from the following list: Acting, Bribery, Bureaucratics, Climbing, Combat Driving, Combat Skill Levels, Computer Programming, Concealment, Conversation, Cramming, Cryptography, Deduction, Disguise, Forgery, Gambling, High Society, Lipreading, Lockpicking, Martial Arts, Persuasion, Security Systems, Seduction, Shadowing, Skill Levels, Sleight Of Hand, Stealth, Streetwise, Weapon Familiarity, any Background Skill (particularly Languages), Contacts, Deep Cover

Total Cost Of Package Abilities: 31

Disadvantages

Value	Disadvantage
20	Hunted: enemy nation or espionage agency 8- (Mo Pow, NCI, Capture/Kill)
10	Hunted: his own nation or espionage agency 8- (Mo Pow, NCI, Watching)

Total Value Of Package Disadvantages: 30

Options

Value	Ability
0	<i>Undercover Spy</i> : Choose as optional abilities Acting, Disguise, Deep Cover(s), and a selection of appropriate Background Skills for his Deep Cover(s)
-15	Psychological Limitation: Patriot (Common, Strong)
-5	Rivalry (Professional, with another spy in his agency)
-5	<i>Double Agent</i> : Social Limitation: Harmful Secret (Occasionally, Minor) (character may also need to take one or more other Disadvantages representing what led him to betray his country or made him susceptible to blackmail, such as Psychological Limitation: Compulsive Gambler for a spy who needs money to pay his gambling debts)



Typical Abilities: Unlike the widely-skilled Cinematic Spy, the Field Agent has a much more restricted set of Skills and abilities. In addition to some general espionage training, he usually has Skills (primarily KSs, Languages, and the like) pertaining to a particular area of expertise. For example, a Field Agent who's assigned to Africa probably has AK: Africa, CKs of various cities in Africa, KS: African Politics, various Languages spoken in the parts of Africa he frequents, Contacts among prominent or useful Africans, and the like.

Suggested Disadvantages: The Field Agent is, of course, Hunted by the enemy and Watched by his own side. If he's been recruited by another agency as a double agent, he has a Social Limitation and probably another Disadvantage reflecting the "hook" with which he was recruited.

Progression: As with other spies, the Field Agent can just keep buying Skills from his Package Deal's optional list if he wants. If he becomes a full-time adventurer, he may want to broaden his Skills a little.; many Field Agents focus pretty narrowly on their area of specialization, and that doesn't always make for good adventuring.

Intelligence Agencies Of The World

Here's a *brief* description of some existing intelligence agencies, as well as some from the recent past that may factor into games set in the latter half of the twentieth century (or whose members may now be "freelancers" opposing the PCs). Gamers who are interested in knowing more should consult the references listed in the Bibliography.

BULGARIA

During the Cold War, Bulgaria's espionage and secret police service was known as the DS (*Durzhavna Sigurnost*, or "State Security"). It conducted many operations on behalf of the KGB, which preferred to distance itself from certain missions (such as some assassinations) that the DS was willing to carry out. Its other activities included gathering military and strategic intelligence and domestic counterintelligence operations. Modern Bulgaria's intelligence agency is the National Intelligence Service.

CHINA

China has a large and active intelligence community, one which has sadly proven adept at stealing American technological and military secrets. The large Chinese community in the United States (and other nations) provides excellent cover for its operations.

The primary intelligence agency in China is the Ministry of State Security (MSS). It's organized into numbered bureaus — First, Second, Third, and

so on. The Second Bureau is responsible for foreign intelligence gathering and operations; the First for recruiting and certain domestic intelligence activities; the Third for operations in Hong Kong, Macao, and Taiwan. The Ministry of Public Security, the primary police force in China, also has some espionage-related responsibilities.

CUBA

Cuba's espionage agency is the DGI (*Dirección General de Inteligencia*, or General Intelligence Directorate), a branch of the Ministry of the Interior. Traditionally associated with the Soviet and Russian intelligence services, it's said to maintain close ties to them today. It's responsible for gathering foreign intelligence; the DCM (Military Counterintelligence Department) of the Ministry of Revolutionary Armed Forces handles domestic intelligence/counterintelligence operations.

The DGI has two large divisions, Operational and Support, each containing three smaller divisions. For example, Operational Division includes the Political/Economic Intelligence Division (which subdivides into geographic sections) and the Military Intelligence Division.

It's thought that the DGI is especially active in Miami and around Guantanamo Bay (the United States naval base in Cuba). In addition to gathering foreign intelligence, it also trains revolutionaries and guerrilla warriors in other Third World countries, and participates in the international drug trade. Some American officials allege that over half the members of the Cuban delegation to the United Nations are DGI spies.

FRANCE

France has several espionage agencies of note. The foremost of them is the *Direction Générale de la Sécurité Extérieure* (DGSE, or Directorate of External Security), which collects intelligence data and conducts counterintelligence and covert operations. It also has some role in combating drug trafficking. It has five main internal directorates: Strategic; Intelligence; Operations; Administration; and Technical.

Next is the DRM, or *Direction du Renseignement Militaire* (Directorate of Military Intelligence). Created to resolve intelligence problems experienced during the Gulf War, it was formed from several existing agencies, including the Deuxième Bureau ("Second Bureau"). Its initial brief was to "plan[], coordinat[e], and lead[] investigations and the use of military intelligence." In the ensuing decade it has evolved from a pure military intelligence organization to one that also works with political and strategic intelligence, like the DGSE. It has no internal security role and no operations branch; it's an intelligence analysis and evaluation organization.

Other French intelligence agencies include the *Direction de la Protection et de la Sécurité de la Défense* (DPSD, the Directorate for Defense Protection and Security) and the *Brigade de Renseignement et de Guerre Electronique* (BRGE, the Intelligence and Electronic Warfare Brigade).

GERMANY

The primary German intelligence agency is known as BND (*Bundesnachrichtendienst*, or Federal Intelligence Service). It gathers intelligence internally (against suspect groups such as Islamic extremists) and abroad. Large and well-funded, it monitors activities and broadcasts of interest around the world, and has a large staff of field operatives. It cooperates with Russian intelligence to combat nuclear smuggling; it also engages in operations to combat drug smuggling and money laundering.

The BND has six primary departments: Operational Procurement; Technical Surveillance; Interpretation; Administration; Security And Defense; and Central Tasks. Administration maintains the Central File For Persons (PEZD), a valuable database which includes all records regarding persons who come into contact with the intelligence services.

The Stasi

Before East and West Germany merged, the East had its own intelligence agencies. Chief among these was *Stasi*, the dreaded East German secret police. The Stasi reportedly attempted to keep a file on every East German, and its intelligence network is said to have included as many as half of the citizens. Since reunification, the government has abolished the Stasi, but presumably many of its former agents are still working somewhere, whether for other nations or for themselves.

INDIA

As one of the largest, most populous nations in the world, with one of the world's largest militaries, India likewise has an extensive intelligence community. Among the most important of its intelligence agencies are:

- the Research and Analysis Wing (RAW), which gathers foreign intelligence. It works directly for the Prime Minister and does not report to Parliament. It's had great success in operations against Pakistan and other neighboring nations.

- the Intelligence Bureau (IB), said by some to be the world's oldest intelligence agency. It's responsible for domestic intelligence. By law its activities cannot be investigated or audited, so determining exactly what it does and how it performs its mission is difficult.

- the Joint Intelligence Committee (JIC), which analyzes and evaluates the intelligence gathered by the RAW and the IB.

IRAN

The main Iranian intelligence agency is the Ministry of Intelligence and Security (MOIS), or VEVAK, the successor to the SAVAK (see below). Its functions remain obscure, though it seems to engage in both domestic and foreign intelligence operations. It includes some lower-ranking SAVAK members whose knowledge or experience were regarded as particularly valuable. Its foreign agents are thought to be mostly consular personnel, "employees" of Iran Air, and students. Experts believe it has financed and otherwise supported terrorist activities abroad.

The Joint Committee for Special Operations, a body whose members include the president and the nation's top religious official, coordinates Iranian intelligence operations. It also monitors the activities of the Iranian exile community.

The SAVAK

The SAVAK, or Ministry of Security, was formed by the Shah of Iran in 1957. Initially founded for limited purposes, it quickly grew into a large, powerful intelligence-gathering agency and secret police organization. During the Shah's reign it developed a well-deserved reputation for abuse of power, cruelty, and the use of torture on prisoners — among other things, it had the authority to arrest anyone in Iran and hold them indefinitely without reason. The Ayatollah Khomeini dissolved the SAVAK when he came to power in 1979 (many of its leaders and members were executed at that time), but the PCs in a *Dark Champions* campaign could easily run into veterans of the agency who've been “freelancing” since then.

ISRAEL

As a small state surrounded by many enemies, Israel places great value on intelligence-gathering. It has several intelligence agencies, including:

The Mossad

The chief Israeli intelligence organization is the Mossad (Institute for Intelligence and Special Tasks), a small agency regarded as efficient and sometimes cruel. It's said to be able to call on a worldwide network of Jews for assistance in its foreign intelligence operations, which mainly focus on Arab states and nationals.

The Mossad has eight departments. The largest is Collections, which is responsible for various espionage operations. Special Operations, or *Metsada*, performs dangerous and highly sensitive missions such as sabotage, assassination, paramilitary operations, and psychological warfare. Research analyzes and manages the data gathered by the organization, and Technology develops the devices and weapons needed to support Mossad activities.

Shabak

Also known as *Shin Bet*, Shabak (the Israel Security Service, formerly the General Security Service) is the Israeli domestic security and counterintelligence agency. It's responsible for helping to maintain the security of the people and the state. It has three operational departments: Arab Affairs (which mainly monitors Arab terrorists and tries to prevent terrorist activities); Non-Arab Affairs; and Protective Security (which protects government buildings, vital defense and scientific installations, and El Al). While it's regarded as a highly proficient organization, it has been accused of numerous human rights and Geneva Convention violations.

Aman

Aman is the Israeli military intelligence service (also known as the *Mod'in*). It performs the usual military intelligence duties: preparing briefs and reports regarding security threats; conducting target studies of potential enemies; and the like. It's an independent service, equal in prominence to the army, navy, and air force (all of whom have intelligence units that function as semi-autonomous sections of Aman).



TYPES OF INTELLIGENCE

Intelligence agencies typically organize intelligence into seven categories:

COMINT: Communications Intelligence, information derived by intercepting communications.

ELINT: Electronic Intelligence, technical and intelligence information gathered from electromagnetic transmissions which are not communications.

HUMINT: Human Intelligence, information gathered from human sources (such as friendly agents, informants, double agents, and unsuspecting dupes) through various covert and overt techniques.

IMINT: Imagery Intelligence, information gathered from satellite photographs and other images.

MASINT: Measurement and Signature Intelligence, information about technical matters, such as acoustic, materials science, nuclear, optical, radiofrequency, and seismic data.

OPEN SOURCE: Information in the public domain (e.g., in the newspaper, on the news, on the Internet).

SIGINT: Signals Intelligence, information gathered by intercepting signals, including all COMINT, ELINT, and MASINT.

JAPAN

Japan's main intelligence agency is the *Koan-cho* (Public Security Investigation Agency). It's a comparatively small organization responsible for both internal and external security matters, with a focus on counter-espionage activities.

RUSSIA

Russia has a long history of powerful, well-funded, and effective intelligence agencies. In a Cold War-era *Dark Champions* campaign, Russian agents are likely to be the primary adversaries of spy PCs.

The KGB

The best-known Soviet intelligence agency was the infamous KGB (*Komitet Gosudarstvennoi Bezopasnosti*, Committee for State Security). Besides its world-wide functions as an espionage agency, the KGB was in charge of Soviet internal security and acted as a feared secret police.

The KGB's fearsome reputation was due in part to its extreme caution and willingness to play for long-term goals. Its operations included not only standard intelligence-gathering and analysis, but the sponsorship of terrorism, subversion of enemies of the Soviet state, and outright assassination of enemies (often with the help of the DS, GRU, or SMERSH). It employed about half a million people throughout the world.

The organization and hierarchy of the KGB was complex and detailed, but basically it had five major internal directorates and several other minor ones. The First Directorate was responsible for all foreign intelligence gathering and operations. It included field operatives, technicians, analysts, and even a special Spetznaz (special forces) unit. The Second Directorate was responsible for internal security and control. The Third Directorate dealt with military counterintelligence and political surveillance of the Soviet military. The Eighth Directorate was in charge of communications and cryptography.

The SVR

The KGB collapsed along with the Soviet Union in 1991-92, but its assets, activities, and personnel simply became part of other, newly-formed organizations. One of these was the SVR (*Sluzhba Vneshney Razvedki*, or Foreign Intelligence Service). It took over the resources and duties of the KGB's First Directorate (i.e., foreign intelligence). Like the First Directorate, it probably has three internal directorates (S, T, and K) and three services (I, A, and R), each responsible for one facet of its overall mission. It also controls a Spetznaz counter-terrorist unit, *Vympel* ("Banner").

The FSB

The *Federal'naya Sluzhba Bezopasnosti*, or Federal Security Service, is also a successor to the KGB. Its duties involve Russian internal security, counterespionage, and combatting organized crime; they were once the purview of the Second, Third, Fifth, and Seventh Directorates of the KGB. It was initially known as the Federal Counterintelligence Service (*Federal'naya Sluzhba Kontr-razvedky*, or

FSK), but subsequently redesignated the FSB. It has approximately 75,000 employees.

The GRU

Another important Soviet agency was the *Glavnoye Razvedyvatelnoye Upravlenie* (Chief Intelligence Directorate of the Soviet General Staff), or GRU. Agents of the GRU, who were fierce rivals of the KGB, were considered to be vicious, brutal men who preferred direct action over the KGB's stealth and maneuvering. GRU activities included industrial espionage and aiding guerrilla warfare in enemy countries, but its primary focus was gathering military intelligence.

Unlike the KGB, the GRU survived the collapse of the Soviet Union and continues to function as a military intelligence agency (some believe it has more resources for gathering foreign intelligence than the SVR). Its structure has remained largely the same as well, with a system of directorates, directions, and sections, each devoted to a particular subject and/or geographic region.

SMERSH

SMERSH, *Smert Shpionen* or *Shpionam* ("Death to Spies"), was the Soviet agency in charge of counterespionage, assassination, kidnapping, and similar activities. Its agents were considered cold, cruel professionals; they used many exotic devices. In the 1980s it merged with the KGB, its functions taken over by that agency's Third Directorate.

THE UNITED KINGDOM

The primary British intelligence agencies, MI-5 and MI-6 (Military Intelligence 5 and 6), are well known in fictionalized form to fans of the "James Bond" movie series. These agencies have a long tradition of excellent service and were the models for the intelligence agencies of many other nations.

MI-5, the Security Service, is responsible for counterespionage, counterterrorism, and national security. It has five internal branches, each headed by a Director: two have duties pertaining to intelligence collection, information management, and administrative matters; three analyze and evaluate collected intelligence and advise the government. It has about 1,900 employees.

MI-6, the Secret Intelligence Service (SIS; motto: *Semper Occultus*, "Always Secret"), conducts foreign espionage operations. Known in Espionage World slang as "the Firm" (or, to other agencies, "the Friends"), it's an extremely secretive agency thought to have about 2,300 employees.

THE UNITED STATES

The American government has numerous intelligence agencies, almost all of them well-equipped and well-funded by Espionage World standards. Some of the most important include:

The CIA

The Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) is headquartered at Langley, Virginia. It is an executive branch agency with approximately 20,000 to 30,000 employees, making it one of the largest intelligence agencies in the world.

Central Intelligence is responsible for gathering all sorts of foreign intelligence and for domestic counterespionage (it shares the latter responsibility with the FBI). United States law forbids it to commit assassinations or engage in domestic spying.

The CIA has four Directorates — Administration, Intelligence, Operations, and Science and Technology — each headed by a Deputy Director. The Directorates are further divided by the geographic region they are responsible for. The Directorate of the most immediate interest to *Dark Champions* GMs and players is Operations, which conducts classical espionage activities, covert operations, counterintelligence, and counterterrorism. The information Operations obtains through traditional spying, and that Science and Technology gets through signals intelligence and like sources, is analyzed and turned into “finished intelligence product” by Intelligence.

The DIA

Headquartered at the Pentagon, the Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA) is the United States’s main military intelligence agency. It describes itself as a “combat support agency.” It has subordinate branches in each of the American military services, and also assigns military attachés to American embassies.

The DIA has six Directorates, including Analysis, Intelligence Joint Staff, Human Intelligence, and MASINT and Technical Collection. It also operates the Joint Military Intelligence College, a center for educating civilian and military intelligence professionals.

The NSA

The National Security Agency (NSA), headquartered at Fort Meade, Maryland, is probably the United States’s most secret intelligence agency (it used to be said that the initials stood for “No Such Agency”). Its primary responsibilities are to gather and analyze electronic intelligence and communications, evaluate intelligence data, make and break codes, protect sensitive and classified U.S. government information, and help other agencies plan missions. Its computer resources, information network, and technical capabilities are among the best in the world.

LAW ENFORCEMENT PACKAGE DEALS

These Package Deals cover various careers in American law enforcement — an excellent form of training for costumed vigilantes and many other *Dark Champions* characters. If you want to create a cop from another country, you can easily adapt the most appropriate Package Deal by changing a few Skills and so on.

POLICE OFFICER PACKAGE DEAL

This Package Deal is for local and state law enforcement officers — city cops on the beat, homicide detectives, county sheriff’s deputies, State Highway Patrolmen, and so forth. Police training varies from jurisdiction to jurisdiction, so GMs who are willing to do a little extra research can customize this Package to fit particular cities or locales.

Typical Goals And Motivations: The attitudes and goals of law enforcement personnel can vary greatly from officer to officer. Many want to do the best job they can, while others are corrupt and only interested in getting rich by exploiting their position. Some are caring and compassionate individuals who genuinely want to help people, but a few are macho swaggerers who get a big kick out of wearing a gun and pushing people around.

One motivation most officers share is caution, suspicion, “paranoia,” and being on the lookout for danger. Because their lives are always on the line, and everything they do is subject to scrutiny by a hostile media and other special interests, this “circling of the wagons” attitude is often understandable. But it may lead to a department “closing ranks” to hinder investigations of alleged police corruption, brutality, or the like.

The nature of law enforcement work demands that officers and agents be assertive, self-confident individuals. You should reflect this when you role-play a cop.

Typical Abilities: Policemen are generally fit and physically capable individuals (in game terms, they often have at least some Primary Characteristics above 8). Because they have to confront people frequently, and have seen so many terrible things, they’re hard to intimidate or impress (high PRE).

Many cops have some form of martial arts training (for example, Commando Training as a collection of self-defense techniques, or maneuvers that represent their skill using a nightstick or tonfa). They’re observant and have good memories, because their job requires them to pay a lot more attention to their surroundings than most people do.

The *Membership Fringe Benefit* in this Package Deal assumes a relatively low-ranking officer. You can pay more Character Points to increase it if you want to create a higher-ranking character.

Cops carry a lot of equipment, either on their persons or in their squad cars. This includes a firearm (and possibly a hidden backup pistol) with extra clips of ammunition, pepper spray, a nightstick or tonfa, handcuffs (and a handcuff key), a

walkie-talkie (or similar radio communicator), and a flashlight that can also be used as a club.

POLICE OFFICER PACKAGE DEAL

Abilities

Cost	Ability
2	<i>Observant</i> : +1 PER with Sight Group
1	Combat Driving 8-
3	Criminology
2	AK or CK appropriate to job or jurisdiction, 11-
2	KS: Criminal Law And Procedure 11-
2	KS: The Law Enforcement World 11-
2	PS: Police Officer (or the like), 11-
3	Streetwise
2	WF: Small Arms
4	Contacts (4 points' worth)
2	Fringe Benefit: Local Police Powers
1	Fringe Benefit: Law Enforcement Rank
1	Fringe Benefit: Weapon Permit
6	6 points' worth of Skills from the following list: Acting, Animal Handler (Canines or Equines), Bribery, Bugging, Bureaucrats, Climbing, Combat Driving, Combat Skill Levels, Computer Programming, Concealment, Conversation, Deduction, Demolitions, Disguise, Electronics, Fast Draw, Forensic Medicine, Gambling, Interrogation, Lockpicking, Martial Arts, Paramedics, Persuasion, Security Systems, Shadowing, Skill Levels, Stealth, Tactics, Weapon Familiarity, Weaponsmith, any Background Skill, Contacts, Deep Cover

Total Cost Of Package Abilities: 33

Disadvantages

Value	Disadvantage
5	Distinctive Features: Uniform and/or Badge (Easily Concealed)
10	Hunted: department he works for 8- (Mo Pow, NCI, Watching)
20	Social Limitation: Subject To Orders (Very Frequently, Major)

Total Value Of Package Disadvantages: 35

Options

Value	Ability
0	<i>Bomb Squad</i> : Skill choices must include Demolitions
0	<i>Criminalistics Officer</i> : Choose Forensic Medicine and Skill Levels (with Criminalistics, Forensic Medicine, and one related Skill of the player's choice)
+1	<i>Detective</i> : Choose Deduction and Shadowing, increase Law Enforcement Rank by 1
0	<i>SWAT</i> : Choose Combat Skill Levels and Weapon Familiarity (in whatever combination or arrangement desired)
0	<i>Undercover Cop</i> : Choose Acting and Disguise
15	<i>Something's Wrong Here...</i> : Danger Sense (self only, out of combat, intuitional) (INT Roll)
-5	<i>Corrupt Cop</i> : Add Social Limitation: Harmful Secret (Occasionally, Minor)

Suggested Disadvantages: In addition to wearing an obvious uniform, being monitored by their own department, and being subject to the orders of their commanders, cops can have many other Disadvantages. The media may Hunt (Watch) an officer, particularly if he's developed a Reputation (as, say, a brutal cop, a racist, or a corrupt cop). A criminal the cop once arrested may seek revenge on him (Hunted). The pressures of the job may drive a cop to drinking or drugs (Dependence [Addiction form]). In grand action movie tradition, a cop's enemies may go after his family (DNPCs) when he becomes too much of a threat. And of course, many Psychological Limitations (such as *Paranoid*, *Protective Of Innocents*, or *Triggerhappy*) may apply.

Progression: While the Skill choice list in the Package Deal provides a lot of room for a Police Officer to grow and improve, some cops tend not to broaden the scope of their abilities. They increase the ones they have a little, maybe, but otherwise spend their Experience Points on buying Contacts, KSs, and the like. Of course, a cop who becomes an adventurer may have a lot more incentive to learn new things.

BUREAU OF ALCOHOL, TOBACCO, AND FIREARMS AGENT PACKAGE DEAL

The BATF is a federal law enforcement agency that's part of the Department of the Treasury. It focuses on violators of (you guessed it) federal alcohol, tobacco, and firearms laws. Its special agents enforce the relevant federal laws, while its inspectors investigate possible violations of those laws and related matters.

A Director appointed by the President leads the BATF. The agency has twenty-three field divisions, with offices in every state and all major cities, and two criminalistics laboratories. Its duties range from the mundane (checking firearm serial numbers, ensuring firearms industry compliance with federal regulations) to the dangerous (seizing guns and explosives from criminals).

Typical Goals And Motivations: As with ordinary cops, most BATF agents just want to do their jobs well and help keep people safe from heavily-armed criminals and the other dangers which fall within their jurisdiction. A few, however, get swept up in the power of their position, and may abuse it.

Typical Abilities: This Package Deal represents a general BATF special agent of broad competence and ability (just like you'd expect from an action hero). Although the Package Deal doesn't have any Characteristics in it, most special agents are at least a little stronger, tougher, and more confident than the average person.

Suggested Disadvantages: For the most part, BATF agents' Disadvantages are like those of police officers. Due to the negative attention the BATF has received in recent years from the media, it's possible a well-known agent might be Watched by a reporter, who might saddle him with a Reputation (deserved or undeserved).

Progression: BATF agents practice constantly and do their best to keep abreast of developments in their fields, so they can always spend Experience Points to increase their Skills or buy new ones from the choice list. If they start to specialize in a particular type of mission, they'll need to focus on the Skills pertinent to that job. And as adventurers, they may have the chance to learn other Skills or abilities not related to their BATF training.

BATF AGENT PACKAGE DEAL

Abilities

Cost	Ability
3	Criminology
2	KS: Alcohol, Tobacco, And Firearms Laws 11-
2	KS: Federal Criminal Law And Procedure 11-
2	KS: The Law Enforcement World 11-
2	PS: BATF Agent 11-
3	Streetwise
2	WF: Small Arms
1	Weaponsmith (Firearms) 8-
4	Contacts (4 points' worth)
3	Fringe Benefit: Federal/National Police Powers
2	Fringe Benefit: Law Enforcement Rank
1	Fringe Benefit: Weapon Permit
6	6 points' worth of Skills from the following list: Acting, Animal Handler (Canines), Bribery, Bugging, Bureaucrats, Climbing, Combat Driving, Combat Skill Levels, Computer Programming, Concealment, Conversation, Deduction, Demolitions, Disguise, Electronics, Fast Draw, Interrogation, Martial Arts, Paramedics, Persuasion, Skill Levels, Stealth, Tactics, Weapon Familiarity, Weaponsmith, any Background Skill, Contacts, Deep Cover

Total Cost Of Package Abilities: 33

Disadvantages

Value	Disadvantage
5	Distinctive Features: Uniform and/or Badge (Easily Concealed)
10	Hunted: BATF 8- (Mo Pow, NCI, Watching)
20	Social Limitation: Subject To Orders (Very Frequently, Major)

Total Value Of Package Disadvantages: 35

Options

Value	Ability
0	<i>Arson/Explosion Investigator:</i> Choose Demolitions and SS: Arson/Explosion Investigation
0	<i>Inspector:</i> Choose Deduction and Background Skills relating to specific types of inspection or investigation (such as SS: Forensic Accounting or KS: Federal Tax Law).
0	<i>Undercover Agent:</i> Choose Acting and Disguise
-5	<i>Corrupt Agent:</i> Add Social Limitation: Harmful Secret (Occasionally, Minor)

DRUG ENFORCEMENT ADMINISTRATION AGENT PACKAGE DEAL

The DEA, an agency of the Department of Justice, is the federal government department with primary responsibility for enforcing federal drug trafficking laws. Its mission includes the interdiction of drug shipments, prevention of drug sales, drug awareness education, and the monitoring of legal transactions in dangerous drugs.

The DEA began as the Bureau of Narcotics under the Treasury in 1930. In 1968 the Bureau was transferred to Justice and merged with the Bureau of Drug Abuse Control to form the Bureau of Narcotics and Dangerous Drugs. In 1973, it was renamed the DEA.

The DEA is run by an Administrator, who's appointed by the President and who reports to the Director of the FBI. As of 2004, it has 237 offices in the United States and eighty foreign offices in 58

DEA AGENT PACKAGE DEAL

Abilities

Cost	Ability
3	Concealment
3	Criminology
2	KS: Drug Trafficking 11-
2	KS: Federal Criminal Law And Procedure 11-
2	KS: The Law Enforcement World 11-
2	KS: Narcotics Laws 11-
2	PS: DEA Agent 11-
3	Streetwise
2	WF: Small Arms
4	Contacts (4 points' worth)
3	Fringe Benefit: Federal/National Police Powers
3	Fringe Benefit: Law Enforcement Rank
1	Fringe Benefit: Weapon Permit
6	6 points' worth of Skills from the following list: Acting, Animal Handler (Canines), Bribery, Bugging, Bureaucrats, Combat Driving, Combat Skill Levels, Computer Programming, Conversation, Deduction, Disguise, Fast Draw, Interrogation, Lock-picking, Martial Arts, Paramedics, Persuasion, Security Systems, Shadowing, Skill Levels, Stealth, Survival, Tactics, Weapon Familiarity, any Background Skill (particularly Language: Spanish), Contacts, Deep Cover

Total Cost Of Package Abilities: 38

Disadvantages

Value	Disadvantage
5	Distinctive Features: Uniform and/or Badge (Easily Concealed)
10	Hunted: DEA 8- (Mo Pow, NCI, Watching)
20	Social Limitation: Subject To Orders (Very Frequently, Major)

Total Value Of Package Disadvantages: 35

Options

Value	Ability
0	<i>Undercover Agent:</i> Choose Acting and Disguise
-5	<i>Corrupt Agent:</i> Add Social Limitation: Harmful Secret (Occasionally, Minor)

other nations. The domestic offices are organized into twenty divisions, its foreign offices into five geographic groupings. Its field personnel are known as “special agents.”

The DEA maintains several databases and intelligence programs which contain information about and monitor the drug trafficking trade. The most important of these are NADDIS (the Narcotics And Dangerous Drugs Information System); STRIDE II (System To Retrieve Information from Drug Evidence); and EPIC (the El Paso Intelligence Center, which collects information about drug traffickers and trafficking from all over the world and disseminates it to federal and state agencies).

Typical Goals And Motivations: Most DEA agents are dedicated law enforcers who want to make the United States and its citizens safe from illegal drugs and those who use them. They put in long hours, often in uncomfortable or dangerous conditions, to confront smugglers, find illegal drugs, and educate the public. A few, lured by the vast amounts of money in drug trafficking, become corrupt, giving a black eye to the entire organization.

Typical Abilities: Naturally, DEA agents’ training focuses on knowledge of controlled substances and the laws pertaining to them. They also know how drug traffickers work, and how to find the drugs they’ve concealed in trucks, planes, on their persons, and the like.

Suggested Disadvantages: Most DEA agents have the Disadvantages typical to all law enforcement personnel. Beyond that, they might secretly be corrupt or have an Addiction to the drugs they’re supposed to stop people from using.

Progression: Experienced DEA agents usually develop some of their basic Skills (such as Concealment and Streetwise) to higher levels, thus reflecting learning on the job. Area and City Knowledges of the places they’ve worked in are also appropriate. Eventually a field officer may move into administration and acquire the Skills needed for that position.

FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION SPECIAL AGENT PACKAGE DEAL

The FBI, the premier federal law enforcement agency, is a part of the Department of Justice. Its mission is to enforce federal law and investigate alleged federal crimes that are not the province of some other agency (these include, but are not limited to, drug trafficking [the FBI and DEA share jurisdiction over such crimes], bank robbery, auto theft and carjacking, racketeering, terrorism, espionage and treason against the United States, and mail and wire fraud [which are a part of most white-collar crimes]). Altogether, the FBI has jurisdiction over more than 200 federal crimes.

The FBI began in 1908 as the Bureau of Investigation, which was known as an inefficient and often corrupt organization. This changed with the appointment of J. Edgar Hoover as Director in 1924. Hoover established rigorous requirements and standards for his men (for example, special agents had to have a college degree, and all appointments were on the basis of merit). In succeeding years his standards gave the Bureau (which was renamed the FBI in 1935) a reputation for excellence... though also, at times, as one that seemed to favor appearance over function. Hoover led the FBI until his death in 1972.

Headquartered in Washington, D.C., the FBI is headed by a Director appointed by the President for a term not to exceed ten years. As of 2004, the FBI has 57 field offices, most headed by a Special Agent in Charge (SAC), as well as over thirty foreign liaison posts.

The FBI divides its functions among three main divisions: Administration; Counterterrorism/Counterintelligence; and Law Enforcement Services. Each division has subdivisions within it. For example, Law Enforcement Services includes among its subsections the Critical Incidents Response Group, Criminal Justice Information Services, Investigative Technology, Laboratory, and Training and Development. Laboratory, one of the largest and most comprehensive criminalistics laboratories in the world, offers its services free of charge to all American law enforcement agencies (and often assists foreign law enforcement as well). Training and Development runs the FBI Academy at Quantico, Virginia, and also gives seminars and conferences for state and local law enforcement officers.

Within the FBI there are specialists in all law enforcement fields. For example, part of the FBI Academy is the National Center for the Analysis of Violent Crime (NCAVC), which runs the Violent Criminal Apprehension Program (VICAP) and the Behavioral Sciences Unit. The special agents in this department are experts in the field of criminal psychology, criminal profiling, and violent crime (including serial killers and rapists), and their assistance is often invaluable in apprehending such criminals. Other special “departments” of the FBI deal with organized crime, terrorism, spying, cybercrime, financial crime, and so forth. The FBI even has its own anti-terrorist squad, the Hostage Rescue Team (HRT).

Two of the FBI's most important functions are to maintain databases on crime and criminals, and to assist state and local police forces when necessary. The best example of this is the FBI's National Crime Information Center (NCIC), a nationwide computer database containing information on criminals and their records, stolen firearms, vehicles, and other items, and wanted persons. Any police department can access the NCIC and take advantage of its copious information.

FBI agents are referred to as "special agents." Many of them bring skills in law, accounting, languages, or other fields to their job.

Typical Goals And Motivations: FBI agents are often considered "the best of the best" in the American law enforcement community, and many of them try to live up to this reputation. They work long, hard hours investigating crimes and pursuing and apprehending felons. But like any other law enforcement officers, they're only human, and may fall subject to personal or professional failings.

Typical Abilities: Special agents receive a general grounding in law enforcement skills at Quantico, plus physical fitness training so they have the strength and stamina for their often-demanding jobs. But before they get there, they have often undergone special training that makes them attractive as FBI recruits. The Bureau often focuses on law school graduates, persons who studied certain foreign languages (such as Arabic, Chinese, and Russian) in college (or who learned them some other way), and the like. You can represent this "pre-training" with the appropriate Background Skills.

Suggested Disadvantages: In addition to standard law enforcement Disadvantages, in action movies and other inspirational source material FBI agents often seem to acquire Hunteds — criminals who fixate on them for some reason and make their lives difficult. (Alternately, they may be Hunting a particularly vicious criminal who's gotten away from them.) They may also have Rivals within the Bureau, or in other law enforcement organizations.

Progression: FBI agents' progression is similar to that of other law enforcement officers: they usually focus on improving their existing Skills, buying other ones only as needed or their experiences dictate. As adventurers they may try to improve their combat abilities or other Skill sets that aren't immediately necessary for their day-to-day law enforcement activities.

INTERPOL

Interpol, the International Criminal Police Association, is not an actual law enforcement agency *per se*. Rather, it's a world association of national police forces who work together to exchange information about crime and criminals for their mutual benefit. Interpol has no agents or officers; cannot investigate crimes, make arrests, or seize evidence; and must act within the bounds of each member nation's laws when in that nation. As of 2004, more than 180 nations around the world belong to Interpol... though their degree of cooperation and interaction with it often vary considerably.

FBI SPECIAL AGENT PACKAGE DEAL

Abilities

Cost	Ability
3	Criminology
3	Deduction
2	KS: Federal Criminal Law And Procedure 11-
2	KS: The Law Enforcement World 11-
2	PS: FBI Agent 11-
3	Streetwise
2	WF: Small Arms
4	Contacts (4 points' worth)
3	Fringe Benefit: Federal/National Police Powers
3	Fringe Benefit: Law Enforcement Rank
1	Fringe Benefit: Weapon Permit
6	6 points' worth of Skills from the following list: Acting, Animal Handler (Canines), Bribery, Bugging, Bureaucratics, Combat Driving, Combat Skill Levels, Computer Programming, Concealment, Conversation, Disguise, Fast Draw, Forensic Medicine, Interrogation, Lockpicking, Martial Arts, Paramedics, Persuasion, Security Systems, Shadowing, Skill Levels, Stealth, Tactics, Weapon Familiarity, any Background Skill, Contacts, Deep Cover

Total Cost Of Package Abilities: 34

Disadvantages

Value	Disadvantage
5	Distinctive Features: Uniform and/or Badge (Easily Concealed)
10	Hunted: FBI 8- (Mo Pow, NCI, Watching)
20	Social Limitation: Subject To Orders (Very Frequently, Major)

Total Value Of Package Disadvantages: 35

Options

Value	Ability
0	<i>Behavioral Sciences Agent:</i> Choose SS: Psychology, SS: Criminal Psychology, and/or KS: Serial Killers And Serial Murder
0	<i>Forensic Accountant:</i> Choose PS: Accounting
0	<i>Hostage Rescue Team:</i> Choose Combat Skill Levels and Weapon Familiarity (in whatever combination or arrangement desired)
0	<i>Undercover Agent:</i> Choose Acting and Disguise
-5	<i>Corrupt Agent:</i> Add Social Limitation: Harmful Secret (Occasionally, Minor)

Founded in 1923 by the Second International Police Congress, Interpol maintains its headquarters in France. It's not affiliated with the United Nations or based on any treaty; it has its own constitution and operates through the cooperation of its member states. The General Assembly, a governing body which makes all major policy decisions, leads it. The Executive Committee, a group of thirteen members whose seats are divided among the different continents in a roughly equal fashion, implements the General Assembly's decisions. The General Secretariat handles day-to-day decisionmaking and administrative matters; it's split up into divisions (such as Police

Division, which is in charge of the databases about criminals). Other divisions provide legal and technical reference services, financial services, and so forth.

Interpol's primary function is to collect and disseminate data about crime and criminals, and to arrange for the law enforcement officers of one member nation to conduct investigations in other member nations. This is done through a system of National Central Bureaus (NCBs). In the United States, the USNCB is part of the Department of Justice; it spreads information to federal and state law enforcement agencies via NLETS, the National Law Enforcement Telecommunications System. Interpol also transmits notices about wanted criminals and certain stolen items, holds seminars and conferences, and conducts research on criminological subjects. However, in the interest of being fair to all member nations, Interpol does not work on any crime which involves political, military, religious, or racial concerns.

Because Interpol has no "agents," just researchers and administrators, it has no Package Deal. Characters who are Hunted by Interpol are actually the subject of intense investigation by Interpol, which passes information on to local law enforcement agencies wherever the character is.

SECRET SERVICE AGENT PACKAGE DEAL

The United States Secret Service is an agency of the Department of the Treasury (and, in part, the Department of Homeland Security). It is composed of two "branches." The first, the uniformed branch, protects the White House and some other federal buildings, such as embassies. The second consists of special agents who are bodyguards for the president, vice-president, past presidents, major presidential candidates, all of these persons' families, and certain other individuals. More importantly for character creation purposes, the second branch of the Secret Service also has jurisdiction over counterfeiting, forgery of United States currency, and financial crimes.

The USSS is headquartered in Washington, D.C. It's led by a Director, and has field offices in major cities throughout the United States and in many foreign countries.

Typical Goals And Motivations: An agent in the uniformed branch of the Secret Service has the same motivations as any other law enforcement officer: to do his job well; stop people from violating the law; and catch those who do. Bodyguard division members naturally want to excel at their job. But even beyond that, they're trained to do *anything* they have to — even unhesitatingly give their lives — to protect the President (or whomever else they're assigned to protect).

Typical Abilities: Secret Service agents receive law enforcement training similar to that of other federal agents, but with an emphasis on financial crimes and counterfeiting. Many of them become experts on these subjects, spending additional Character Points to buy more KSs and related Skills. Those who protect the President often develop a "sixth sense" for potential threats (based on experience and constant, even subconscious, observation of their surroundings), and may buy Lightning Reflexes or other abilities that

allow them to react to threats as quickly as possible.

Suggested Disadvantages: For the most part, Secret Service agents have standard law enforcement Disadvantages. Bodyguard agents are fanatically devoted to keeping their protectees safe from harm.

Progression: Compared to many Law Enforcement Package Deals, Secret Service agents have a fairly narrow focus on specific types of crime. As the campaign progresses, they may want to broaden their abilities, learning Skills more appropriate to other branches of law enforcement.

SECRET SERVICE AGENT PACKAGE DEAL

Abilities

Cost	Ability
2	<i>Observant:</i> +1 PER with Sight Group
3	Criminology
3	Deduction
1	Forgery (Money) 8-
2	KS: Counterfeiting 11-
2	KS: Federal Criminal Law And Procedure 11-
2	KS: Financial Crimes And Frauds 11-
2	KS: The Law Enforcement World 11-
2	PS: Bodyguard 11-
2	PS: USSS Agent 11-
3	Streetwise
2	WF: Small Arms
4	Contacts (4 points' worth)
3	Fringe Benefit: Federal/National Police Powers
3	Fringe Benefit: Law Enforcement Rank
1	Fringe Benefit: Weapon Permit
6	6 points' worth of Skills from the following list: Acting, Bureaucrats, Combat Driving, Combat Skill Levels, Computer Programming, Concealment, Conversation, Disguise, Fast Draw, Forgery, Interrogation, Martial Arts, Paramedics, Persuasion, Shadowing, Skill Levels, Stealth, Tactics, Weapon Familiarity, any Background Skill, Contacts, Deep Cover

Total Cost Of Package Abilities: 43

Disadvantages

Value	Disadvantage
5	Distinctive Features: Uniform and/or Badge (Easily Concealed)
10	Hunted: Secret Service 8- (Mo Pow, NCI, Watching)
20	Social Limitation: Subject To Orders (Very Frequently, Major)

Total Value Of Package Disadvantages: 35

Options

Value	Ability
-25	<i>Presidential Bodyguard:</i> Devoted To Defending Protectee (Very Common, Total)
20	<i>Bodyguard's Sixth Sense:</i> Danger Sense (immediate vicinity, out of combat, intuitional) (INT Roll)
0	<i>Humorous Distinctive Features:</i> Change "Uniform and/or Badge" to "Serious-Looking Person In A Nice Suit And Sunglasses With A Radio Wire In His Ear Who's Standing Off To The Side Trying To Look Inconspicuous"

MILITARY PACKAGE DEALS

This selection of Package Deals is for characters whose background or origin includes service in the United States military, whether regular forces or an elite force of some sort. If you want to create a character who belongs (or once belonged) to some other armed force, you can adapt these Package Deals by making a few changes in the listed Skills.

The Military Package Deals include a *Military Rank Perk*, a *Distinctive Features* (the uniform worn), and so forth. If the character has left the military for good, these may no longer apply, and he can remove them from the Package Deal. Similarly, if a character has to take two or more Package Deals, and some of the elements of a Package Deal duplicate or are superfluous, he can omit them.

Basic Military Training Package Deal

From a character creation perspective, all military forces are more or less identical: the character first undergoes “basic training,” which is intended to instill discipline, make him physically fit (*i.e.*, brings his Primary Characteristics up to at least 10, if not higher), and teach him basic military skills such as simple tactics, the use of firearms, and so forth.

After completing basic training, military personnel go on to advanced training: Advanced Individual Training (AIT) in the Army, or “A-School” in the Navy and Marines. Here the character learns his Military Occupational Speciality (MOS). This could be virtually any chosen field, such as computer science, aircraft mechanics, the medical corps, and the like. Characters who show special aptitude may be able to undertake even more advanced training as members of a “special force” or elite unit (see below).

Since each branch of the military offers the opportunity to learn approximately the same skills, this Package Deal is “generic,” intended for all four branches of the American military. Players need only tailor the options to conform to the training they feel their character would have received in the branch he joined.

The Basic Military Training Package Deal is a prerequisite for taking any of the other Package Deals below. A character can’t simply sign up to become a Green Beret; he has to go through the standard military training first.

Typical Goals And Motivations: The goals and motivations of the average soldier are usually not too different from those of the average civilian. However, there are several “stock” goals frequently seen in military characters in adventure fiction and movies. For example, some military personnel are extremely patriotic, willing to do anything for the good of the United States. Others are lazy, wanting only to serve their term and get out, so they’re always goofing off (and remaining alert for their commanding officer so they don’t get caught doing it). A few soldiers have an almost sociopathic love of violence, destruction, and danger (they usually end up as villains).

Typical Abilities: Because military training is standardized, members of the same force (for example, the U.S. Army) should all have the same basic skills and abilities, as described below. However, within reason the military lets its members learn as many skills as they want, so a motivated character could have picked up a wide variety of knowledge and skills while serving his “hitch.”

Suggested Disadvantages: Soldiers come from all walks of life, so many different Disadvantages are appropriate for them: Age (for older officers); DNPCs (family and friends); Hunted or Watched by enemies of the United States; Physical Limitations or Vulnerabilities (caused by old injuries); Psychological Limitations reflecting their goals and motivations (for example, “Patriotic”); Rivalries with other branches of the military.

BASIC MILITARY TRAINING PACKAGE DEAL

Abilities

Cost	Ability
2	Running +1”
2	KS: The Military/Mercenary/Terrorist World 11-
2	KS: [Military Force] History And Customs 11-
2	PS: [member of military; e.g., “Sailor”] 11-
3	Tactics
3	WF: Small Arms, Knives
4	Contacts (4 points’ worth)
0	Fringe Benefit: Military Rank
6	6 points’ worth of Skills from the following list: Autofire Skills, Bureaucratics, Climbing, Combat Driving, Combat Piloting, Combat Skill Levels, Computer Programming, Concealment, Cryptography, Demolitions, Electronics, Fast Draw, Interrogation, Martial Arts, Mechanics, Navigation, Paramedics, Persuasion, Security Systems, Skill Levels, Stealth, Survival, Systems Operation, Weapon Familiarity, Weaponsmith, any Background Skill, Contacts

Total Cost Of Package Abilities: 24

Disadvantages

Value	Disadvantage
5	Distinctive Features: Uniform (Easily Concealed)
10	Hunted: military force character belongs to 8- (Mo Pow, NCI, Watching)
20	Social Limitation: Subject To Orders (Very Frequently, Major)

Total Value Of Package Disadvantages: 35

Options

Value	Ability
0	<i>Combat Engineer:</i> Choose SS: Civil Engineering and at least one other engineering-oriented Skill
0	<i>Information Warfare Specialist:</i> Choose Computer Programming and Systems Operation
0	<i>Pilot:</i> Choose Combat Piloting
0	<i>Tank Driver:</i> Choose TF: Tracked Military Vehicles



Progression: Some personnel find a niche they like in the military and stick with it for decades, but that's unusual for PCs and prominent NPCs. They usually go one of two routes: up or out. Going up means promotions (an increase in the cost of the *Membership Perk*), with the attendant authorities and responsibility — which means the need to learn new Skills in most cases. “Out” means leaving the military for a civilian or paramilitary career, and that could lead to the character learning just about any sort of Skill or ability.

Elite Forces Package Deals

A few talented soldiers get to join the elite units of the military, the so-called “special forces.” These highly trained and extremely skilled fighters perform some of the most dangerous and dirty missions the military has: unconventional warfare; anti-terrorist activities; reconnaissance; strategic strikes and “infiltrate and rescue” missions; paramilitary operations; and counterinsurgency training, just to name a few.

Each branch of the military has its own special force or forces, described below. A character cannot buy any of these Package Deals without first buying the Basic Military Training Package Deal (plus any other prerequisites listed in the descriptions of the individual elite forces Package Deals). You can also use these Package Deals for the special forces of other nations, such as the SAS of the United Kingdom or the Spetznaz of Russia.

Typical Goals And Motivations: Because candidates for the United States's elite forces undergo psychological testing to prove they're fit for the job, they usually have certain psychological characteristics in common. They tend to be very patriotic, disciplined, loyal, and adaptable. They're extremely devoted to the completion of their mission and to the protection of American civilians. In adventure fiction and movies some elite soldiers are “mavericks” — tough, overconfident men who prefer their own method of doing things to their commanding officer's orders (and they're usually right). A few become too erratic or violence-prone to remain in the military; they usually leave (or get discharged) and end up becoming mercenaries or villains.

Typical Abilities: The members of all special forces have certain abilities in common. For one, they're in extremely good physical condition (e.g., STR and CON of at least 13-15). For another, they're quick-witted, strong-willed, confident, and courageous (INT and EGO of at least 10, and often higher; PRE of 15 or more). Beyond that, since special forces members can take many different “specialized” study courses after they complete their training, they can buy just about any Skill a player wants.

Suggested Disadvantages: In addition to the standard military Disadvantages (which they get from their Basic Military Training Package Deal), an elite soldier could suffer from many different hindrances or difficulties: Hunted or Watched by enemies of

the United States (or Watched by a superior officer who “has it in” for the character); a Reputation (perhaps as a coward, a risk-taker, or a maverick); Rivalry with other special forces or with someone in their unit.

Progression: Elite soldiers usually go on practicing their Skills and learning new ones throughout their careers, so they have plenty of ways to spend their Experience Points. Once they get out of the military, they can broaden the scope of their abilities by studying other subjects or learning from their fellow adventurers.

DELTA FORCE PACKAGE DEAL

The First Special Forces Operational Detachment (SFOD) Delta (“Delta Force” or simply “Delta”) is an elite unit whose existence is not formally acknowledged by the U.S. Special Operations Command (USSOCOM). Based at “the Stockade” at Fort Bragg, North Carolina, it’s a counterterrorist unit formed in 1977 to combat hijackings, hostage takings, and similar terrorist activities. In the wake of the 9/11 attacks, its role has become more important than ever.

Delta Force does not take volunteers — it contacts personnel whom it’s interested in having take its qualifications course. Any active Army, Army Reserve, or Army National Guard male personnel are eligible for this “recruitment.” The qualifications course is incredibly grueling, and made harder by the fact that the evaluators don’t offer candidates any feedback, and even keep failed candidates involved to further confuse the participants. Intense psychological testing is also part of the process. In the end, Delta Force accepts only about ten percent of the personnel who take the course.

Accepted recruits undergo a period of training lasting two years that concentrates on infiltration, assault, close-quarters combat, undercover operations, and related subjects. Among the many subjects, marksmanship is emphasized, with

DELTA FORCE PACKAGE DEAL

Abilities

Cost	Ability
2	+2 STR
4	+2 CON
2	Running +1”
4	+2 OCV with firearm of choice
12	+6 versus Range Modifier with Firearms
3	Acting
2	+2 to KS: The Military/Mercenary/Terrorist World
2	KS: Delta Force History And Traditions 11-
3	Lockpicking
3	Paramedics
2	PS: Delta Force Operative 11-
4	TF: SCUBA, Snow Skiing, Two-Wheeled Motorized Ground Vehicles, one more 1-point TF of choice
5	Fringe Benefit: Military Rank
5	Fringe Benefit: Security Clearance
3	3 points’ worth of Skills from the choice list for the Basic Military Training Package Deal

Total Cost Of Additional Abilities: +56

trainees expected to score a 100% success rating hitting targets 900 yards (411”) away and to perform similarly on related tests (including close-quarters combat accuracy).

Due the the stringency of the whole Delta Force testing and training process, most Delta members come from the Special Forces (Green Berets) or Rangers. In game terms, the Delta Force Package Deal adds to either the Ranger or Green Beret Package Deal — either the character was a member of one of those forces going into Delta training, or the Delta Force regimen brings him up to their standard. In other words, to buy the Delta Force Package Deal, a character must first buy the Basic Military Training Package Deal and the Ranger Package Deal; if he desires he can also buy the Green Beret Package Deal.

You can also use this Package Deal as the basis for other anti-terrorist teams, or design your own. Most major nations in the modern world have a special squad of soldiers specifically trained to deal with terrorists and hostage situations. For example, Germany has GSG-9, and Spain its *Unidad Especial de Intervencion*.

RANGER PACKAGE DEAL

The Rangers (or, more accurately, the 75th Ranger Regiment, consisting of three Ranger Battalions) are the U.S. Army’s premiere light infantry force. They’re tasked with ambush, reconnaissance, and raiding missions in support of conventional forces, and large-scale counterterrorism and counter-guerrilla activities, in any environment or condi-

RANGER PACKAGE DEAL

Abilities

Cost	Ability
3	+3 STR
15	+5 DEX
10	+5 CON
3	+3 INT
5	+5 PRE
2	Running +1”
1	Swimming +1”
4	+2 OCV with firearm of choice
3	Climbing
2	KS: Ranger History And Traditions 11-
10	Martial Arts (10 points’ worth — usually Commando Training, but the character can choose another style if preferred)
2	Navigation (Land)
2	PS: Ranger 11-
3	Stealth
8	Survival (Desert, Mountains, Temperate/Subtropical, Tropical)
3	Tracking
2	TF: Basic Parachuting, Advanced Parachuting
3	WF: Grenade Launchers, General Purpose/Heavy Machine Guns, Shoulder-Fired Weapons
3	Fringe Benefit: Military Rank
5	Fringe Benefit: Security Clearance
3	3 points’ worth of Skills from the choice list for the Basic Military Training Package Deal

Total Cost Of Additional Abilities: +92

tions. They're particularly skilled at seizing airfields and holding them until the arrival of larger conventional forces.

Volunteers for the Rangers have all received infantryman training and must meet rigorous physical standards to even qualify to attend Ranger School. The Ranger School program takes place in three phases and exposes the candidates to extreme physical and mental stress. Fewer than thirty percent of the students at Ranger School complete the program. Even after that, a Ranger must undergo additional training to become eligible to join one of the Ranger Battalions.

To buy the Ranger Package Deal, characters must first buy the Basic Military Training Package Deal.

RECONNAISSANCE UNITS (RECON) PACKAGE DEAL

Although the Marines as a whole are sometimes considered to be a special force (though they're not a part of USSOCOM), the Corps has its own elite force: Recon. Prior to 1998, the Marines had two reconnaissance units — Recon, which scouted and gathered intelligence out to ten miles past the "forward edge of battle area"; and Force

RECON PACKAGE DEAL

Abilities

Cost	Ability
5	+5 STR
15	+5 DEX
10	+5 CON
3	+3 INT
5	+5 PRE
4	Running +2"
2	Swimming +2"
4	+2 OCV with firearm of choice
6	+2 with any three Package Deal Skills
3	Climbing
3	Combat Driving
3	Demolitions
2	KS: Recon History And Traditions 11-
10	Martial Arts (10 points' worth — usually Commando Training, but the character can choose another style if preferred)
3	Navigation (Land, Marine)
3	Paramedics
2	PS: Recon Marine 11-
2	SS: Hydrography 11-
3	Stealth
10	Survival (Desert, Marine, Mountains, Temperate/Subtropical, Tropical)
3	Systems Operation
3	Tracking
5	TF: Basic Parachuting, Advanced Parachuting, SCUBA, Small Rowed Boats, Small Motorized Boats
3	WF: Grenade Launchers, General Purpose/ Heavy Machine Guns, Shoulder-Fired Weapons
3	Fringe Benefit: Military Rank
5	Fringe Benefit: Security Clearance
3	3 points' worth of Skills from the choice list for the Basic Military Training Package Deal

Total Cost Of Additional Abilities: +123

Recon units responsible for intelligence gathering further out than that. The two groups were merged into one; different companies within a Recon Battalion are trained for missions analogous to the old Recon/Force Recon ones.

The training, skills, and missions of Recon are roughly the same as those for the US Navy SEALs. However, unlike other elite units it's possible for a recruit to enlist directly into Recon (though he still has to pass the training courses...).

U.S. NAVY SEALS PACKAGE DEAL

The SEALs (SEa-Air-Land forces) are the Navy's special force. The requirements for admission to SEAL training are similar to those for the Rangers and Green Berets, but with more emphasis on underwater and boating skills. SEAL teams conduct deep penetration, sabotage, reconnaissance, unconventional warfare, and counterterrorism missions.

The BUD/S (Basic Underwater Demolitions/ SEAL) testing program is so difficult that injuries, and even the death of candidates, sometimes result. In fact, the program doesn't begin until candidates undergo seven weeks of preliminary training and preconditioning! It includes the infamous "Hell

U.S. NAVY SEALS PACKAGE DEAL

Abilities

Cost	Ability
5	+5 STR
18	+6 DEX
12	+6 CON
3	+3 INT
5	+5 PRE
4	Running +2"
2	Swimming +2"
6	+3 OCV with firearm of choice
6	+2 with any three Package Deal Skills
3	Climbing
7	Demolitions +2
2	KS: SEAL History And Traditions 11-
10	Martial Arts (10 points' worth — usually Commando Training, but the character can choose another style if preferred)
3	Navigation (Land, Marine)
3	Paramedics
2	PS: SEAL 11-
2	SS: Hydrography 11-
3	Stealth
10	Survival (Desert, Marine, Mountains, Temperate/Subtropical, Tropical)
3	Systems Operation
3	Tracking
5	TF: Basic Parachuting, Advanced Parachuting, SCUBA, Small Rowed Boats, Small Motorized Boats
3	WF: Grenade Launchers, General Purpose/ Heavy Machine Guns, Shoulder-Fired Weapons
4	Fringe Benefit: Military Rank
5	Fringe Benefit: Security Clearance
3	3 points' worth of Skills from the choice list for the Basic Military Training Package Deal

Total Cost Of Additional Abilities: +132

Week,” when candidates only get to sleep about 30 minutes a day while undergoing some of the most rigorous physical training imaginable.

A SEAL Team theoretically consists of ten platoons of SEALs, but in practice typically has thirty officers and 200 enlisted men. The 16-man platoon (two officers, 14 men) is the basic unit; it divides into two squads (one officer and seven men in each), which subdivide into two four-man fire teams.

Perhaps the most elite unit within the SEALs is the Naval Special Warfare Development Group (NAVSPECWARDEVGRU, or DEVGRU), *a.k.a.* SEAL Team 6. It conducts various counterterrorism operations. It consists of six teams: Red, Gold, and Blue (all assault); Black (reconnaissance and surveillance); Gray (transportation); and Green (new personnel still in training).

To buy the SEAL Package Deal, characters must first buy the Basic Military Training Package Deal.

SPECIAL FORCES (GREEN BERETS) PACKAGE DEAL

The Special Forces — or, as its members are better known, the Green Berets, from their trademark headwear — is an elite Army unit based at Fort Bragg, North Carolina. It’s a clandestine warfare force intended to infiltrate enemy-held territory, organize and assist resistance movements, and conduct unconventional warfare operations and special reconnaissance missions. It’s the largest special operations force in the world.

Only a small percentage of military personnel have the qualifications the Army looks for in potential Green Berets (fitness, intelligence, and certain types of training). Since Green Berets often have to blend into their environment and work with local peoples, they tend to be older and more mature than average for the Army. They must already have attained the rank of sergeant (for enlisted personnel) or first lieutenant (for officers), have (or earn) a college degree, and have good “people skills.” Most have previously served in the infantry; most have Airborne training or are Rangers. The Special Forces’s other admission and “basic training” requirements are among the toughest in the world.

Assuming they meet these criteria, then they have to succeed at the Assessment and Selection course, which tests both physical and mental skills and endurance. Those who pass the test go on to the Qualification Course. As part of the Q course, each candidate trains in one of six specialty fields: officer training; weapons training; medical training; engineering; communications; or operations/intelligence. In the end, fewer than three in 100 candidates completes Q course and graduates — but even then, he’s not done learning. After passing Q course, a candidate attends the Defense Language Insitute (DLI) to learn a foreign language

SPECIAL FORCES (GREEN BERETS) PACKAGE DEAL

Abilities

Cost	Ability
2	Running +1”
1	Swimming +1”
6	+2 with any three Ranger Package Deal Skills
2	KS: Green Beret History And Traditions 11-
2	Language (fluent conversation; character’s choice)
5	Martial Arts (+5 points’ worth)
2	PS: Green Beret 11-
2	PS: Instructor 11-
2	TF: Basic Parachuting, Advanced Parachuting
1	WF: choose one additional 1-point WF
3	Q Course Specialty Training: choose one of the options listed below
3	3 points’ worth of Skills from the choice list for the Basic Military Training Package Deal
4	Fringe Benefit: Military Rank
5	Fringe Benefit: Security Clearance
3	Resistance (3 points)

Total Cost Of Additional Abilities: +43

Q Course Specialty Training

Value	Ability
+6	<i>Communications:</i> Computer Programming, Cryptography, and Systems Operation
+2	<i>Engineering:</i> Demolitions, PS: Construction Work 11-
0	<i>Officer Training:</i> PS: Mission Planning And Logistics (INT Roll)
0	<i>Operations/Intelligence:</i> PS: Mission Planning And Logistics (INT Roll)
0	<i>Medical Training:</i> Paramedics
0	<i>Weapons Training:</i> Weaponsmith (Firearms), WF: Mortars

appropriate to the region where he’ll be posted, and then attends Survival, Evasion, Resistance, and Escape School.

During their careers, most Green Berets cross-train in at least one additional specialty. In game terms, they spend Experience Points to buy another Q Course Specialty Training set of Skills. They also have the opportunity to attend many other training schools, providing even more outlets for the expenditure of Experience Points.

For game purposes, the Green Beret Package Deal adds to the Ranger Package Deal — either the character was a Ranger going into Green Beret training, or the Special Forces regimen brings him up to the Ranger standard. In other words, to buy the Green Beret Package Deal, a character must first buy the Basic Military Training Package Deal and the Ranger Package Deal.

OTHER SPECIAL FORCES

While the Military Package Deals focus on the special forces of the United States, you can easily adapt them for use in creating characters who’ve trained with similar organization in other national militaries. Some other special forces include:

Australia: the Special Air Service (SAS)

Canada: Joint Task Force 2

France: the Legion Étrangère (French Foreign Legion); the GIGN

Germany: GSG-9

Israel: Sayeret Duvdevan; Sayeret Mat’kal; Sayeret Tzanhanin

Russia: Spetznaz

Spain: UEI

United Kingdom: the Gurkhas; the Special Air Service (SAS); the Special Boat Service (SBS)

MISCELLANEOUS PACKAGE DEALS

Here are a few more Package Deals appropriate to the modern-day action-adventure genre, but which don't fit into any of the above categories.

BOUNTY HUNTER PACKAGE DEAL

A bounty hunter is a person who tracks down wanted fugitives, suspects on bail or parole who've "skipped out," and so on.

Typical Goals And Motivations: A bounty hunter doesn't care too much about "Justice" or saving the innocent from the evil. Mostly he's in it for the money (though he could certainly have "a heart of gold" if you want to play him that way). He captures (or kills) criminals because they have a price on their heads (or because a bail bondsman hired him), not because of their inherent badness. However, some bounty hunters may secretly yearn for a more noble calling, and might get into adventuring because of that desire.

Typical Abilities: Characters who are more nobly inclined may loathe the Bounty Hunter's callousness and greed, but still find him a useful ally because of his knowledge of the underworld, the justice system, and the city. To make money as a bounty hunter, a character has to know the city (possibly several cities) really well, and stay on top of doings in the underworld. Bounty hunters know a lot about criminals, not only those in the campaign city but all over the country. They have

BOUNTY HUNTER PACKAGE DEAL

Abilities

Cost	Ability
3	One AK or CK of character's choice (INT Roll)
2	KS: The Justice System 11-
2	KS: Wanted Criminals 11-
3	Lockpicking
3	Shadowing
5	Streetwise +1
2	WF: Small Arms
4	Contacts (4 points' worth)
1	Fringe Benefit: License (bounty hunter)
1	Fringe Benefit: Weapon Permit
6	6 points' worth of Skills from the following list: Bribery, Bureaucrats, Climbing, Combat Driving, Combat Skill Levels, Computer Programming, Concealment, Deduction, Fast Draw, Gambling, Martial Arts, Paramedics, Persuasion, Security Systems, Skill Levels, Stealth, Weapon Familiarity, Weaponsmith, any Background Skill, Contacts

Total Cost Of Package Abilities: 32

Disadvantages

Value	Disadvantage
None	

Total Value Of Package Disadvantages: 0

to, since they make their money by knowing who's wanted, what he's like, and where he might be found. Many bounty hunters also tend to have a lot of Skills with relatively low rolls, since they learn a little here and there as they earn their living.

Suggested Disadvantages: A bounty hunter might be Watched by the police, who consider him a nuisance or potential danger. He might be Hunting a high-bounty fugitive whom he's never managed to catch, or be Hunted by a criminal he's clashed with before. Since he competes with other bounty hunters, he could easily develop a Rivalry with one or more.

Progression: A bounty hunter who gets involved in adventuring is probably going to want to expand the scope of his knowledge and abilities a little. He's not really suited for paramilitary operations or anything like that — take him out of his little pond, and he's not so big a fish anymore... but some Experience Points properly invested can change that.

PRIVATE INVESTIGATOR PACKAGE DEAL

Even though most of a "real world" private investigator's jobs are relatively dull work, the PI is forever enshrined in American thought as an adventurous rogue who's constantly getting himself into trouble and has to get himself out again using his deductive skills, wits, and ability to shoot quickly and accurately. "Private eyes" may be portrayed as grim or unlucky, but rarely as truly bad figures; they're always capable of self-redemption and heroism if the cause is true (and the money is good).

Private eyes often seem to come in two varieties: the good-looking man-of-danger type, often a military veteran (this type is especially common in television detective shows) and the scruffy, down-on-his-luck street investigator. Other traits or interests can be added as desired to create a fairly well-rounded character with a surprise here and there.

Typical Goals And Motivations: Private investigators from the 1930s onward tend to have certain motivations and outlooks in common. They of course want to solve mysteries and ensure that murderers and crooks get their just desserts (and that their client goes free, or gets whatever it is he wants). There's usually a woman whose heart they're trying to win. And last but not least, they're always in need of money and looking for (mostly) honest ways to get more. In other words: get the bad guy, get the girl, and get the money.

Typical Abilities: Private eyes are usually an intriguing mix of smarts and physical prowess. Their ability to figure out mysteries is often astonishing, and they're generally quick-witted, clever, and perceptive. They're also pretty good in a fight and are accurate shots. They may have Knowledge Skills and Contacts from earlier careers (such as the military or an intelligence agency).

Suggested Disadvantages: Private eyes seem to have a lot of "stock" Disadvantages. In addition to the DNPC (the PI's girlfriend, latest client, or both), they might be Watched by the police or Hunted by a criminal

PRIVATE INVESTIGATOR PACKAGE DEAL

Abilities

Cost	Ability
3	Concealment
3	Criminology
5	Deduction +1
2	CK: one city of character's choice 11-
2	KS: The Law Enforcement World 11-
5	Shadowing +1
3	Stealth
3	Streetwise
2	WF: Small Arms
6	Contacts (6 points' worth)
2	Fringe Benefit: Private Investigator License
1	Fringe Benefit: Weapon Permit
9	9 points' worth of Skills from the following list: Acting, Bribery, Bugging, Bureaucratics, Combat Driving, Combat Skill Levels, Computer Programming, Conversation, Disguise, Fast Draw, Gambling, High Society, Interrogation, Lockpicking, Mimicry, Paramedics, Persuasion, Security Systems, Seduction, Skill Levels, Weapon Familiarity, Weaponsmith, any Background Skill, Contacts

Total Cost Of Package Abilities: 46

Disadvantages

Value	Disadvantage
None	

Total Value Of Package Disadvantages: 0

Options

Value	Ability
10	<i>Two-Fisted</i> : Martial Arts (10 points' worth of maneuvers from Fisticuffs or Cinematic Brawling)

with whom they've matched wits previously. Competition with other PIs may spark Rivalries. Last but not least, they usually have at least one or two significant Psychological Limitations such as *Can't Resist A Mystery*, *Sucker For A Pretty Face* (or *For A Sob Story*), *Greedy*, *Skirtchaser*, *Wisecracker*, or *Must Do The Right Thing No Matter How Much It Hurts*.

Progression: Most PIs have a pretty useful group of Skills to begin with, though they can always get better at them (particularly in the modern world, where the ability to use computers and other technology may be more important than traditional detective Skills). Once they step into the full-blown world of adventuring or vigilante crimefighting, they may find themselves needing Skills that were never required when they were just following cheating spouses or trying to get someone cleared of a murder charge.

VIGILANTE PACKAGE DEAL

This Package Deal represents a general suite of Skills and other abilities appropriate to vigilante crimefighters (costumed or otherwise).

Typical Goals And Motivations: First and foremost, the vigilante's goal is to end crime and protect innocent citizens from criminals. The Psychological Limitation that's a part of the Package Deal reflects this; it's

a defining element of the character type, though the exact expression of the motivation may vary from character to character. The character may have secondary motivations and goals that affect his vigilantism, such as a drive to get revenge on an organized crime group, a desire to protect a particular neighborhood or district in particular, or the like.

Typical Abilities: Beyond certain very basic Skills, no two vigilantes are quite alike — each one approaches crimefighting in his own unique way. Some are militaristic, prone to jumping into the middle of things with guns blazing and fists flying. Some favor stealth and infiltration so they can attack from surprise, while still others are investigators more than anything.

Suggested Disadvantages: Besides their Psychological Limitation(s), vigilantes can have a wide range of Disadvantages. The most common is Hunted — being Hunted by the police (and/or other law enforcement agencies) is practically a prerequisite for being a vigilante in many *Dark Champions* campaigns, and vigilantes are also often Hunted by the criminals they pursue. A vigilante might even Hunt a particular criminal or criminal group himself.

Progression: The abilities that might come in handy when fighting crime on the streets (or elsewhere) are practically numberless, so a vigilante shouldn't lack for places to spend his Experience Points. In addition to buying Skills from the optional list in the Package Deal, he might learn some of the "Super-Skills" on pages 106-49, develop military Skills under the tutelage of a fellow PC with military experience, or the like.

VIGILANTE PACKAGE DEAL

Abilities

Cost	Ability
5	+5 PRE
3	Criminology
6	KSs (6 points' worth, relating to the campaign city, its underworld, and the like)
3	Stealth
5	Streetwise +1
2	WF: 2 points' worth of the character's choice
4	Contacts (4 points' worth)
15	15 points' worth of Skills from the following list: Acting, Bribery, Bugging, Climbing, Combat Driving, Combat Skill Levels, Computer Programming, Concealment, Conversation, Deduction, Demolitions, Disguise, Electronics, Fast Draw, Forensic Medicine, Gambling, Interrogation, Lockpicking, Martial Arts, Paramedics, Persuasion, Security Systems, Shadowing, Skill Levels, Sleight Of Hand, Weapon Familiarity, Weaponsmith, any Background Skill, Contacts

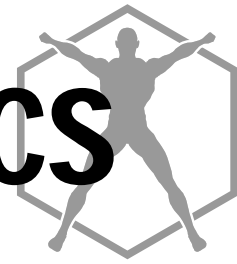
Total Cost Of Package Abilities: 43

Disadvantages

Value	Disadvantage
15	Appropriate Psychological Limitation (such as <i>Must Protect Innocents From Crime</i> , <i>Devoted To Justice</i> , or <i>Vigilante Mentality</i>)

Total Value Of Package Disadvantages: 15

CHARACTERISTICS



Most *HERO System* gamers start designing their characters by purchasing Characteristics. Several Characteristics, and related issues, have important implications for *Dark Champions* games.

Normal Characteristic Maxima

Dark Champions campaigns typically impose Normal Characteristic Maxima as a default for the campaign; characters must abide by the NCM restrictions without getting any Disadvantage points for doing so. But in some cases the GM may want to reconsider that decision. For games that verge more toward the Superheroic — street-level superheroes, or James Bond- or John Woo-style games with lots of fantastic stunts and gunplay — the Normal Characteristic Maxima rules may not make much sense, and may even inhibit the “feel” the GM wants to create.

Characteristic Ranges

Dark Champions is a Heroic genre, and therefore most characters have most of their Primary Characteristics in the 10-20 range. This can cause problems of uniformity. In some campaigns, it's rare to see a combat-oriented character with STR and/or DEX of less than 20, a character who specializes in technology with an INT less than 20, or any character with a low PRE. Furthermore, because some Characteristics cost relatively few points to increase, it's not uncommon to see characters with unusually high ratings in Characteristics not associated with that character type — such as hackers with STR 15-20.

This potential uniformity is an important feature of the *HERO System*, one that allows players to build whatever characters they want. But it may cause problems in some campaigns, particularly those where GMs and players want to emphasize the differences between the various major archetypical characters. If “Characteristic uniformity” causes a problem in your game, here are some possible solutions:

- Lower the Normal Characteristic Maxima breakpoint. If characters have to start paying double at 15 instead of 20, Characteristics in the 18-20 range become rarer. However, PCs may end up with fewer points to spend on Skills and abilities, which causes problems of its own.

- Lower the Normal Characteristic Maxima breakpoint selectively by character type. Choose one Characteristic that's important for each character archetype (for example, STR for brawlers, DEX for sneaky or agile characters, INT for technicians). That archetype can buy that Characteristic up to 20 for the normal cost, but must pay double at a lower breakpoint (such as 15) for all other Characteristics. For example, maybe the GM lets each character pick one Primary Characteristic he can buy up to 20 for the normal cost, but the character has to pay double for each point of any other Primary Characteristic above 15. This heightens each archetype's natural strengths, but may cause difficulties when you try to build some character concepts.

- Sever the relationship between a Primary Characteristic and one or more of the Figured Characteristics it affects. If characters only get ED and REC from CON, and not END or STUN, they may be more likely to keep CON at a lower level than they otherwise would so they can put points into END and STUN. Again, this may lead to characters spending too many of their points on Characteristics.

- Assign a useful bonus to a Characteristic that makes characters want to buy it in unusual amounts, instead of amounts ending in 0, 3, 5, and 8. For example, suppose you establish a house rule saying that if two characters have the same DEX (a not uncommon occurrence in a *Dark Champions* campaign), the character with the highest INT gets to act first in a Phase. This prompts at least some characters to spend a little more on INT, since an INT 16 is better than INT 15 even though they both generate the same INT Roll and PER Roll. Proceed with caution, however; most such changes indirectly benefit some character type more, and you may accidentally create a game balance problem. Similarly, you could rule that in Skill Versus Skill Contests involving Skills based on the same Characteristic, ties go to the character with the highest Characteristic.

- Forbid some archetypes to buy Characteristics beyond a defined maximum (or at least, not without special permission). For example, maybe the GM decides technology-oriented characters cannot buy STR above 15, and characters who specialize in physical combat can't buy INT above 15. This may significantly inhibit the creative freedom that is a hallmark of the *HERO System*, but it can really distinguish the archetypes from each other.



Primary Characteristics

STRENGTH

Strength suffers from the potential problems of Characteristic uniformity and balance described above to a greater degree than any other Primary Characteristic. Given STR's relatively inexpensive cost, a character can easily spend a few points to increase it, which nets him extra points for several Figured Characteristics, improved carrying capacity, and an enhanced ability to inflict damage with fists or weapons. Therefore, GMs may want to examine characters' STR scores closely and require them to scale back if they seem to have high STR for no good reason other than "rules benefits." Remember, STR 10 makes a character extremely fit and strong in "real world" terms, and STR 15 is roughly equivalent to a world-class weightlifter.

DEXTERITY

DEX is a popular Characteristic for any type of character, since it dictates the character's base CV and rolls with several important Skills. It's not uncommon to see a group of *Dark Champions* characters who all have DEXs clustered in the 15-20 range, making it difficult for characters who should be noteworthy for their agility and adroitness to truly stand out from the crowd.

Given this concern, DEX is a prime candidate for the "Characteristic uniformity" solutions described above, because characters can compensate for the lack of pure DEX in other ways. Combat Skill Levels and Martial Arts can improve

a character's CV without inflating his DEX, and Lightning Reflexes keeps his initiative rating high. The GM could even let some characters buy DEX with a -1 Limitation, *Only For DEX Rolls*, to improve their ability to perform Skills without becoming hyper-accurate combat monsters.

CONSTITUTION AND BODY

In a genre where Killing Attacks are the norm, and combat occurs frequently, most heroes can justify at least a few extra points of CON and BODY to keep themselves from dying like flies. Since high CON and BODY tend to encourage "heroic" actions by characters, Characteristic uniformity causes far fewer (if any) problems compared to STR or DEX.

INTELLIGENCE

Although high INT is perhaps most associated with characters who work with technology, since it represents the ability to process and react to information a high INT would be appropriate for virtually any type of *Dark Champions* adventurer. Characters who hit the Normal Characteristic Maxima for INT, or who shouldn't have an overall high INT, should consider Enhanced Perception, or 5-point Skill Levels with Intellect Skills. The latter, which also apply to PER Rolls, substitute for INT effectively for characters with lots of Intellect Skills.

EGO

At least a few points of EGO are appropriate for almost any *Dark Champions* characters. Heroes should have great willpower, and EGO reflects that. To encourage characters to buy it, the GM could

even reduce its cost to 1 Character Point per point. Since most *Dark Champions* games don't involve powers targeted with ECV, decreasing the cost of EGO won't make mentalist characters unbalancingly effective.

PRESENCE

Force of personality, courage, and general impressiveness are a key element in many *Dark Champions* character conceptions (particularly the "terror of the underworld" costumed vigilante). It's not uncommon to find that every character in a *Dark Champions* campaign has a PRE of 15 or higher, but fortunately this usually just contributes to the fun of the game rather than causing problems. Characters who don't necessarily want to be impressive themselves, but who are fearless, jaded, or blasé, can buy some extra PRE with the -1 Limitation, *Only To Protect Against Presence Attacks*. Conversely, character who want to be particularly impressive in some specific way can buy the *Reputation* Perk, or extra PRE with Limitations like *Only For Fear-/Intimidation-Based Presence Attacks* (-1).

In *Dark Champions*, one of the best ways for a character to make a Presence Attack is in conjunction with a weapon of some sort. Having a gun shoved in his face makes almost any NPC more willing to talk or surrender. The accompanying table lists suggested Presence Attack modifiers for various gun-related threats.

GUN THREATS

Action	Presence Attack Bonus
Pointing a gun at target	+1d6
Pulling back the hammer of a gun pointed at target	+2d6*
Pumping a pump-action shotgun	+2d6
Placing a laser sight "red dot" on target	+2d6

*: This replaces the "pointing a gun" bonus; the two don't add together.

Figured Characteristics

PHYSICAL DEFENSE AND ENERGY DEFENSE

Given the "realistic" feel of most *Dark Champions* campaigns, high PDs and EDs are relatively uncommon. Characters who want a little more protection can wear body armor, or buy Talents like *Combat Luck* (or abilities like the defensive Super-Skills on pages 124-29). But GMs should carefully evaluate a character's defenses to make sure he's not *too* well protected. The *Dark Champions* genre features a lot of gunfights and other combat, and if characters aren't at least a little concerned about the possibility of getting injured, the game loses a lot of its verisimilitude.

SPEED

Characteristic uniformity occurs frequently with SPD. Most *Dark Champions* characters have SPD 3 or 4; a few pay the extra cost for SPD 5 to be *really* fast. Because SPDs tend to cluster at the low end of the scale, even a single extra point of SPD can offer a character a significant advantage. It not only allows him to take more actions in combat, but it increases his overall movement speed and ability to Recover from injuries and END use. Gamemasters should examine any character with an unusually high SPD (above 4) to make sure he won't unbalance the campaign.

ENDURANCE

As a Heroic genre, *Dark Champions* uses the rule that STR costs 1 END per 5 points (not 10), while Powers and the like still cost 1 END per 10 Active Points. Even allowing for that, and for the END cost of Encumbrance (*HERO System 5th Edition, Revised*, page 379), many characters have far more END than they generally need. This makes it easy for them to Push (when appropriate), which may cause problems during the game. If necessary, the GM should consider using the Long-Term Endurance rules (*HERO System 5th Edition, Revised*, page 425) as a balancing factor.

SKILLS



Skills are probably the most important aspect of a *Dark Champions* character; the genre's all about highly-skilled characters and the way they get things done. Some Skills are especially appropriate for, or have unique applications in, the *Dark Champions* genre, and it's those Skills which are discussed below.

Skill Modifiers

Gamemasters may want to incorporate the following optional rules and guidelines for Skill modifiers into their *Dark Champions* campaigns.

COMBAT CONDITIONS

In some cases, trying to use a Skill in combat conditions, or other high-stress crisis situations, imposes a -1 to -3 penalty on the Skill Roll.

The following Skills are intended for use in combat conditions, and therefore characters receive no negative modifiers for using them in combat: Accurate Sprayfire, Acrobatics, Analyzes related to combat situations (Analyze Style, Analyze Combat Technique, and the like), Breakfall, Combat Driving, Combat Piloting, Concentrated Sprayfire, Rapid Attack, Rapid Autofire, Skipover Sprayfire, Stealth, Tactics, Two-Weapon Fighting, and Weapon Familiarity. All other Skills are *not* suited for combat conditions — even Skills often associated with combat situations, such as Demolitions, typically aren't intended for use when the character is under attack. Characters using those Skills in combat suffer a negative modifier determined by the GM. Characters may buy the Talent *Combat-Ready* (see page 90) for a Skill to eliminate any combat conditions penalties.

DAMAGE TO SUBJECT

If the object a character is using his Skill on or with — a lock he's trying to open with Lockpicking, and engine he's trying to fix with Mechanics, a broken radio he's trying to make a last-ditch Systems Operation roll with — is broken or damaged, it may be harder (if not impossible) for him to succeed. The accompanying table lists the standard modifiers in this situation.

"Significant" damage is damage to a specific part of the subject, or a specific type of damage, that the GM deems particularly significant or necessary for the Skill used or task attempted. For example, if a character has to pick a lock, and parts of the lock have been fused together by fire damage, the GM might consider that "significant" damage and tack on an additional -2 penalty to the roll. Significant damage penalties are cumulative with other damage modifiers.

At the GM's option, damage to the subject may not affect some Skills or Skill uses. For example, damage to parts of a radio might not penalize a character who wants to use that radio to jam another radio's signal.

DAMAGE TO SUBJECT MODIFIERS

Damage	Modifier
Up to 1/3 BODY	-0
1/3 to 2/3 BODY	-2
More than 2/3 BODY	-4
Significant damage	Additional -1 to -3

EQUIPMENT

Many Skills, like Lockpicking and Demolitions, almost always require some type of equipment to perform. With the right type of equipment, a character may find his task easier; on the other hand, poor-quality, improvised, or damaged equipment will probably make his job tougher, if not impossible. The accompanying table has suggested modifiers for equipment quality.

"Improvised" equipment includes makeshift, jury-rigged, and other less-than-perfect forms of equipment used when nothing better is available. Determining which types of equipment are Poor, Very Good, and so forth is left to the GM's discretion — unless, of course, the character has paid Character Points for better-than-average equipment, in which case he's entitled to the bonuses he paid for. You can use the guidelines in this table when deciding how to build quality equipment; if a character wants "very good" lockpicks, he should buy them as a +4 (or greater) bonus to Lockpicking.

EQUIPMENT MODIFIERS

Type Of Equipment	Modifier
None	Cannot perform Skill
Very Poor	-4 to -6 or more
Very Damaged	-4 to -6 or more
Poor and Improvised	-4 to -6 or more
Poor, Improvised, or Damaged	-1 to -3
Average	+0
Good	+1 to +3
Very Good	+4 to +6
Extremely Good	+7 or more

INJURY

As an optional rule, it's harder for a character to use most Skills when he's hurt. The penalties in the accompanying table reflect this.

A "significant" injury is one to any part of the body which the GM deems particularly necessary for the Skill used or task attempted. For example, a character who has received an injury to his hand may suffer additional penalties to Skills such as Lockpicking and Sleight Of Hand. Significant injury penalties are cumulative with other injury modifiers.

At the GM's option, injuries may not affect some Skills. For example, Knowledge Skills and uses of other Skills which simply reflect knowing something often ignore injury penalties (unless the injury is to the head).

INJURY MODIFIERS

Degree Of Injury	Modifier
Up to 1/3 BODY	-0
1/3 to 2/3 BODY	-2
More than 2/3 BODY	-4
Significant injury	Additional -1 to -3

MOVEMENT

Characters in motion — who move during the same Segment when they want to use a Skill — have a more difficult time performing many Skills, whether they're moving under their own power or are in a moving vehicle, as indicated by the accompanying table. Generally this only applies to Skills that require rolls; it doesn't affect a character's ability to allocate his Combat Skill Levels, Penalty Skill Levels, or Skill Levels, shout a command in a learned Language, to use Rapid Attack or Two-Weapon Fighting, or the like.

MOVEMENT MODIFIERS

Degree Of Injury	Modifier
Up to 1/3 BODY	-0
1/3 to 2/3 BODY	-2
More than 2/3 BODY	-4
Significant injury	Additional -1 to -3

Movement This Phase	Modifier
Half Move (under own power)	-2
Full Move (under own power)	Cannot perform any Skills unless permitted by GM
In smooth-riding vehicle/mount	-1 to -2
In rough-riding vehicle/mount	-2 to -5

In campaigns that stress "realism," the GM may want to significantly increase these penalties (say, by another -2 to -4 each).

STEALTHY SKILL USE

Characters have trouble performing some Skills if they try to be stealthy while doing so. Characters may not be able to use some Skills in a stealthy fashion at all; the GM determines this on a case-by-case basis. If stealthy use is possible, the character must make a Stealth roll at -2 (or worse, at the GM's discretion) to perform the task stealthfully. If he fails the roll he can still attempt to use the Skill, but others can perceive him doing so as usual.

Skills And Equipment

As stated in the rulebook, if a character pays Character Points for a piece of equipment (such as a weapon or a Vehicle), he doesn't have to buy a Skill to use it — he automatically knows how. However, that only means he knows how to use that one piece of equipment; it doesn't give him a Skill for free. Paying Character Points for a gun doesn't let him have WF: Small Arms for free; paying Character Points for a motorcycle doesn't give a character TF: Two-Wheeled Motorized Ground Vehicles.

Buying a piece of equipment with Equipment Points (page 153) does *not* count as paying Character Points for it. A character must have a Skill to use such gear, or suffer the appropriate penalties.

Some Skills, such as Lockpicking, generally assume a character has to have equipment (the appropriate tools or devices) to use them. Unless stated otherwise in the Skill's writeup, it's not necessarily assumed the character gets the needed equipment for "free," because he may have to pay money for it in-game or the like. But he doesn't have to pay a separate Character Point cost for it.

Skill Descriptions

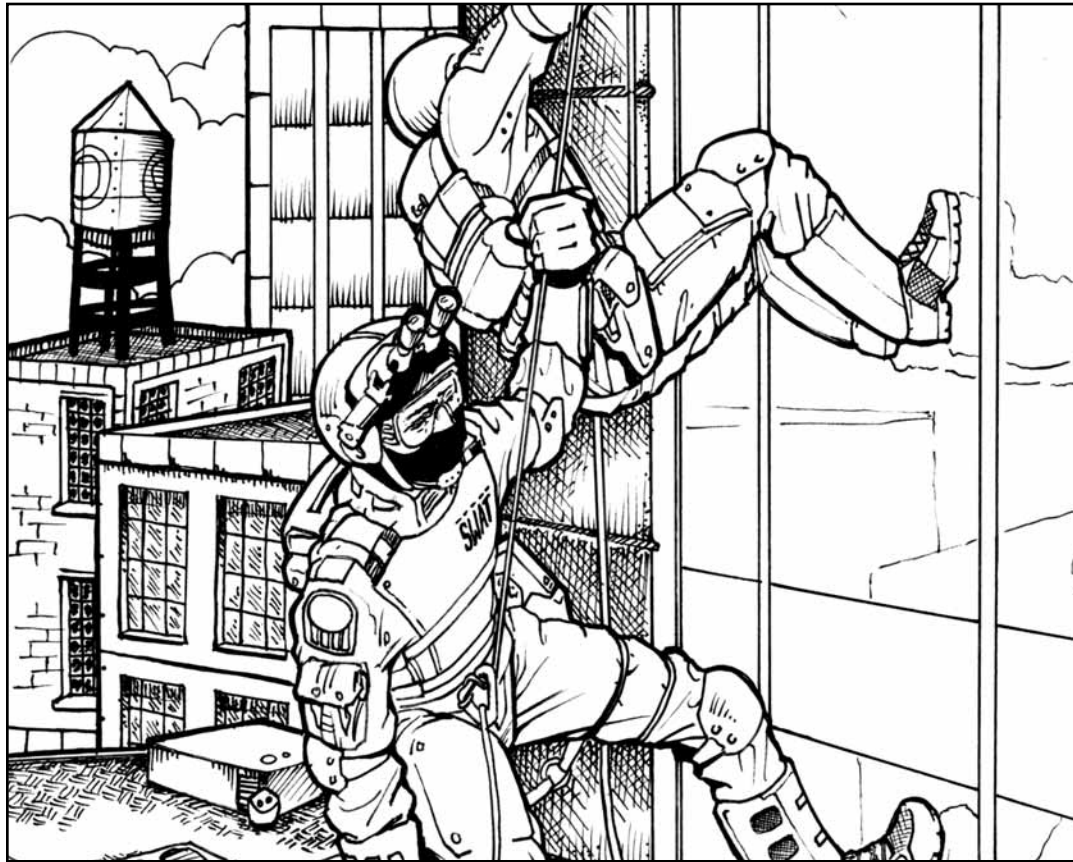
ANALYZE

Dark Champions characters could have many different forms of Analyze. For example, a character who's a trained martial artist might have Analyze Style (see *The Ultimate Martial Artist*, pages 112-13), while one who's an expert at demolitions might have Analyze Construction so he can figure out the best way to collapse a building with minimal risk to nearby structures.

Another form of Analyze common to modern-day action-adventure heroes is *Analyze Combat Technique*. This is similar to Analyze Style, but applies to fighting skills, combat tactics, and related abilities that don't rise to the level of a "formal" fighting art like Kung Fu or Aikido. Analyze Combat Technique can be a Complementary Skill to Tactics in some situations (and vice-versa).

The accompanying table describes the sort of information characters typically gain from an Analyze Combat Technique roll, though the final results are up to the GM. These results follow the general pattern for the Skill as described on page 49 of the *HERO System 5th Edition, Revised* rulebook, and unlike Analyze Style are not in addition to those results.

A character cannot make successive Analyze



ANALYZE COMBAT TECHNIQUE

Makes Roll By	Information Gained
0 (exactly)	Character has general idea of how good his opponent is in relation to himself (“He’s fair/good/excellent,” “He’s better/worse than me,” “I can’t beat him unless I get lucky”)
1 or 2	Where/how opponent was trained (has been in the Green Berets; has had marksman or sharpshooter training; or the like). If the foe has not had any recognizable training, the character cannot find anything out about him this way.
3 or 4	Character can discover distinctive mannerisms about the opponent which allow the character +1 DCV against that foe’s attacks (foe tends to fire to the left; foe has a hard time hitting targets more than 10’ away, or the like)
Half or Better	Character can figure out so much about the opponent’s fighting tactics that he gets a +2 CV against the foe. This +2 is equivalent to two 8-point Combat Skill Levels, and can apply to OCV or DCV, at the character’s option.

Combat Technique rolls against the same opponent in the same fight — he gets one try only. Knowledge and combat bonuses gained through use of Analyze Combat Technique last for that combat only; they do not “carry over” to future attacks. However, if the character made a previous Analyze Combat Technique roll against a specific opponent by two or more, he gets a +1 bonus to his next attempt to Analyze Combat Technique on that foe.

AUTOFIRE SKILLS

All of the Autofire Skills are highly appropriate for *Dark Champions* games, since modern-day action heroes are likely to carry automatic firearms. If a character has an Autofire Skill, it typically applies to all the Autofire attacks he has or uses. If he commonly uses multiple types of Autofire attacks, but an Autofire Skill only applies to one of those attacks, at the GM’s option he may be able to take a Limitation (-0 to -½) on the Skill.

If the GM wants to encourage lots of gunfire

and fast-paced gunplay in the campaign, one way to do that is to reduce the cost of the Autofire Skills. If they cost, say, 3 Character Points apiece instead of 5, more characters would buy and use them.

BRIBERY

If a *Dark Champions* character needs to smuggle something through Customs, get information from a reluctant official, or obtain special treatment in some societies, he may have to bribe someone. A character with the *Bribery* Skill knows what to bribe someone with, how to approach that person, and how much to offer. Any character can try to bribe someone, but unless he has this Skill he’s probably so clumsy about it that he’s unlikely to succeed (give him about a 6- chance in most cases).

Many different circumstances can modify a Bribery roll, usually negatively. These include:

Illegality: trying to get someone to overlook or cover up a minor illegal act (like a speeding ticket)

may involve no penalty to the roll, or at most a -1. The more serious or dangerous the illegal act, the higher the modifier becomes, up to a maximum of -4 in most cases.

Psychological Limitation: If the potential bribee has a relevant Psychological Limitation (such as *Greedy* or *Incorruptible*), depending on whether the Disadvantage favors or disfavors bribery the roll receives a modifier of +1/-1 for a Moderate Psychological Limitation, +2/-2 for a Strong, and +3/-3 for a Total.

Type Of Bribe: If the briber offers exactly what the bribee wants (usually money), he gets a +0 bonus. If what he offers isn't quite what the bribee wants, he may suffer a penalty of -1 to -4. (If appropriate, the GM can allow the character to make a separate Bribery roll to gauge what the target wants before he makes the roll to actually complete the transaction.)

Amount Of Bribe: A bribe that's too small or too large may cause problems. The GM should determine the ideal amount of a bribe, given the situation and the target. (If appropriate, the GM can allow the character to make a separate Bribery roll to gauge how much the target wants before he makes the roll to actually complete the transaction.) A bribe that equals the target amount gives a +2 bonus to the roll. One that's a little over (no more than 39% more) can increase the bonus to up to +4. One that's 40% or more too much makes the target nervous, changing the bonus to a -2 or larger penalty. One that's too little incurs a penalty of -2 to -8.

Typically, a failed Bribery attempt results in a refusal to take the bribe, perhaps accompanied by a pointed question ("Are you trying to bribe me, sir?"). If the Bribery attempt fails badly — by 4 or more — or if the character attempts to bribe an incorruptible target, the potential bribee may call his superior or the police, arrest the character, or threaten him with a weapon. Also, just because a character has bribed someone doesn't mean he'll *stay* bribed....

BUGGING

Bugging is one of the most useful information-gathering Skills in the *Dark Champions* genre — and one that offers the additional excitement and plot potential of the character having to infiltrate an area to plant a bug. Generally, Bugging allows a character to do the following:

- plant bugs for best reception and transmission
- operate bugs for maximum effect and efficiency, using them to watch or listen to someone (or some place) from a distance
- operate listening or tracking devices designed to be worn by a person and/or placed in or on a moving object (such as a car)
- "sweep" (search physically or with detectors) for bugs other persons have planted
- disable or counteract bugs planted and used by other persons
- create bugs (assuming the character has the proper equipment and supplies to do so)

If the GM uses the expanded "surveillance" form of Shadowing, then the operation of devices such as parabolic microphones should fall under that Skill instead. Otherwise, it's a part of Bugging, as described in the rulebook.

See pages 278-80 for some *HERO System* write-ups of common Bugging equipment.

Planting Standard Bugs

The most common use of Bugging is to plant a bug. To do this, a character needs access to the location where the bug is to be planted. This may require some breaking and entering work on the character's part, or the use of wits, forged documents, or other forms of subterfuge. This can be an adventure in and of itself!

Once in the proper location, the character makes a Bugging roll to determine the best place to put the bug; the GM applies a modifier from the Bugging Table to reflect the ease or difficulty of the task. The modifier reflects the general conditions of the location; some are good for Bugging because they have lots of places to conceal bugs, good acoustics, and the like, while others are difficult to bug because they have the opposite qualities.

The Bugging roll takes into account finding the best places to get sound and/or video reception for the bug, determining the best places for the bug to transmit what it "sees," and placing the bug so that it's not readily apparent to persons in the room (but not truly hiding it; see below). If the roll succeeds, the character has chosen the optimum location for the bug, given the prevailing circumstances; the bug functions effectively and provides clear sound and/or pictures.

If the roll to place a bug fails, the character placed the bug poorly. This may have one or more negative implications, such as:

- **poor pickup:** the bug isn't positioned to get the best "view" of the location (or whatever it is the character wants to see or hear). The user of the bugging equipment must make PER Rolls each Phase (or some other time interval) to determine what's being seen or heard. If the roll fails by 4 or more, it may mean the bug fails to pick anything up (either it's malfunctioned, or it's horribly placed).
- **poor transmission:** the bug isn't positioned well for transmitting; something interferes with its ability to send information. The results are the same as for poor pickup.
- **easily found:** anyone searching for the bug receives a +2 (or greater) bonus to locate it.

Properly placing a bug doesn't necessarily mean *hiding* the bug. Bugging by itself doesn't allow characters to hide bugs; that requires Concealment, with Bugging serving as a Complementary Skill. (Of course, the GM can simply describe the location and let the characters roleplay where they hide the bug, thus dispensing with rolls in favor of roleplaying.) A bug placed with a successful Bugging roll but not Concealment isn't readily apparent — the average person in the location won't ever notice it — but it can quickly be found with a search, and it's possible for someone to accidentally stumble across it.

Planting Wiretaps

Characters with Bugging also know how to plant wiretaps. A skilled Bugging expert can sometimes tap into a phone line without going to the precise location where the phone to be tapped is located. Instead, he can find the right line outside the building, nearby, or sometimes even blocks away at a junction point or bridging box (a “down-line tap”). The Bugging Modifiers Table lists the penalties for trying to wiretap from a long distance away, but the GM may in some cases rule that it’s impossible without inside information from the telephone company about which wires are the ones the character needs to tap. Tapping some types of cable (such as fiber optic) is more difficult.

Sweeping For Bugs

Another common Bugging task is to “sweep” a room — search for bugs other people have planted. Usually a character does this so he can remove, disable, or destroy the bugs, but sometimes he just wants to know where the bugs are so he can feed false (or tailored) information to whoever’s operating them.

There are two ways to find a bug: without equipment, and with. A character searching for bugs with his hands and eyes must make a Concealment roll with the modifiers listed in the Bugging Table; Bugging serves as a Complementary Skill. Disguised bugs, which are either hidden in a generally inaccessible location (such as inside a chair arm or a radio) or are made to look like ordinary objects, may be particularly difficult to find. An easier way to locate bugs is with equipment specifically designed to find them by tracking the radio waves they emit. This may overcome the penalties for disguised bugs, but won’t find bugs that don’t broadcast radio waves (*i.e.*, which record what they “see” for later retrieval, or which transmit via a wire) (other types of devices can detect such bugs).

BUGGING TABLE

Planting Bugs	Modifier
Excellent location	+2
Good location	+1
Average location	+0
Poor location	-1
Very poor location	-2
Planting Wiretaps	
Planting wiretap in...	
Telephone set, or room where set is located	+2
Line in same building	+0
Line outside but within 1 city block of building	-2
Line 1-3 city blocks away	-4
Line over 3 city blocks away	-6
Fiber optic cable	-2 to -4
Sweeping For Bugs	
Amount/quality of hiding places	
Exceptional capacity for hiding bugs	-4
Good capacity for hiding bugs	-2
Average capacity for hiding bugs	-0
Poor capacity for hiding bugs	+2
Very poor capacity for hiding bugs	+4
Disguised bug	-2 to -5

BUREAUCRATICS

Given the size, complexity, and resources available to modern bureaucratic organizations, the *Bureaucratics* Skill can be one of an investigator’s most valuable tools. As an Interaction Skill, it works best when the GM and player roleplay the course of events. However, many factors can affect the roll, based on what the character tries to accomplish and the nature of the official or organization he’s using the Skill against (see accompanying table). Some possible modifiers include:

Complexity of the organization: The larger and/or more complex the organization is, the harder it tends to be to manipulate. For some rolls, such as hiding information, the complexity modifier may change from negative to positive.

Difficulty of the task: The more difficult, time-consuming, or irregular the request the character makes, the less likely it is he’ll get what he wants (requests for information have different modifiers, based on the type of information the character wants to learn; see the Bureaucratic Information Table on page 66).

Speed: Getting an organization to act quickly is difficult, if not impossible. Assume that 1 Hour is the minimum for any request that involves a Bureaucratics roll, but depending on circumstances the GM may set an actual time of hours, days, or even weeks. If the character makes his roll at the indicated penalty, he can get quicker action.

Membership: For many requests, such as arranging an appointment, manipulating a particular bureaucrat, and the like, the target’s power within the organization influences Bureaucratics rolls. The more powerful he is (*i.e.*, the more points he’s spent on the *Membership* Fringe Benefit, or any like Perk such as Governmental Rank), the harder he can be to work with.

BUREAUCRATICS TABLE

Size/Complexity Of Organization	Modifier
Small and/or Simple	-0
Large and/or Complex	-1
Very Large and/or Very Complex	-2
Extremely Large and/or Extremely Complex	-4
Difficulty Of Request/Task	
Very Simple	+2
Simple	+1
Average	-0
Difficult	-2
Very Difficult	-4
Immediacy Of Request/Task	
Each step up Time Chart	-3 per step
Membership	-1 per point target spent on Membership

BUREAUCRATIC INFORMATION

Type Of Information	Modifier	Examples/Notes
Public	+2	Deeds, non-sealed court filings, public records, adults' criminal records
Non-Public	-0	Sealed court records, juvenile criminal records
Confidential/Sensitive	-2	Building security plans, personnel files, medical records
Classified	-4	Security Clearance (1+) required
Secret	-6	Security Clearance (5+) required
Top Secret	-8	Security Clearance (7+) required

CLIMBING

Dark Champions characters frequently find themselves scaling mountainsides, the walls of buildings, fences, and similar obstacles. The accompanying table has modifiers for Climbing based on the surface involved. Characters can obtain positive modifiers by using appropriate climbing equipment.

COMBAT DRIVING, COMBAT PILOTING

As noted in the *HERO System 5th Edition, Revised*, Combat Driving applies to Vehicles that move in two dimensions (such as ground vehicles and ships), and Combat Piloting to Vehicles that move in three dimensions (aircraft and submarines). In campaigns that feature a lot of Vehicles and vehicle combat, GMs may want to divide these Skills up a little more, or create new ones appropriate to the game. Combat Sailing might replace Combat Driving for surface watercraft, while Combat Submarining becomes the Skill for submarines, leaving Combat Piloting just for aircraft. For even greater precision, the GM could divide Combat Piloting into Combat Aircraft Piloting and Combat Helicopter Piloting.

See *The Ultimate Vehicle* for extensive rules about operating and using vehicles in the *HERO System*.

CLIMBING TABLE

Nature of Surface	Modifier	Example
Inclination		
45-60 degree incline	-0	Steep hill, average mountainside
61-75 degree incline	-1	Steep mountainside
76-90 degree incline	-2	Tree, building, very steep mountainside
91-105 degree incline	-4	
106-120 degree incline	-6	
121 or greater degree incline	-8*	
Slipperiness		
Slippery surface	-2	Wet rocks
Very slippery surface	-4	Ice-covered rocks
Extremely slippery surface	-6	Smooth stone wall
Incredibly slippery surface	-8	Wet or icy smooth stone wall
Handholds		
Numerous handholds	+4	Tree with lots of branches
Many handholds	+2	
Average handholds	-0	Tree with a few branches
Few handholds	-2	
No/Almost no handholds	-4	Flagpole

* If climbable at all

COMBAT SKILL LEVELS

The *Dark Champions* genre sees as much fighting as any other gaming genre, and many *Dark Champions* characters buy some Combat Skill Levels to help them win their battles. In addition to straightforward CSLs, characters can buy CSLs as Powers, with Limitations reflecting particular abilities the character possesses (see the "Super-Skills" section for plenty of examples).


Combat Skill Levels And Drawn Weapons

The GM decides whether characters must have their weapons drawn to apply Combat Skill Levels bought with those weapons. In most cases, it makes sense for the GM to rule that a character can't use his CSLs with a weapon unless he has that weapon out and ready to fight with. However, in some cases it may be appropriate to allow a character to use weapon CSLs for some purposes (DCV, primarily) even if he has not yet drawn the weapon — for example, if he's expecting trouble but doesn't want to provoke anyone (or perhaps reveal his position) by unholstering his pistol first.

2-Point Combat Skill Levels With Weapons

A 2-point Combat Skill Level with a single type of weapon (such as M1911A Pistols or Knives) applies to increase the character's OCV whenever the character uses the weapon, regardless of what Combat Maneuver he uses. For example, a 2-point CSL with Steyr AUG Assault Rifles could apply if the character makes a Strike with his Steyr, performs a Disarm (see page 181), or Rapid Fires it at several enemies.

The GM may, at his option, exempt some Combat Maneuvers, such as Rapid Fire or Suppression Fire, from this rule. The usual grounds for this decision is that those Maneuvers constitute "separate" forms of attack, rather than a variation/extension of a Strike with that weapon.

 At the GM's option, characters can buy a Combat Skill Level that only works with a single Combat Maneuver and a single type of weapon (such as only Strikes with Desert Eagle .50 Pistols, or only Disarms with Thrown Knives) for 1 Character Point each. Characters can only use these Levels for OCV. Also at the GM's option, 1-point CSLs could apply to any attack made with a single weapon (such as the Desert Eagle .50 the character received as a gift from his father, not with any DE .50 in the world).

2-Point Combat Skill Levels With Maneuvers

A 2-point Combat Skill Level with a single Maneuver other than Strike (such as Move Through or Grab) applies to increase the character's OCV whenever the character uses that Maneuver, regardless of what weapon or mechanism he uses to perform the Maneuver.

Some types of Combat Maneuvers incorporate other Maneuvers or attacks. For example, a character can Haymaker with a weapon, a punch, or possibly some paranormal abilities; a character can perform a Sweep with many other Combat Maneuvers. A character may buy a 2-point Combat Skill Level that increases his OCV with a single

such Maneuver regardless of what power or attack he uses that Maneuver with. For example, he could buy a 2-point CSL that applied to Sweep regardless of whether the character Sweep Punches, Sweep Grabs, Sweep knife-strikes, or the like.

Combat Skill Levels With Strike

If a character buys a 2-point Combat Skill Level with Strike, he must define the type of Strike — Punch, Knife Slash, or the like. If he could apply it to *any* form of Strike, it would be unbalancingly effective. (The same applies to a 3-point CSL bought to apply to Strike and two other Maneuvers.)

At the GM's option, if a character buys a 3-point CSL *solely for Strike*, he could apply it to increase OCV with either "all HTH Strikes" or "all Ranged Strikes"; he must choose one or the other when he buys the Level. (These Levels would only apply with straightforward Strikes, not with, for example, Haymakers or Sweeps involving Strike.) Since this type of CSL may be extremely similar to 5-point CSLs for HTH Combat or Ranged Combat, the GM may require characters to buy 5-point CSLs instead.

Combat Skill Levels With Martial Arts

A Combat Skill Level with a character's Martial Maneuvers is a 3-point CSL, regardless of how many Maneuvers he knows. If the character has a Weapon Element allowing him to use a weapon with that style, he can apply the CSLs to increase the damage done when he attacks with the weapon using a Martial Maneuver.

Limited Combat Skill Levels

Because the rules don't allow characters to put Limitations on Combat Skill Levels costing less than 5 points apiece, a character may find himself in a situation where it costs more to buy Limited CSLs with a particular attack than it would if he just bought less expensive CSLs — even though the cheaper CSLs are *less* restricted. In that case, the GM may, at his option, allow the character to buy the less expensive CSLs and treat them as if they were Limited, without actually applying the Limitation to them.

COMPUTER PROGRAMMING

Given the prevalence of computers in modern life, Computer Programming is an important Skill in virtually all *Dark Champions* campaigns. Characters can use it for many purposes, including searching for information and penetrating secured or restricted computer systems.

Because computer technology advances and changes so swiftly, the accompanying rules are written "generically" — they don't refer to any specific type of computer system, software, or standards. If they did, they'd run the risk of becoming obsolete. Instead, they require the GM to describe a computer system or database with generic terms which establish modifiers for working with that system. The intent is to allow for "dramatic" or "cinematic" computer use, not to provide "realistic" rules for how computer systems are built and used. Game-masters who consider themselves knowledgeable



EXPANDED COMPUTER PROGRAMMING

Personal Computers

Handheld Computers
Portable Computers
(laptops and such)
Desktop Computers

Computer Networks

Local Networks
The Internet

Mainframe Computers And Supercomputers

Hacking And Computer Security

Infiltration/Penetration
Defense

Military And Government Computers

Government Computers
Law Enforcement Com-
puters
Military Computers

Artificial Intelligence (if appropriate to the campaign)

In a technology-ori-
ented game, the GM
may refine the cat-
egories even more, to
specific manufacturers
and years. For example,
programming an IBM
computer running a
Microsoft operating
system in 1994 is differ-
ent from doing the same
thing in 2004.

COMPUTER PROGRAMMING MODIFIERS

Searching For Information

Type Of Information	Modifier
Not hidden	+2
Poorly hidden	+1
Hidden	+0
Well hidden	-2
Very well hidden	-4

Penetrating Computer Systems

Type Of System	Modifier	Skill Roll	Example
Unsecured	+2 or better	None	Typical home computer
Poorly secured	+1	8-	Typical business computer
Secured	+0	9- to 11-	Low-end government, law enforce- ment, and corporate computers
Well secured	-1 to -3	12- to 14-	Average government, law enforcement, and corporate computers
Very well secured	-4 to -6	15- to 17-	High-end government, law enforce- ment, and corporate computers
Extremely well secured	-7 to -9	18- or better	Military computers

Other Circumstances

Other Circumstances	Modifier
Character has some information or clues regarding system passwords	+0 or better
Character has found exploitable flaws in the same or similar software	+0 or better

Computer system is...

Much less advanced than what the character's used to	+6 or better
Less advanced than what the character's used to	+1 to +5
More advanced than what the character's used to	-1 to -5
Much more advanced than what the character's used to	-6 or worse

"Other Circumstances" penalties are cumulative with
Type Of System penalties, but in most cases the maximum
penalty the GM should impose is -10.

in the subject can easily devise more complex rules
using technologies available as of game time.

Searching For Information

Perhaps the most common use of Computer
Programming is to search for information within
a computer system or database. In the case of
publicly-available information, such as anything
posted on the Internet or World Wide Web, char-
acters probably don't even need to make Computer
Programming rolls — in that situation, a PS like
Research serves them better.

On the other hand, getting information kept in
a secured database or otherwise considered "secret,"
typically requires Computer Programming. Before
a character can search for such information, he may
have to use Computer Programming to penetrate
("hack into") the system where the information's
kept (see below). Once a character has access to the
system, he can make a Computer Programming
roll, using the modifiers from the accompanying
table. Skills such as PS: Research or PS: Information
Sciences may serve as Complementary Skills.

Searching for information may require only a
few Phases, or it may take hours — it all depends
on how difficult it is to find the information, how
much of it there is, the quality of the computer the
character uses, and so forth. The GM should set a
time to perform the task based on the Time Chart.
For each full 3 points by which the character makes
his roll (e.g., rolling an 8 when the character has an
11- Skill Roll), reduce the time required by one step
up the Time Chart.

Penetrating Computer Systems

Penetrating
secured, restricted, or
otherwise non-public
computer systems and
databases — "hacking,"
in popular parlance
(though a more accu-
rate current term would
be "cracking") — is one
of characters' most valu-
able uses for Computer
Programming. With it
they can gain access to
their enemies' comput-
ers, search classified
government computers
for valuable data, or
even engage in informa-
tion theft if they're lar-
cenusly inclined.

In game terms,
hacking typically
involves either a Com-
puter Programming roll
made by the character
at a penalty, or a Skill
Versus Skill roll pitting
the character's Computer
Programming against
the Computer Program-
ming roll of the person
or system he's trying to

defeat. (In either case, Security Systems may func-
tion as a Complementary Skill, at the GM's option;
this is particularly appropriate if the character takes
the *Only Versus Computer Security Systems* version
of that Skill [see page 78]). The accompanying table
lists the penalty, and the corresponding roll if you
prefer that method, for computer systems with vari-
ous levels of security.

Typically, attempting to penetrate computer
security requires at least 1 Hour, and may in fact
take days or weeks of laborious checking of pos-
sible passwords, efforts to bypass preliminary secu-
rity software or find "back doors" into the system,
and so forth. The GM should set a time to perform
the task based on the Time Chart. For each full 3
points by which the character makes his roll (e.g.,
rolling an 8 when the character has an 11- Skill
Roll), reduce the time required by one step up the
Time Chart. For dramatic purposes, the GM can
condense the time further as he sees fit.

In most cases, characters can access computer
systems remotely, since the systems are hooked up
to the Internet in some way. One way of increasing
the security of a computer is not to connect it to
any other system at all — to make it a "standalone."
That means the character has to gain physical
access to the computer before he can try to crack its
security and find the data he needs... and just get-
ting to it may be an adventure!

Expanded Computer Programming

In a *Dark Champions* game that emphasizes information warfare and the like, having a single *Computer Programming* Skill may not work — GMs and players may want to take technical differences into account. One of the easiest ways to do this (besides the Skill Roll penalties suggested in the *Computer Programming Modifiers Table*) is to split *Computer Programming* up into various categories (just like *Gambling* and *Survival*). The sidebar on page 68 has a sample list of subcategories, but the GM can change or add to it as he sees fit. Characters can learn any one category for 2 Character Points for a (9 + (INT/5)) roll; each additional category costs +2 Character Points, or each additional subcategory +1 Character Point; improving the roll for all categories and subcategories known costs +2 Character Points for each +1 to the roll.

CONCEALMENT

In most situations, characters should use *Concealment* to hide themselves for a long time (more than a Turn). For shorter periods of time, a character can hide himself using either *Concealment* or *Stealth* (his choice), and with the GM's permission he can use the other Skill (if he has it) as *Complementary*.

CONTORTIONIST

In *Dark Champions* campaigns, the most common use for *Contortionist* is to escape from handcuffs, ropes, and other restraints. The accompanying table lists some suggested modifiers for *Contortionist* rolls, based on the type of restraint and other factors.

CRAMMING

Cramming can add a dimension of believability to a disguise. The character can choose a subject the disguise identity should know about and *Cram* that subject so he can make conversation about it if someone questions him. This is particularly useful when the character is attempting to imitate some real person so he can infiltrate an organization or base.

CRIMINOLOGY, FORENSIC MEDICINE

Criminology is one of the most useful Skills in most *Dark Champions* campaigns — it's one of two basic Skills which allow PCs to gather information about crimes and criminals (the other is *Streetwise*). You can find information about what characters can do with this Skill (and its companion, *Forensic Medicine*), and what sort of things they can find out by using them, in Chapter Three. Players should have the GM's permission to read that section, because it contains information he may wish to keep secret.

CRYPTOGRAPHY

Once of interest only to spies, military personnel, and hobbyists, *Cryptography* has become an important subject for many people in the modern world due to the need to protect computer data and the like. While ancient methods of creating and using codes and ciphers, not to mention early

CONTORTIONIST MODIFIERS TABLE

Type Of Restraint	Modifier
Chains	
Strong/thick	-4
Weak/thin	-3
Handcuffs	
Flexible	-4
Rigid	-5
Hand restraint systems	-7
Legcuffs	-4
Plasticuffs	-5
Rope	
Thin cord or plastic	-1
Normal	-0
Straitjacket	-4
Thumbcuffs	-4
Wire	-3
Other Circumstances	
Using lubricant (oil, soap, butter, blood)	+1 to +3
Puffing up the chest	+1 to +2
Dislocating limbs* (requires EGO Roll)	+3
Injuries from previous attempts	-1 to -2

*: Deliberately dislocating a limb (or in some cases a finger) requires a successful EGO Roll (if the GM permits it at all, and he may impose penalties as desired), followed by a successful *Contortionist* roll. If the rolls succeed, the character takes 2d6 STUN (no defense), but receives a +3 bonus to all *Contortionist* rolls involving that limb (or hand) until he relocates the joint. If either of the rolls fail, the joint is not dislocated, and the character takes no STUN and receives no *Contortionist* bonuses; further attempts to dislocate that same joint are at -2 to both rolls per failed attempt. Relocating the joint requires an EGO Roll and causes another 2d6 STUN to the character. Until the character relocates the joint, he cannot use that limb or appendage in any way (or, at the GM's option, must make a DEX Roll at -4 each Phase to do so). Attacks which strike the dislocated joint or limb cause an extra +1 STUN Modifier (or +2d6 STUN for Normal damage attacks).

encoding devices such as the Enigma machine, remain viable in *Dark Champions* campaigns, in most cases *Dark Champions* characters can't make or break codes without using a computer. *Computer Programming* serves as a *Complementary Skill* in most cases.

Modern computer encryption depends on two concepts. The first is the *asymmetric key cipher*, a method of encoding a message in which the key for enciphering it differs from the key to decipher it. Prior to the 1970s, all ciphers were *symmetric*, meaning the keys had to be the same, but the rise of computers made asymmetric encoding possible. The second is *public key cryptography*, which uses a system in which one person publicly distributes the key to encrypt messages sent to him, but keeps secret the asymmetric key that decrypts them. The values of the numbers chosen for the keys are so high as to make the encryption effectively unbreakable. The best-known form of public key cryptography is PGP (Pretty Good Privacy), a free computer

COMPUTERIZED CRYPTOGRAPHY

Cryptography Roll	Bits Of Encryption	Bonus To Decrypt
8-	8 (-8 penalty to decrypt)	+4
9- to 11-	16 (-16 penalty to decrypt)	+8
12-, 13-	32 (-32 penalty to decrypt)	+16
14-, 15-	64 (-64 penalty to decrypt)	+32
16-, 17-	128 (-128 penalty to decrypt)	+64
18- to 20-	256 (-256 penalty to decrypt)	+128
21- to 25-	512 (-512 penalty to decrypt)	+256
26- to 30-	1,024 (-1,024 penalty to decrypt)	+512
31- to 35-	2,048 (-2,048 penalty to decrypt)	+1,024
...and so on		

If you use these optional expanded rules, a roll of 3 on 3d6 *does not* always succeed when a character makes a Cryptography roll. In some cases automatic success on a 3 is possible — maybe a character has a flash of insight and instantly knows how to break the code — but in the case of cryptanalysis in the age of computers, that rule defies both common and dramatic sense.

program. According to one authority, even if every personal computer in the world were put to the task of trying to crack a single message encrypted with PGP, it would take approximately 12 times the age of the universe to succeed.

Computer Cryptography Rules

In game terms, you can resolve attempts to encrypt and decrypt messages protected by computerized cryptography using the two computers' Cryptography rolls (with their operators' rolls as Complementary, if appropriate) in a Skill Versus Skill Contest. But the truly important factor here is the power and sophistication of the computer's cryptography software.

The strength of computer encryption depends on the key length, or number of bits in the keys used to encipher and decipher a message — 16 bits, 32 bits, 64 bits, and so on. The number of bits equals a negative modifier to attempts to decrypt the message without a key. For example, trying to crack a message encrypted with 256 bit encryption entails a -256 penalty! The accompanying table provides suggested guidelines for the strength of a computer's cryptographic software, based on its Cryptography roll.

Cryptographic software also provides a bonus for decrypting messages; the bonus equals half of its encryption penalty. For example, a computer with Cryptography 16- can encrypt messages so well that attempts to break them incur a -128 penalty; if it tries to decrypt a message without the key, it receives a +64 bonus. As a result, in most cases a character has no hope of breaking a cipher encoded by computers as powerful or more powerful than the ones he has access to, but some chance to break encryption created by weaker or less sophisticated computers.

The bonuses and penalties for computerized Cryptography apply only to ciphers created by computers. When used to crack a cipher generated by hand, the computer uses its standard Cryptography roll. However, the GM may, in his discretion, allow characters to apply some or all of a computer's Cryptography bonus to non-computerized codes — for example, perhaps they could enter a handwritten substitution cipher into a computer

and use the computer's power to break the code in just a few seconds by running through all possible substitutions. As always, common sense, dramatic sense, and considerations of game balance should be the deciding factors.

Of course, it's entirely possible someone will come up with a way to easily break computerized cryptography (this was the central plot device driving the movie *Sneakers*, for example). The codebreakers having caught up to the codemakers, the race will start again with further attempts to create inviolable codes... followed by attempts to decrypt them.

DEMOLITIONS

Demolitions is a Skill that no team of *Dark Champions* PCs should be without. Sooner or later, the team's going to encounter a bomb, or need to plant one, and that's when the character with Demolitions has to step up and save the day. The accompanying table lists the modifiers for working with various types of explosives; you can find descriptions of the explosives themselves beginning on page 256.

One common use of Demolitions is to disarm bombs and other explosive devices. At the GM's option, a character may (or may have to) make his

DEMOLITIONS MODIFIERS

Explosive	Modifier
Black powder	+1 to +3
Ammonium picrate	-0
ANFO	-0
Dynamite	+1 to +2
Foam explosive	-0
HMX	+1 to +2
Initiator	
Blasting cap	-3
Detonating cord	+1
Lead azide	-0
Mercury fulminate	-2
Nitroglycerin	-3
PETN	-1
RDX	+1 to +2
Plastique	+1 to +2
TNT	+1 to +2
Amatol	+1 to +2
Cyclotol	+1 to +2
Pentolite	+1 to +2
Picrotol	+1 to +2
Tetrytol	+1 to +2
Torpex	+1 to +2
Incendiary	Modifier
Fire bottle/Molotov cocktail	No roll required
Gelled gasoline	-1
Incendiary brick	-0
Magnesium	-0
Napalm	-0
Paraffin-Sawdust	-0
Thermite	-0
Thermate	-0
White Phosphorus	-2
Other Circumstances	Modifier
Simple fuse	+1
Complex fuse	-1 to -4

Demolitions roll based on DEX rather than INT when it comes to doing things like snipping the right wire or manipulating the bomb's inner workings without setting it off.

In some circumstances, a character who makes his Demolitions roll can improve the performance of the explosives he uses. For example, the GM might rule that for every point the character makes the roll by, he can add 1 Damage Class to the force of the explosion. If the character makes a particularly good roll, say by 5 or more, the bomb might become Armor Piercing. The GM decides whether to allow such bonuses, and if so how they're obtained and how they work.

DISGUISE

Many *Dark Champions* PCs take the *Disguise* Skill because it's useful for undercover work, stake-outs, and infiltrating criminal or enemy organizations. Of course, Acting and Mimicry are also helpful, and the character may need Forgery and/or Computer Programming to create an "identity trail" for the disguise (or he can simply buy a Deep Cover, if appropriate). For example, a disguise as an FBI agent won't last very long unless there are records of the "disguise identity" in the FBI's computers. The accompanying table lists some general modifiers for Disguise.

DISGUISE MODIFIERS TABLE

Circumstance	Modifier
Character disguises self as different gender	-2 or worse
Disguise identity is...	
Smaller than character	-2
Larger than character	-1
Significantly heavier than character	-2
Significantly lighter weight than character	-4
Disguise identity is...	
1-2 decades older/younger than character	-2
3-4 decades older/younger than character	-5
5+ decades older/younger than character	-9
Character must maintain disguise for...	
Several days	-1
1 Week to 1 Month	-2
Over 1 Month	-3 (or worse)
Character disguises self as specific other person	-1 to -3*

* Or worse when encountering people who know the person character is impersonating

INTERROGATION

In *Champions* or *Dark Champions: The Animated Series* campaigns, heroes do not often have Interrogation because of its unsavory connotations. Other *Dark Champions* characters are much more likely to have it and use it; some go so far as to use psychological manipulation or outright torture to obtain the information they seek. Depending on what methods the character uses, Conversation, Persuasion, SS: Pharmacology/Toxicology, SS: Psychology, and similar Skills might act as Complementary Skills to Interrogation. A character's *Reputation* Perk can also enhance his chance to successfully Interrogate someone.

KNOWLEDGE SKILLS

Knowledge and information are perhaps the most important tools available for *Dark Champions* characters in their adversaries. Information skills are arguably more important than combat skills: it doesn't matter how good a shot a PC is if he can't find out who he should shoot at and where the target is. Here are just a few examples of Knowledge Skills that *Dark Champions* characters could take.

AK: [Campaign City] Underground Systems

Characters with this KS know all about the world beneath the streets of the city: the sewers, the subway tunnels, and so forth. Assuming he's willing to brave their dangers and discomforts (the stench, the rats, the albino mutant alligators...), he can use them to travel around the city unnoticed (albeit slowly, compared to driving), and sometimes even to gain access to buildings through their waste disposal systems.

CK: [Campaign City]

Dark Champions characters often have a matchless knowledge of the city in which they live and adventure. They spend their days and nights on the street, so they know those streets intimately. They can find shortcuts other people would overlook, locate underworld bars that have no signs or posted addresses, and know the best place for cheese danish.

KS: [Campaign City] Underworld

This Knowledge Skill tells the character who's who in the underworld in the campaign city, from the lowest thug or street gang member to the most powerful mob boss. This KS is often a Complementary Skill for Streetwise.

Characters could also take a more detailed Knowledge Skill about specific types of criminals, such as KS: Burglars or KS: Serial Killers. Some of these skills may cover criminals of that type from all over the country, not just from the campaign city.

KS: [Dark Champions Subculture]

A Subculture KS is similar to the *Streetwise* Skill, but deals only with the world of a particular subculture or isolated/secretive group of people. *Streetwise* doesn't always work well among some groups of people because those who belong to such a subculture are rather insular and closed-mouthed about it when talking to outsiders.

A successful Subculture KS roll allows a hero to know about the subculture, including its practices and practitioners, places where members of the subculture congregate, the subculture's bodies of lore, who's on top in any competitions unique to the subculture, current affairs among members of the subculture, and so forth. Additionally, he can use the subculture's grapevine to hear about unusual events and happenings in that subculture, and to send messages to other people in that subculture. For example, if a hero hears that an assassin used an interesting but little-known poison to kill a politician, a successful KS: The Espionage World roll might let him figure out who can reveal the culprit's identity to him (or, simply, who the culprit is).



A Subculture Knowledge can act as a Complementary Skill to Disguise or Bureaucratics rolls related to that subculture. However, based on the character's origin, his knowledge of some aspects of a subculture may be limited, imposing penalties on the roll. For example, a character with KS: Law Enforcement World based on his former job as a New York cop might know very little about how policemen in the United Kingdom act.

Here are some subcultures *Dark Champions* PCs might have knowledge of:

KS: The Espionage World: A character with this KS knows a lot about spies, spying, and intelligence agencies worldwide. He can identify distinctive assassination and tradecraft styles, knows about different types of espionage gadgets (such as tie-tack cameras and ballpoint pen guns; see page 286), and knows who's important in the various intelligence agencies (and what those agencies are up to, roughly speaking). Depending on how much he makes the roll by, he may know drop points for secret information, that a particular person is an agent on a mission, what certain code-words mean, or other sensitive intelligence data.

KS: The Law Enforcement World: A character with this KS knows how lawmen and law enforcement agencies work. The skill covers local police departments, the FBI, the DEA, and other such agencies. The character knows where cops hang out when they're off-duty, what police signals and codes mean, and maybe even when a big arrest is coming down. He also knows about the organization and structure of law enforcement agencies, and their respective jurisdictions.

KS: The Military/Mercenary/Terrorist World: Characters with this KS know all about the military culture and how to get by in it. Furthermore, they have contact with the worldwide mercenary network and the world of terrorism. This Skill allows a character to identify a NPC's military rank, find out which mercenaries are currently in the country, and know which terrorists have enough skill with Demolitions to build the type of bomb that exploded at the airport last month. Characters can, if they wish, buy more specialized versions of this KS (such as just KS: The Military World).

KS: The Vice World: A character with this KS knows all about the seamiest side of the city — the drug and sex trades. He know all about illegal drugs and how they are manufactured, distributed, concealed, and sold (though he doesn't know any of the science behind it all; that requires Pharmacology/Toxicology). He also knows where the sex trade is plied in the city, who the big players are, and how it functions.

KS: Electrical Systems

Characters with this KS know how buildings, vehicles, and the like are wired for power. They cannot install wiring or electronic systems (that requires PS: Electrician), or design such systems (that requires SS: Electronic Engineering), but they know how to tap into a building's power, disrupt that power, and so forth. KS: Electrical Systems can act as a Complementary Skill for Electronics and Security Systems in some situations.

KS: Illegal Arms Market

Characters with this KS, which may be a Complementary Skill to Streetwise, know all about the underground arms market: how to find it, who's involved in it, what's available for sale, and what black market arms cost.

KS: Military Science

Characters with this KS know how military organizations are structured, operated, maintained, and act; how military activities are conducted; the composition of the world's military forces; and the resources possessed by and weapons and equipment used by those forces. It may act as a Complementary Skill for Tactics or KS: Military/Mercenary/Terrorist World.

KS: [Organized Crime Group]

This Knowledge Skill will give the character in-depth knowledge of a particular organized crime group: the Mafia, the yakuza, criminal motorcycle gangs, or whichever group the character prefers (see pages 290-302 for some possibilities). The character knows who belongs to that group; the group's organizational structure, culture, and customs; what sort of crimes the group commits; and how to contact the group. KS: [Organized Crime Group] is often a Complementary Skill for Streetwise in circumstances involving that particular group.

KS: Scents

Some *Dark Champions* characters have spent a lot of time memorizing the distinctive odors of poisons, perfumes, and other substances. This sort of information can come in handy for solving mysteries and tracking down criminals. Characters who want to have this ability should buy KS: Scents with a roll that matches the character's Smell PER Roll (for which he may buy Enhanced Sense, since he's trained his olfactory senses so exquisitely).

KNOWLEDGE SKILL PENALTIES

As a rough guideline for the effects of the "scale" in a *Dark Champions* campaign, GMs can use the following ranking of magnitudes of knowledge. Figure out which category the character's KS falls into, then what category the fact he wants to know is most appropriate for. For each step up or down the list, the character suffers a -5 penalty to know the fact. The GM may alter this penalty for facts he feels are particularly noteworthy or obscure. Thus, if a character has KS: World History, he suffers a -20 penalty for trying to remember an average fact about an event that took place in some town.

World
Continent/Region
Nation/Country
Province/State/City
Town/Village/Locality

Gamemasters may not want to use this system, or may want to significantly reduce the penalties, in campaigns with a more "cinematic" feel.

KS: Telephone And Utilities Systems

A character with this KS knows all about the telephone, power, and related systems in the campaign city (and often by extension how they work in other cities). He knows how to shut off power to portions of the city, where the major telephone trunk lines are, and so forth. This KS is often a Complementary Skill for Bugging when the character places a wiretap. Characters can purchase more specialized forms of this Skill, such as KS: Telephone Systems.

KS: World Criminals

This KS is similar to KS: [Campaign City] Underworld, but it covers criminals all over the world. The more obscure a criminal is, the less the character is likely to know of him (*i.e.*, the GM should assess penalties to the roll if a character wants to know about little-known criminals from far-flung locales). This Skill can be particularly useful if foreign criminals decide to set up shop in America, when dealing with Interpol, when the character wants to infiltrate a worldwide criminal organization, and so forth.

LANGUAGES

Spies and Green Berets often find themselves in foreign lands where knowing the language makes it easier for them to complete their missions. Street vigilantes may need to know Italian, Russian, or the like to eavesdrop on the conversations of ethnic organized crime figures (or to infiltrate such groups in disguise), and street gang slang is often virtually incomprehensible to speakers of normal English.

Characters can purchase any one type of gang slang for 1 point. These "languages" are so simple that 1 point is enough to buy Idiomatic fluency, but characters must purchase each different type of gang slang separately.

Clever PCs (or criminals) might even create their own battle-language or coded commands so they can coordinate maneuvers and attacks. If each member of a group of characters spends 1 or 2 Character Points each for a battle-code, the group can have an almost foolproof secret communications system. This language can be as elaborate as the characters desire (*i.e.*, they could get by with a simple 1-point code, or could invent a complex 3-point language).

LOCKPICKING

Dark Champions PCs often need to sneak into someone's business, compound, home, office, car, or safe to look for evidence and gather useful information. The *Lockpicking* Skill is crucial to this sort of breaking-and-entering activity (so is Security Systems; see below).

These situations also offer the GM an opportunity for a little roleplaying... and a chance to make the players sweat a little. Rather than just telling the players that there's a lock to be picked, the GM can describe the type of lock(s). Then, the heroes have to figure out how best to approach the problem before they can make their Skill Rolls. The accompanying table lists suggested modifiers for various types of locks, but the GM can change them

**LIBRARIES AND
DATABASES**

Characters who can't afford to buy a true Base, complete with labs and libraries to help them figure things out, can still own a good library or database by buying bonuses to KSs, PSs, and similar Skills with the -1 Limitation *Must Have Access To Library [or Database] And Time To Do Research*. This is a good way for a character to simulate possession of, for example, an extensive library on Criminology: he can buy +5 to his *Criminology* Skill for only 5 points, but he has to have access to the library to get the bonus. A character should buy this bonus separately for each KS, SS, or other Skill he wants to use it for; to obtain general bonuses to any of a group of Skills he should buy Skill Levels (see page 80).

LOCKPICKING MODIFIERS TABLE

Type Of Lock	Modifier	Examples
Combination Locks		
Electronic key lock	-4	Some bank doors
Keypad/pushbutton locks	-3	Highly secured doors
Magnetic lock/card lock	-3	Highly secured doors
Tumbler Locks		
Disk tumbler lock	-7	Safes and vaults
Double-sided disk tumbler	-2	Showcases, some vending machines
Keyed disk tumbler lock	-3	General purposes, gaming machines
Multiple row pin tumbler	-3	Some burglar alarms, slot machines
Mushroom/spool pin tumbler	-2	Some bank doors, some padlocks
Pin tumbler lock (basic)	-0	House doors, some padlocks
Side-bar wafer lock	-0	Most cars
Twisting pin tumbler lock	-2	House doors, some padlocks
Wafer tumbler lock	-0	File cabinets, garage doors, desks
Handcuffs		
Single-locked	-2	
Double-locked	-3	

Alternately, the GM can ignore the type of lock, and simply base the penalty (or, if preferred, the opposing roll for a Skill Versus Skill Contest) on the quality of the lock, described generically:

Type Of Lock	Modifier	Roll
Poor quality	+1	8-
Average quality	-0 to -3	11-
Above Average quality	-4 to -5	14-
High quality	-6 to -7	17-
Very high quality	-8 to -9	20-
Superb quality	-10	23-

as desired (for example, he could make the penalty worse for a particularly high-quality version of a given type of lock).

MARTIAL ARTS

Martial Arts is a common Skill among virtually all types of *Dark Champions* characters. Special forces soldiers learn Commando Training, while spies, costumed vigilantes, and their ilk may study any of hundreds of styles, or create their own.

Since firearms play an important role in the genre, characters sometimes use the Ranged Martial Arts rules from *The Ultimate Martial Artist* to create gun-based martial arts. For example:

Zen Riflery

This fighting style is best referred to as “the art of the gun.” Its tongue-in-cheek name is a joking reference to Kyujutsu/Kyudo (“Zen archery”). Some practitioners call it Gun Fu or Woojutsu. It’s a modern-day refinement on several more or less extinct Japanese arts, including Jukenjutsu (the art of the bayonet), Hojutsu (the art of the arquebus), and Kajutsu (the art of firearms and explosives, also known as Kayakujutsu and Teppojutsu).

Zen Riflery cannot take the *Style Distinctive* Feature.

ZEN RIFLERY

Usable with Clubs Weapons Group; Clubs Weapon
Element is Free

Maneuver	Phs	Cost	OCV	DCV	Notes
Block	½	4	+2	+2	Block, Abort
Dodge	½	4	—	+5	Dodge All Attacks, Abort
Smash/Thrust	½	4	+0	+2	Weapon +2 DC Strike
Takeaway	½	5	+0	+0	Grab Weapon, +10 STR to take weapon away

Usable with Pistols Weapons Group; Pistols Weapon
Element is Free

Maneuvers	Phs	Cost	OCV	DCV	Rng	Damage/Effect
Accurate Shot	½	4	+2	-2	+2	Weapon Strike
Basic Shot	½	4	+0	+0	+2	Weapon +2 DC Strike
Defensive Shot	½	3	-1	+2	+0	Weapon Strike
Distance Shot	½	5	+0	-2	+6	Weapon Strike, +1 Segment
Diving Shot	½	3	+0	+2	+1	Weapon Strike, Half Move Required, You Fall
Far Shot	½	5	+1	-1	+4	Weapon Strike
Leg Shot	½	3	+0	-1	+0	Weapon +2 DC Strike, Throw
Offensive Shot	½	4	-1	-1	+0	Weapon +4 DC Strike
Quick Shot	½	4	+1	+0	+0	Weapon +2 DC Strike
Ranged Disarm	½	4	+0	+0	+0	Disarm, +15 STR to roll
Trained Shot	½	4	+2	+0	+0	Weapon Strike

Skills

Combat Skill Levels
Demolitions*
KS: Gun Accessories
KS: Zen Riflery
Missile Deflection (dodging bullets)
PS: Gunsmith
PS: Create Ammunition
TF: Parachuting
WF: Pole Arms (for Bayonet)
WF: Small Arms*
WF: other modern weapons
Weaponsmith

Elements

Weapons: +1 Use Art with Bayonet
Barehanded +1 Use Takeaway maneuver Barehanded

The “Club” referred to above is the gun itself, used as a hand-to-hand weapon. In some cases this can damage the gun. Practitioners can also learn special techniques for using the bayonet on a rifle (they may also study true Jukenjutsu if they wish; see page 32 of *The Ultimate Martial Artist*).

Optional Rules: The Smash/Thrust takes a 2d6+1 Hit Location roll. The Leg Shot takes a 2d6+7 hit location roll. All other offensive maneuvers take a 3d6 Hit Location roll.

Special Abilities: Gun Fu practitioners have developed a wide variety of abilities to simulate their skill with firearms. See pages 107-23 for plenty of examples.

PARACHUTING

Parachuting is a new Skill for use in Military Action campaigns and other games where characters may frequently need to jump out of perfectly good airplanes. If used, it replaces the two TFs pertaining to parachuting (though the GM might retain TF: Basic Parachuting for characters who just want some familiarity with the activity). If the GM would rather not have Parachuting function as its own Skill, he can use this information for characters who have TF: Advanced Parachuting, letting them make DEX Rolls as appropriate.

Parachuting is an Agility Skill; it costs 3 Character Points for a 9 + (DEX/5) or less roll, +1 to the roll for each +2 Character Points. A character with Parachuting knows about the different methods of parachuting and how to perform them safely, how to prepare and use parachuting equipment, and so forth. The Parachuting Table lists some general modifiers for Parachuting rolls in addition to those mentioned in the text for specific types of jumps; Encumbrance penalties also apply if the character carries too much gear.

PARACHUTING TABLE

Condition	Modifier
Airborne maneuvering (to get into formation or the like)	-2 or more
Difficult drop zone	
Very Small (less than 4" radius)	-4
Small (4-8" radius)	-2
Hard to reach/surrounded by obstacles	-2 or more
Nighttime jump	-2
Weather, adverse (rain, etc.)	-2 or more
Winds	
High winds	-2
Very high winds	-4

Basic Parachuting

Most civilian or sport parachute dives take place from no higher than about 12,000 feet (3,658"), with the jumper carrying little to no extra equipment or gear. The character only needs to make a standard roll to ensure that his chute opens safely and he lands without incident (for routine jumps, the GM may not even require a roll). If this roll fails, disastrous consequences could result. The worst is that the chute fails to open; in this case, allow another roll to see if the reserve parachute opens. If it does, the character is fine, but suffers a -4 on rolls to steer (if the GM allows steering at all).

If the reserve chute fails to open (or the character doesn't have one), he may take an all too quick and deadly trip to the ground (in which case, the falling rules apply). But a chute failing to open isn't necessarily the only result of a failed Parachuting roll. Other possible consequences for a failed roll include: the character hurts himself when he lands; the character lands in an awkward or uncomfortable place (stuck in a tree, in a bog, or the like); the character gets snarled in his chute when he lands and has to spend 2d6 Phases freeing himself; or the character *really* misses his target

landing area. A badly failed roll — by 4 or more — should definitely mean a very unpleasant result for the character, up to and including death due to "sudden deceleration trauma."

Assuming the character's parachute opens properly, he can steer toward his target "drop zone" (designated landing area). Parachutes aren't highly steerable, though modern ones (from the mid-1960s and after) are much better in this regard than versions used earlier in the century. A character can make a Parachuting roll to land in his drop zone; he suffers a basic -2 penalty, with another -1 (or worse) if the winds are particularly strong or fierce. Success means he's in the drop zone (and the better the success, the closer he is to dead center); failure means he misses (and the greater the failure, the further away he is).

Advanced Parachuting

Advanced parachuting techniques are used by the military for various insertion missions.

MAMO: The basic parachute jump associated with most military operations is a *MAMO*, or middle altitude, middle opening. The jump takes place from 500 to 1200 feet (152" to 366"); a static line opens the chute almost immediately. Completing a *MAMO* properly requires a Parachuting roll with no modifiers. Due to the short fall distance, the parachutist has relatively little ability to steer toward the "drop zone" (designated landing area); any rolls made to steer suffer a -2 in addition to other penalties.

LALO: A *LALO* (low altitude, low opening) jump takes place from 300 to 500 feet (91" to 152"). Despite the fact that the parachute is pulled instantly by the static line, the jumper is likely to suffer a rough landing... and if the main chute fails, there's no time to pull the reserve. Offsetting these risks is the fact that the aircraft and jumpers evade radar by flying so close to the surface. Completing a *LALO* successfully requires a Parachuting roll at -4 (this is in addition to the standard roll to see if the parachute opens, and so forth). For every point by which the character fails the roll, he takes 2d6 Normal Damage (rolled as a Low Shot for Hit Location purposes, if desired).

HALO: A *HALO* (high altitude, low opening) jump begins at 25,000 to 30,000 feet (7,620" to 9,144"), but the jumper doesn't open his chute until 2,000 feet (607") or below. *HALO* allows the aircraft to fly above the range of surface-to-air missiles and the like. Furthermore, the jumper has no radar profile (making him very difficult, at best, for anyone on the ground to detect), and by making a Parachuting roll the jumper can "track" — steer himself to a drop zone up to about 36 miles from where he jumped (thus helping to disguise his ultimate destination). But the jumper must have special breathing and heating equipment to survive the velocity and frigid air, and if he loses his aerodynamic stability (not an unheard-of thing for someone falling at 120 miles per hour), he'll probably never be able to open his parachute and will fall to his death. Performing a *HALO* successfully requires a Parachut-

ing roll at -4 (this is in addition to the standard roll to see if the parachute opens, and so forth). Steering to the proper location requires a Parachuting roll with a penalty of -1 per three miles “tracked.” For every point by which the character fails the roll, he takes 2d6 Normal Damage (rolled as a Low Shot for Hit Location purposes, if desired).

HAHO: A *HAHO* (high altitude, high opening) jump begins at 25,000 to 30,000 feet (7,620” to 9,144”), with the jumper opening his parachute almost immediately (if it’s not opened by static line). The chute is specially designed to function something like a hang-glider; it allows for maximum steering ability (this eliminates the standard -2 penalty on Parachuting rolls to steer), and allows the jumper to travel up to several dozen miles from where he jumped. (This makes it possible to, for example, jump in friendly territory but then drift into enemy territory.) Steering to the proper location requires a Parachuting roll with a penalty of -1 per five miles “tracked.” The jumper requires the same equipment has HALO, and exposes himself to many of the same risks. Performing a HAHO successfully requires a Parachuting roll at -2 (this is in addition to the standard roll to see if the parachute opens, and so forth). For every point by which the character fails the roll, he takes 2d6 Normal Damage (rolled as a Low Shot for Hit Location purposes, if desired).

A character making a high-altitude jump without oxygen or heating gear exposes himself to oxygen deprivation (see the rules for drowning on page 424 of the *HERO System 5th Edition, Revised*) and to temperatures of approximately -35 to -65 Celsius (this inflicts 2d6 NND damage on Segments 3, 6, 9, and 12). Given falling speed and temperature, it’s not unknown for a jumper’s goggles to freeze and shatter, and his eyes to freeze shut (if he has no goggles, his eyes almost certainly freeze shut). A blinded parachutist suffers a -3 penalty on all rolls, and must make a roll at -6 just to land safely.

PARACHUTE

Effect: Gliding 6”; Limited Movement
Target/Area Affected: Self
Duration: Constant
Range: Self
Charges: 1 Recoverable Continuing Charge
Breakability: 1 DEF

Description: This is the standard modern parachute used with the *Parachuting* Skill.

Game Information: *Gliding 6” (6 Active Points); OAF (-1), Limited Movement (character cannot gain altitude, and must move at least 12” downward for every 1” forward; -½), 1 Recoverable Continuing Charge (lasts until character hits the ground or chute is fouled; -¾). Total cost: 2 points.*

Options:

1) **Parawing:** This is the chute referenced above under HAHO; it’s designed to function something like a hang-glider and allows for maximum steering

ability. Add +2 to Parachuting (4 Active Points); Only To Counteract The Standard -2 Steering Penalty (-1). Total cost: 2 points; total cost of gadget 4 points.

PARAMEDICS

In a genre which makes heavy use of Killing Attacks and has no magical or superhuman methods of healing, Paramedics is an extremely useful Skill. It can also help the GM keep his scenarios running smoothly by allowing characters to use it to heal minor amounts of BODY damage they suffer (see page 190).

PENALTY SKILL LEVELS

Penalty Skill Levels are an excellent way to represent a character’s skill with guns (or other attacks) without simply increasing his overall OCV (which may have game balance consequences). A few Targeting Skill Levels, Range Skill Levels, or other PSLs can add distinctiveness and flavor to a character’s combat style as well — though the GM should be wary of letting a character buy too many of them (especially Targeting Skill Levels), lest they make the character unbalancingly effective.

The standard *HERO System* rules limit Penalty Skill Levels to applying only to OCV penalties (such as the Range Modifier). With the GM’s permission, a character could buy PSLs to counter similar penalties for Skills — for example, PSLs with Paramedics to counteract the penalties imposed by the size of the wound being treated. The player and GM should work together to determine which cost category for PSLs is most appropriate for such an ability. Also with the GM’s permission, characters might be allowed to buy 3-point PSLs to counteract some types of DCV penalties, but this should be rare and the GM should make sure “defensive PSLs” don’t unbalance the campaign. (The *Environmental Movement* Talent is built this way.)

Characters cannot buy Penalty Skill Levels to counteract the standard OCV penalty imposed by a Combat Maneuver, such as the -3 OCV for a Grab By. If a character wants to buy PSLs with an attack, he must define some form of negative OCV modifier they counteract — such as the Range Modifier or Hit Location modifiers. If he wants to counteract the OCV penalty associated with a Combat Maneuver, he should buy 2-point Combat Skill Levels with that Maneuver.

If a character buys Targeting Skill Levels, they apply to any and all Hit Location penalties. At the GM’s option, they might also apply to counteract (or at least reduce) the OCV penalty for attacking targets smaller than human size (*HERO System 5th Edition, Revised*, pages 375, 382).

Characters cannot buy Penalty Skill Levels to counteract the “Unfamiliar Weapon” penalty (which would effectively give them Weapon Familiarity with all weapons for only 9 Character Points).

Recoil Skill Levels

In campaigns using the Recoil rules (page 194), characters can buy Penalty Skill Levels to counteract the Recoil penalty. Recoil Skill Levels help to counteract the OCV penalty for Autofire, Rapid Fire, or Multifire against a single target (they

have no effect when the character makes shots against multiple targets). Because they're PSLs, Recoil Skill Levels don't improve the character's OCV until after his first shot against a single target — all they can do is counteract some or all of the OCV penalty for Recoil.

Limited Penalty Skill Levels

Because the rules don't allow characters to put Limitations on Penalty Skill Levels costing less than 3 points apiece, a character may find himself in a situation where it costs more to buy Limited PSLs with a particular attack than it would if he just bought less expensive PSLs — even though the cheaper PSLs are *less* restricted. In that case, the GM may, at his option, allow the character to buy the less expensive PSLs and treat them as if they were Limited, without actually applying the Limitation to them.

POWER

Many of the Super-Skills on pages 106-49 use a form of the *Power* Skill called *Shooting Tricks* (sometimes also known as *Gunfire Tricks*, *Trick Shooting*, or the like). This represents a character's skill at making difficult shots; it's based on DEX. Characters who specialize in other types of Ranged attacks (such as archery or thrown knives) can change the name of the Skill to better reflect their preferred method of combat.

PROFESSIONAL SKILLS

Professional Skills can be as important to *Dark Champions* characters as KSs. Here are a few that commonly occur in the genre:

Appraise

A character with this PS knows how to evaluate the worth and quality of items of value, such as artwork, jewelry, gemstones, electronic goods, weapons, and the like (in short, the sorts of things that tend to be stolen, pawned, or traded on the black market). If the character makes his roll exactly, he estimates the value within 3d6% (the GM decides whether the estimate is too low or too high). If he makes it by 1, he's within 2d6%; if by 2, within 1d6%; if by 3 or more, he knows the exact value. If he misses the roll, he wildly mis-estimates the item's value, to his detriment.

Tradecraft

"Tradecraft" is an espionage term for the general skills of a field agent. In a "realistic" campaign, it governs things like knowing how to find and use information drops, how to communicate surreptitiously with one's handlers, how to write reports in the agency's preferred style and lingo, how to scan a crowd to spot potential enemies, the best place to sit in a room for safety and/or observation, and so forth — relatively mundane, but nevertheless important, tasks. In "cinematic" games, it has a much broader scope and vaguer restrictions; it could encompass low-level uses of many Skills (Demolitions, Forgery, Lockpicking, Shadowing, and more).

If desired, the GM could let PCs take similar PSs for other professions: PS: Vigilante; PS: Investigator; PS: Policecraft; PS: Soldier; and so on.

Professional Skills As Skill Combinations

Professional Skills are a good way for characters built on relatively small numbers of Character Points to obtain a wide variety of Skills cheaply if the GM is willing to, in effect, combine several Skills into one PS. For example, instead of spending a lot of points on Cryptography, Forgery, Lockpicking, Security Systems, and other espionage related Skills, a character could simply buy *PS: Spy* with an extremely high roll — at least 20-, possibly more. Then he uses the Extraordinary Skill Rolls rules to govern rolls with the Skill. Even though the character probably suffers significant penalties for using such a broad PS for some of the precision work normally done with Skills like Lockpicking, with such a high roll the odds are the character will often make the roll.

RAPID ATTACK

This is an excellent Skill for many *Dark Champions* games, particularly those that emphasize fast-paced, "cinematic" combat. If the GM wants to encourage that sort of behavior, he might even consider reducing the cost of this Skill to 3 Character Points.

SCIENCE SKILLS

Dark Champions characters can use scientific methods and knowledge in their war on crime. In addition to the many forensics-oriented SSs mentioned in Chapter Three, here are some an action hero might consider buying:

SS: Accounting

Remember Al Capone? He wasn't convicted of murder, robbery, or bootlegging — he was sent to prison for tax evasion. The FBI and other law enforcement agencies have continued to use this sort of tactic in fighting crime. A skilled accountant can examine a suspected crime figure's books to see if he's been hiding or laundering funds. Accounting can also help provide clues as to how large a criminal organization is and what "subsidiaries" it has.

SS: Criminology

Criminology is the sociological study of crime (unlike the Skill *Criminology*, which has more to do with criminalistics, forensics, and investigative procedures). SS: Criminology tells the character what causes people to become criminals, how criminals act, what criminal organizations are like, and what the crime patterns in a particular city or country are. *Dark Champions* PCs may be able to use SS: Criminology to predict crime trends, where a killer will strike next, and so forth. However, SS: Criminology is neither infallible, nor a crystal ball — it cannot provide a lot of detail, and a failed roll often leads the character down the wrong trail.

SS: Graphology

Graphology is the science of determining a person's personality and mental state from his handwriting. It's useful for analyzing ransom and suicide notes, serial killers' letters to the newspaper, a master criminal's journal, and so forth. The GM may allow characters to use appropriate forms of



the *Forgery* Skill this way (at -3 to the roll), or he may require them to buy this ability as an SS.

SS: Pharmacology/Toxicology

Pharmacology is the study of drugs and their effect on the human body; Toxicology is a branch of pharmacology dealing specifically with poisons and toxins. Characters who want to be master poisoners, to analyze and cure drug and poisoning victims, or to know all about how illegal drugs are synthesized and function should buy this SS. In some circumstances, SS: Human Biology would be a Complementary Skill for Pharmacology/Toxicology rolls. (Characters who only wish to know about illegal drug manufacturing and trafficking can buy KS: The Vice World instead.)

SS: Psychology(/Criminal Psychology)

Characters with SS: Psychology understand something of the workings of the human personality. To a limited extent, they can predict how people will act, what makes them act the way they do, and so forth. *Dark Champions* PCs will primarily be concerned with Psychology for the insight it can give them on the criminal mind. If they desire, they can specialize in criminal psychology by buying this Skill as SS: Psychology/Criminal Psychology. This should give them a slight bonus to figuring out the criminal mind, but a slight minus to their roll in other cases.

SECURITY SYSTEMS

Security Systems is as important for infiltration, burglary, and similar activities as Lockpicking — sometimes *more* important. Getting into a secured facility may be pointless if the characters can't do it without tripping alarms.

Locating Security Devices

The first use of Security Systems in most situations is to find security devices — after all, a character can't disarm or avoid a device he's unaware of! In many cases, the GM should allow characters to locate security devices without a roll, because they're prominently placed as a way of discouraging intruders.

However, sometimes a device's designer wants to hide it — either he doesn't want intruders to know they've tripped an alarm, or the device is intended to harm anyone who tries to enter an area, open a locked object, or the like. In this case, the character has to make a Concealment roll to find the device; Security Systems serves as a Complementary Skill.

The GM may impose penalties on a roll to locate a security device based on the skill with which it was installed. In this case the installer's Security System roll to properly install the device becomes the target for the character to beat in a Skill Versus Skill Contest. Alternately, the GM can assign a penalty to finding a device to represent the skill with which it was installed, or the nature of the device.

SECURITY SYSTEMS MODIFIERS TABLE

Type Of System	Modifier
Camera	-2
Electric eyebeam, single	-0 to -2
Electric eyebeam, multiple	-1 to -3
Fingerprint analyzer	
Standard	-5
Vitaprint analyzer	-5
Palmprint analyzer	-5
Infrared sensor	-5
Magnetic switch	-0
Motion detector	-5
Plunger switch	-0
Pressure plate	-3
Proximity sensor	N/A (not defeatable remotely)
Retina scanner	-6
Seismic detector	-5
Vibration sensor	-4
Voiceprint analyzer	-4
Window foil	+1

Alternately, the GM can ignore the type of system, and simply base the penalty (or, if preferred, the opposing roll for a Skill Versus Skill Contest) on the quality of the device, described generically:

Security Systems	Security Systems	Roll
Type Of Lock	Modifier	
Poor quality	+1	8-
Average quality	-0 to -3	11-
Above Average quality	-4 to -5	14-
High quality	-6 to -7	17-
Very high quality	-8 to -9	20-
Superb quality	-10	23-

Disabling/Avoiding Security Devices

After a character finds a security device, he can attempt to bypass, disable, or avoid it with a Security Systems roll (this is separate from the roll to find the device). For ease of reference, the term “disable” refers to any means of using the *Security Systems* Skill to avoid the effects of a security device, even if the character doesn’t literally cause the device to not function or malfunction. The Security Systems Modifiers Table lists a wide variety of security devices and the penalties for each, but the GM can change them as desired (for example, he could make the penalty worse for a particularly high-quality version of a given security device). (For details on a few of these devices, see page 285.) Complementary Skills for disabling security devices include Computer Programming, Electronics, and/or Mechanics, depending on the type of device.

Computer Security

Some characters, such as hackers, only want to buy Security Systems to represent their knowledge of, and ability to bypass or defeat, the security software in computers. In short, they want Security Systems only to use it as a Complementary Skill with Computer Programming. They can buy Security Systems with the Limitation *Only Versus Computer Security Systems* (-½).

SHADOWING

Many *Dark Champions* characters, particularly vigilantes, investigators/detectives, and spies, use Shadowing to gather information about people: where they go; who they meet with; and so forth. Terrorists and assassins use it to determine a target’s regular patterns of movement so they can ambush him.

The accompanying table lists some general modifiers both for following people, and for trying to spot or lose a tail. The “anti-tailing precautions” referred to in the table are active measures designed to reveal or lose a tail, such as entering a store from the front and exiting from the back, making a U-turn and walking back the way one came, loitering, and so forth. “Multiple-tail techniques” refer to Shadowing someone with a group of two or more persons, making it easier to hide each individual’s involvement in the tail.

Depending on the situation, an appropriate Area Knowledge, City Knowledge, or other Knowledge Skill may act as a Complementary Skill Roll for Shadowing.

Static Surveillance

As mentioned on page 70 of the *HERO System 5th Edition, Revised* rulebook, and above under *Bugging*, characters can also use Shadowing to establish and maintain static surveillance of a particular location — in other words, to conduct a “stakeout.” This aspect of Shadowing also allows a character to use direct, long-range surveillance devices such as parabolic microphones; anything more complicated (such as bugs, wiretaps, or advanced radios) requires Bugging or Systems Operation.

The modifiers listed for standard Shadowing

SHADOWING MODIFIERS TABLE

Following A Subject	
General Modifiers	Modifier
Subject takes “anti-tailing precautions”	-2 to -7
Shadower can easily hide from subject’s view	+1 to +3
Shadowing On Foot	
Lots of people to “blend in” with	Modifier
Few or no other people around; character may “stand out”	+1 to +3
	-1 to -5
Vehicular/Mounted Shadowing	
Lots of traffic to “blend in” with	Modifier
Little to no traffic; following vehicle may “stand out”	+1 to +3
	-1 to -5
Multiple-Tail Techniques	
Having 3-4 shadowers	Modifier
Having 5-8 shadowers	+1
Having 9+ shadowers	+2
	+3
Spotting And Losing A Tail	
Circumstance	Modifier*
Taking “anti-tailing precautions”	+2 to +7
Tailing character is conspicuous	
Noteworthy appearance (unusually tall or heavy, COM 6 or less or 13+, and so on)	Modifier
Has relevant Distinctive Features	+1 to +2
Tailing vehicle is conspicuous (unusual make or color, and so on)	+2 to +5
	+2 to +3
Proximity	
Tailing character has to stick close to the subject	Modifier
Tailing character can maintain his distance	+1 to +2
Tailing character can inconspicuously alter his appearance during the tail	+0 to -1
	-1 to -3

*: These modifiers are to the subject’s Shadowing or PER Roll to detect, confirm, or lose the tail.

generally don’t apply to static surveillance, since the shadower has more opportunity to find the best location to observe from and remain there as inconspicuously as possible. If he stands out in the neighborhood (he’s of an unusual race, dresses in a noticeably different way, or the like), persons trying to spot him get a +1 to +3 bonus on their Shadowing or PER Rolls; if he blends into the setting, the subject may suffer a -1 to -3 penalty.

Failed Shadowing Rolls

Generally speaking, a failed Shadowing roll means one (or more) of three things:

1. The character lost the subject (the subject deliberately or accidentally did something that allowed him to “get away from” the character; the character has to go to the bathroom or looks away, and the subject is gone when he returns; or the like).
2. The character revealed himself to, or was otherwise somehow “spotted” by, the subject. (In this case, the subject may engage in countersurveillance, or he may simply take steps to make the character’s efforts useless.)
3. The character Shadowed the subject properly, but nevertheless failed to gather the information he sought (for example, maybe he wanted the subject



to lead him to a crimelord's headquarters, but the subject didn't go there).

In most cases, if the character fails the roll by 1-3, only one of the failure results applies. If he fails it by 4 or more, two or three of them could apply. The GM decides how many apply, and which ones. For the sake of drama, "lost the subject" is often the best choice (since it gives the characters the chance to try again), but "subject spots the character" can lead to exciting chase scenes (or even combat).

If the GM rules that a failed roll means the subject detected the Shadower, then the tail may continue, but all further Shadowing rolls must be made at a penalty equal to the amount by which the character failed the initial roll. This represents the subject's becoming suspicious, taking precautions, and the like. For example, suppose Blade fails his Shadowing roll to follow Pokerface by 3. The GM decides this means Pokerface has spotted Blade and become suspicious that he's being tailed. All further rolls by Blade and/or his teammates to follow Pokerface are at a -3 penalty (in addition to any other modifiers).

If the character used Shadowing to try to spot or lose a tail, a missed roll means he failed to do so. His actions may alert the tail that the tail has been detected (or that the character suspects a tail).

SKILL LEVELS

Characters cannot buy 5-point Skill Levels with "all Background Skills." Instead, they must apply a 5-point Level to one type of Background Skill: KSs, PSs, or SSs.

Limited Skill Levels

Because the rules don't allow characters to put Limitations on Skill Levels costing less than 3 points apiece, a character may find himself in a situation where it costs more to buy Limited Skill Levels with a particular ability than it would if he just bought less expensive Skill Levels — even though the cheaper Skill Levels are *less* restricted. In that case, the GM may, at his option, allow the character to buy the less expensive Skill Levels and treat them as if they were Limited, without actually applying the Limitation to them.

STEALTH

Stealth is the action hero's friend. With it he can sneak up on a guard unobserved so he's in position to knock the guard out before he can raise the alarm, creep quietly through a master criminal's secret fortress to reach the control room without being detected, or blend into the shadows to hide from his enemies.

Some costumed vigilantes and similar characters are said to have a "unique knowledge of the city" (*i.e.*, very high City Knowledge rolls). With the GM's permission, characters like this can, in some situations, use their CK roll as a Complementary Skill for Stealth. If the character is trying to escape pursuers by hiding in the city environment, a CK roll tells him the best place to hide in the area, and can thus improve his Stealth roll.

In most situations, characters should use Concealment, not Stealth, to hide themselves for a long time (more than a Turn). For shorter periods of time, a character can hide himself using either Concealment or Stealth (his choice), and with the GM's permission he can use the other Skill (if he has it) as Complementary.

Stealth And Sense Groups

Stealth most commonly affects the Sight and Hearing Sense Groups. However, technically it applies to *all* Senses, including unusual ones such as Combat Sense and Danger Sense, unless the GM rules otherwise based on considerations of game balance, common sense, and dramatic sense. For example, an ordinary human probably couldn't use Stealth to avoid the Smell/Taste Group Senses of a dog, since there's no real way to "hide" body scent. However, the GM might allow it if the character could, for example, rub himself with something to disguise or conceal his normal body scent. Similarly, hiding from Unusual Senses or Senses defined as belonging to no ordinary Sense Group, like Combat Sense and Danger Sense, can pose game balance problems. Even a hidden danger may constitute a danger, allowing a Danger Sense roll — which would become a Skill Versus Skill Contest against the Stealth, if the GM felt that was appropriate.

STREETWISE

Streetwise is a vital Skill for many *Dark Champions* characters. In fact, in some campaigns (such as costumed vigilantes or law enforcement), it's so important GMs should consider making it an Everyman Skill for the PCs.

Streetwise has four main uses in *Dark Champions* games: finding information on the street; finding people on the street; understanding street slang; and locating and interacting with the black market.

Finding Information Or People

The most common uses for Streetwise are to dig up information (who killed Johnny G.? who's selling heroin in Irishtown? which Freetown gangs are the toughest?) and to find people who are in hiding (or otherwise difficult to locate). The GM should assign a "target" of Streetwise to one of the categories in the accompanying table and use that to determine an appropriate Skill Roll modifier. Alternately, the GM can let the character roll, and after seeing how much the character makes the roll by determine what he's learned (which may net the PC *some* information, just not necessarily what he was looking for).

As noted in the rulebook, some cultures may be so closed or difficult to penetrate that characters using Streetwise to find out about them suffer a -1 to -3 penalty (possibly more). This applies to almost all gangs, organized crime groups, and the like. A character who has an appropriate Knowledge Skill (such as KS: The Mafia or KS: Colombian Drug Cartels) does not suffer this penalty due to his advanced knowledge of the subculture in question. Those sort of KSs also serve as Complementary Skills when the character uses Streetwise to identify

STREETWISE MODIFIERS TABLE

Information/Person Is...	Modifier
Extremely Secret/Well Hidden	-6 to -8
Very Secret/Well Hidden	-3 to -5
Secret/Well Hidden	-1 to -2
Average Secret/Hidden	+0
Known/Poorly Hidden	+1
Widely Known/Very Poorly Hidden	+2
Circumstances	Modifier
Closed subculture (see text)	-1 to -3

prominent mob members, different gang symbols and colors, and the like.

Street Slang

At the GM's option, a character who hasn't purchased a particular form of street or criminal slang as a Language may be able to understand it (and even speak it) by making a Streetwise roll at a -1 to -3 penalty. He has to make a roll every Phase, though, so his comprehension may be sporadic.

Black Marketeering

Characters often use Streetwise to obtain special equipment (and other items) from the black market. See page 268 for more information.

SURVIVAL

In *Dark Champions*, Survival is most common among soldiers and other characters who've been trained to live off the land, survive in the wilderness for weeks without supply drops, and so forth. However, the *Urban* category of Survival environments is also popular in some *Dark Champions* subgenres. It's commonly possessed by the homeless and other characters who scrounge for a living on the mean streets. It lets them know where and how to find food in the city when they have no money, the best places to sleep unmolested, where to go when they get sick, how to keep warm in the winter, and similar information. Streetwise may serve as a Complementary Skill.

The rules for Survival generally assume the character is only trying to keep himself alive and healthy. But sometimes a character has to forage for or protect a group of people (such as his adventuring comrades, or a group of rescued campers). The more people he tries to help with his Survival abilities, the harder it becomes: two people is a -1; 3-4 people is -2; 5-8 people is -3, 9-16 people is -4; and so on.

SYSTEMS OPERATION

Systems Operation is the Skill which allows a character to operate electronic equipment — from advanced weapons systems, to satellites, to air traffic control technology. In some *Dark Champions* campaigns, particularly those which emphasize high technology, it may be too "broad," in that it allows characters to know and do too much for too few points. The optional version of Systems Operation in the accompanying text box makes it less universally useful by dividing the devices it applies to into categories and subcategories. The accompanying box has a sample list of subcategories, but

the GM can change or add to it as he sees fit. Characters can learn any one category for 2 Character Points for a (9 + (INT/5)) roll; each additional category costs +2 Character Points, or each additional subcategory +1 Character Point; improving the roll for all categories and subcategories known costs +2 Character Points for each +1 to the roll.

TRACKING

Characters with Tracking may use it as a Complementary Skill when trying to analyze certain types of print and impression evidence involving prints in the ground, such as from shoes or tires. Tracking cannot help a character analyze tool marks or similar impressions. (See page 166 for more information.)

TRANSPORT FAMILIARITY

If a character has a Vehicle that has multiple modes of movement and/or can operate in multiple environments — for example, a cinematic spy's car that converts into a mini-sub or a mini-copter — the GM may allow him to simply buy a 1-point “just this one vehicle” TF. However, some GMs may consider that abusive, and require the character to buy multiple TFs (one appropriate to each mode/environment).

If a character has multiple Vehicles (or access

to multiple Vehicles due to his membership as part of a team or the like), the GM may allow him to buy a single 2-point TF with “all my Vehicles” or “all Vehicles my team uses.” Other GMs may consider that abusive, and require the character to buy an individual TF for any type of Vehicle he wants to operate. At the very least, a character who's allowed to buy the single 2-point TF should have a reasonable explanation for why he can drive the team's car or motorcycle, but not any other car or motorcycle.

TWO-WEAPON FIGHTING

Many *Dark Champions* characters favor this Skill as a way of increasing their combat effectiveness — and besides, being able to fire two guns or wield two knives at once creates great visuals! However, in campaigns which permit the use of Sweep, the 10-point cost may seem a poor investment compared to buying two 2-point Combat Skill Levels with Sweep and defining their special effect as “fighting with a weapon in each hand.” If your campaign uses Sweep, then Two-Weapon Fighting should confer one, or both, of the following benefits (the GM chooses which one):

- the character only suffers a -2 DCV, instead of the standard halving of DCV, when using Two-Weapon Fighting. (They can also buy WF: Off Hand for another +1 DCV, of course.) If a -2 DCV penalty would constitute halving the character's DCV (or close to it), the GM may consider reducing the penalty to -1 DCV.

- the character can Hold one of his attacks, use one to Block, or Abort one to Block (the latter two only apply to HTH Two-Weapon Fighting). Because Two-Weapon Fighting derives from and uses the rules mechanic for Rapid Fire/Sweep, it constitutes a single maneuver. Therefore, a character ordinarily can't Hold one of his attacks with it (any more than he could, for example, Hold half a Haymaker or half a Disarm). Similarly, he can't Abort one part of it, nor can he choose to perform a defensive action like Block — Rapid Fire/Sweep involves attacks, not defenses. But if the GM chooses this option, characters can do these things.

Characters can combine Two-Weapon Fighting with Rapid Attack to get the two-weapon attack as a Half Phase Action.

WEAPON FAMILIARITY

Characters with WF can perform *basic* maintenance on the weapons they know how to use — things like keeping them clean, sharpening them, and the like. They cannot repair broken weapons, modify or customize the weapon, perform major maintenance, or the like; that requires Weaponsmith.

Many *Dark Champions* characters use tasers (*a.k.a.* “stun guns”) against their foes. The type of taser that fires small metal darts and wires at the target requires WF: Small Arms; the type a character touches to the target requires WF: Fist-Loads.

EXPANDED SYSTEMS OPERATION

Communications Systems (must be purchased separately)

Telephone Communications (installing and using the phone system)

Cellular & Digital Communications (cellular phones, pagers, and so forth)

Radio (standard radio systems, CB radio, ham radio, military radios)

Broadcast Communications (television or broadcast radio equipment)

Satellite Communications (use of satellites and satellite networks to transmit signals, GPS systems)

Communications Jamming Equipment (equipment specially designed to jam transmissions)

Computer Systems (may be purchased as a group) (Characters with the Computer Programming Skill automatically have knowledge of this group, but may purchase Systems Operation with it for use as a Complementary Skill.)

Basic Computers (basic desktop and laptop systems, PCs, Macs)

Networks

Mainframes (UNIX- and VAX-based systems, large corporate networks/intranets)

Cyberspace Systems (BBSes, the Internet, commercial online services, cyberspace)

Military Computers

Sensor Systems (must be purchased separately)

Air Traffic Control Systems (other than radar and radio)

Medical Sensors (x-ray equipment, MRI equipment, and so forth)

Metal Detectors

Radar

Sonar (passive and active arrays, towed arrays)

Sensor Jamming Equipment (equipment specifically designed to jam sensors)

Weapons Systems (must be purchased separately): Advanced weapons such as missiles do not use Weapon Familiarities; rather, they are launched with the Systems Operation Skill. Each type of advanced weapon has its own Weapon System subgroup — Patriot missiles, ICBMs, Mark 48 ADCAP torpedoes, and so forth.

WEAPONSMITH

This is a popular Skill in many *Dark Champions* games, since it not only allows characters to modify and repair weapons, it lets them create new weapons, which may save them a lot of time and trouble compared to trying to find and buy unusual guns and ammunition. The Gunsmithing Table lists the typical modifiers for various gunsmithing tasks, and the time required to perform them. (See *Firearms Modifications And Customization*, page 238, for information on the game effects of many of these modifications.)

The modifiers and times required listed in the Gunsmithing Table assume the character has proper tools (lathes, mills, probes, and the like) and supplies of parts. If the character doesn't have these things, the GM should extend the time required and/or increase the modifier, as appropriate.

If a Weaponsmith roll fails by 1-3, the attempted action or installation fails (this is usually obvious upon inspection, test firing, or the like). If it fails by 4 or more, either the weapon itself has been irreparably damaged, or the failure of the installation doesn't become apparent until the character uses the gun in crisis or combat conditions (*i.e.*, it fails to work just when he needs it the most!).

Expanding The Weaponsmith Categories

For campaigns that involve a lot of gunplay, having a single *Firearms* subcategory for Weaponsmith may make it too easy for characters to do all their own gunsmithing. For a more detailed *Dark Champions* version of Weaponsmith, use these categories instead (the character still gets one for free when he buys the Skill; additional ones cost 1 Character Point apiece):

- Assault Rifles
- Machine Guns
- Revolvers
- Rifles
- Semi-Automatic Handguns
- Shotguns
- Submachine Guns
- Vehicle-Mounted Guns

GUNSMITHING TABLE

Task	Modifier	Time Required
General maintenance and testing	-0	1d6 x 20 Minutes
Ammunition		
Reload empty shell casings		
Standard rounds/shells	-0	1 hour per 20 rounds
Exotic rounds/shells	-3	1 hour per 2 rounds
Create new type of ammo	-6	2d6 weeks, or more
Build a firearm from scratch	-4	1d6 weeks, or more
Magazines		
Expand/extend magazine	-3	1d6 hours
Alter magazine to fit in different gun	-2	½d6 hours
Modify or customize firearm		
Accessory rail	-2	½d6 hours
Ambidextrous Conversion	-2	½d6 hours
Barrel Coating	-2	1d6 hours
Barrel Fluting	-0	1d6 x 20 Minutes
Cryotreatment	-1	1d6 hours
Customizing stock	-2	3d6 hours
Electronic Trigger	-3	1d6 hours
Fine Tuning I	-4	2d6 hours
Fine Tuning II	-6	4d6 hours
Hair Trigger	-3	1d6 hours
Hammer bobbing	-0	1d6 x 20 Minutes
Improved Bedding	-2	½d6 hours
Improved Firing Pin	-3	½d6 hours
Improved Range I	-4	3d6 hours
Improved Range II	-6	1d6 days
Improved Trigger	-2	1d6 hours
Personalization	-1	½d6 hours
Pistol Stock	-1	½d6 hours
Polygonal Rifling	-3	1d6 hours
Rechamber for different caliber	-2	1d6 hours
Recoil compensator	-3	1d6 hours
Replace barrel	-1	½d6 hours
Saw off shotgun barrel	N/A	2d6 Minutes (no roll required)
Silencer, integral	-4	3d6 hours
Size Reduction I	-2	1d6 hours
Size Reduction II	-4	2d6 hours
Streamlining	-2	1d6 hours
Watertight	-3	1d6 hours
Weight Reduction	-1	1d6 hours

SKILL ENHANCERS

Because Background Skills are so important to so many *Dark Champions* characters, Skill Enhancers tend to be equally important. While they're not suitable for every character — they're best used to represent someone with an innate talent for the subject, not just as a way to save Character Points — they fit many character conceptions very well.

Skill Enhancers are particularly useful in combination with Disguise, because they help make the character's disguise more believable. A character who can speak a lot of languages, knows enough to converse about many subjects intelligently, or can do a lot of things has an easier time passing himself off as another person and performing undercover missions.

EXPERT

At the GM's option, *Dark Champions* characters can buy a new type of Skill Enhancer, *Expert*. Whereas the other Skill Enhancers are all restricted by the type of Skill(s) characters can buy through them, *Expert* is restricted by subject. A character can buy any Language, KS, PS, or SS through *Expert*, provide they all relate to a subject about which he is an expert or for which he has an innate talent. Examples might include Russia (Language: Russian, KS: Russian History And Culture, AK: Russia, KS: Russian Art And Literature), Serial Killers (KS: Serial Killers And Serial Killing, SS: Psychology/Criminal Psychology, PS: Criminal Profiling), or Electrician (KS: Electrical Systems, PS: Electrician, SS: Electrical Engineering).

Expert costs 3 Character Points and has the same effect as other Skill Enhancers: it reduces the cost of all Skills bought through it by -1 Character Point (minimum cost of 1 point, as always). However, to prevent abuse, the GM may want to require characters to buy a minimum of three Skills through *Expert*; with fewer than that, it's difficult for a character to argue that he has a thorough, "expert" grasp of all the facets and complexities of a subject.

The GM should examine any purchase of *Expert* carefully to make sure it fits the character, is properly defined, and won't unbalance the game. Characters should use it to define relatively narrow subjects in which they're extremely well-versed, not treat it as an excuse to save points on any Background Skill they want to have and can loosely link together.

PERKS

All of the Perks are appropriate for *Dark Champions* characters. Here are a few notes and expanded rules for some of the most useful or important ones.

Typically, if a character loses a Perk, he get the points back, unless the rules specifically say otherwise (as they do for Deep Cover, for example). But the final decision is up to the GM, since it may depend on the situation, the special effects involved, common sense, dramatic sense, and other factors that can't really be quantified with rules. For example, if a character has Access into the local penitentiary, and the guards discover his secret entrance during an adventure, he'll lose that Access, and the GM would be within his authority to rule that the character didn't get the points back... or at least that he could only spend them on another Access to the prison (which would take months or years to develop).

Contacts

Contacts is one of the most common and important Perks in *Dark Champions*. Sometimes it seems as if every modern-day action hero has at least a handful of "old friends" who can help him out from time to time. (You can even use the optional Resource Points rules, page 154, to simulate this.)

Many of the Contacts *Dark Champions* characters buy are Organization Contacts, representing their broad familiarity with groups like the CIA or the Mafia. In this case, the character should apply all Contact cost modifiers that add or subtract points before applying the Organization x3 multiplier. After the multiplier is applied, the character places the Contact in his *Well-Connected* Skill Enhancer (if he has one) and deducts the 1-point savings for doing so. The minimum cost for a Contact, as for anything else in the system, is 1 Character Point.

Characters may apply 10-point Overall Skill Levels to their Contact rolls. No other Skill Levels of any sort apply to Contact rolls.

At the GM's option, if a Contact is particularly difficult to reach or communicate with even when the character succeeds with his roll — for example, it takes hours to exchange messages with him due to his remote location or elaborate security procedures — the character can deduct -1 Character Point from the cost of the Contact.

Frequently-Encountered Contacts

Some types of Contacts which appear frequently in *Dark Champions* adventures include:

The Armorer/Technician: This Contact is a supplier and technical aide for a PC who has little or no skill with technology. He's an expert at weaponsmithing, computers, vehicle design, or whatever other technical field the PC needs help in. He provides the PC with his expertise because the PC once saved his life, is an old friend, or did him some tremendous favor... or maybe just because the PC pays him. The Armorer himself has KSs and/or significant Con-

tacts that enable him to get his hands on the latest guns, bullets, body armor, and computer systems so the PC can have a technological edge on his enemies.

Alternately, the Armorer may be *the Supplier* — a person who doesn't necessarily have any technical skills himself, but who's a black market arms dealer. Whatever sort of equipment the character needs, the Supplier can provide... for a price.

The Friend On The Force: This Contact is a member of some law enforcement agency. He assists the character by tipping him off when the cops are after him, and by giving him access to the agency's information. The Friend's motives for subverting his own employer vary. He may think the police aren't dealing with the crime problem properly (*i.e.*, the way the PC and other vigilantes deal with it), acknowledge that the PC can handle criminals the force would have difficulty with, admire the character for some other reason (perhaps the PC rescued his daughter from kidnappers), or the like. Alternately, perhaps the PC is blackmailing the "Friend" with some dark secret from his (the Friend's) past.

The Friend is not necessarily a patrol officer. He might be a file clerk or clerical worker with easy access to the agency's files, for example. High-ranking police officers (captains or commissioners, for example) are also common Contacts.

The Old Friend: This Contact is a good friend of the PC's from days gone by. They may have served in the armed forces together, worked for the same intelligence agency, or patrolled the same beat as cops. Whatever the connection, the bonds of friendship remain strong, and the PC can call on his buddy for assistance from time to time. The Old Friend typically holds some position which is of benefit to the character (police captain, reporter, politician). Unlike the two Contacts described above, the Old Friend often does not know about the PC's crimefighting activities, so the character has to be sure to guard his secret well.

False Identity

This new Perk costs 1 Character Point. It's like Deep Cover, but much "shallower." The PC has well-made false identification papers that "prove" he's someone other than who he really is. A quick search of standard databases will probably confirm his identity. But any sort of detailed or in-depth investigation (even just a few minutes' searching in restricted-access databases) reveals that the identity is false (so will 1d6 x 10 Minutes' examination of his papers by someone who succeeds with a Forgery (Documents) roll).

If a PC's False Identity is "blown," with the GM's permission he can get the Character Point back and spend it on another False Identity (or possibly something else). Developing the new False Identity should take some time — probably at least a week, if not a month or more.

Fringe Benefit

The *Fringe Benefit Perk* manifests in the *Dark Champions* genre in many ways — including some that are specific to the genre, which are described below. For the most part these are forms of the *Membership Fringe Benefit*, but where appropriate have their own names and expanded cost structures.

BUSINESS RANK

At the GM's option, characters who are employed at a high level by corporations and other significant business institutions may have to buy a

BUSINESS RANK TABLE

Value	Position
0	Corporate employee
1	Low-level executive of a minor business entity
2	Mid-level executive of a minor business entity
3	High-level executive of a minor business entity; low-level executive of a major business entity
4	CEO, CFO, Chairman of BoD, or like position in a minor business entity; mid-level executive of a major business entity
5	High-level executive of a major business entity
6	CEO, CFO, Chairman of BoD, or like position in a major business entity



Fringe Benefit to represent the benefits that come from having access to the business's resources, influence, and the like. Low-level employees and persons who own or work for small businesses don't need to buy this Perk, since they don't have the same opportunities to take advantage of their position, but they can buy it if they want to and the GM permits it. For example, a character who owns a small but highly influential "think tank" that consults for government agencies might have Business Rank even though he only employs a few people.

Most people who buy this Perk also have the *Money Perk*.

CRIMINAL RANK

Although they're not always as formal as businesses, governments, or militaries, criminal organizations have their own hierarchies. The accompanying table lists suggested Perk values for various positions in organized crime groups.

CRIMINAL RANK TABLE

Value	Position
1	Gang/organized crime group member (e.g., Mafia associate)
2	Gang/organized crime group member of prominence or importance (e.g., the Red Pole of a Triad gang; a made member of the Mafia; leader of a small gang)
3	Mid-level organized crime leader (e.g., leader of a large street gang or outlaw motorcycle gang; mid-level yakuza <i>oyabun</i> ; Mafia <i>caporegima</i>)
4	Mid- to high-level organized crime leader (e.g., Mafia <i>sottocapo</i> or <i>consiglieri</i> ; Incense Master for a Triad gang)
5	Organized crime group overall leader (e.g., Mafia capo; yakuza clan <i>oyabun</i> ; Dragon Head of a Triad)

ESPIONAGE RANK

The accompanying table lists suggested Perk values for various positions in an espionage agency. For ease of reference, the positions listed are for the Central Intelligence Agency, but you can easily adapt the structure to other intelligence organizations.

ESPIONAGE RANK TABLE

Value	Position
1-4	CIA employee
5-7	Deputy/associate director/administrator of a department in a CIA directorate
8-9	Director/administrator of a department in a CIA directorate
10	Associate Deputy Director of a CIA directorate (e.g., Operations)
12	Deputy Director of a CIA directorate
14	Deputy Director of Central Intelligence (DDCI)
15	Director of Central Intelligence (DCI)

Where the value is variable, it depends on the responsibilities, influence, and authority of the position or individual.

GOVERNMENT RANK

The accompanying text box lists suggested Perk values for various positions in the various types and levels of governments, with examples drawn from the United States (you can adapt it for other nations by changing the names of the positions). For national government positions, many high-ranking personnel will also have the *Security Clearance Fringe Benefit* (see page 87).

This table does not include ranks in the military, espionage agencies, or law enforcement agencies. For those, see elsewhere in this section of the book.

GOVERNMENT RANK TABLE

Value	Position
1	Important local government official (e.g., Clerk of Court, ward representative, City Council member)
2	Local government leadership position (e.g., Mayor, City Comptroller, County Commissioner, City Council chairman)
3	Important state government official (e.g., state representative or senator, State Secretary of Corrections, lower state court judge)
4	Top Man (see page 88)
5	State government leadership position (e.g., Governor, justice of a state Supreme Court, some powerful state senators or department heads)
5	Diplomatic Immunity
6	National government departmental employee of minor power
7	Judge on a lower federal court
8	Member of U.S. House of Representatives of minor power; national government departmental employee of major power
9	Member of U.S. House of Representatives of major power
10	Head of state of very minor nation; member of U.S. Senate of minor power; Director/Administrator of minor national government agency (e.g., FEMA); Deputy Director/Administrator of major national government agency; Associate Justice, national Supreme Court
12	Chief Justice, national States Supreme Court
15	Head of state of minor nation; member of U.S. Senate of major power; Director of major national government agency (e.g., the FDA)
20	Head of state of average nation; Director/leader of governmental department or branch (e.g., U.S. Cabinet Secretary)
25	Leader of a major nation (e.g., President of the United States)

LAW ENFORCEMENT RANK

The accompanying text box lists suggested Perk values for various positions in the various types of law enforcement organizations. For ease of reference, the positions listed are for the FBI, but you can easily adapt the structure to other law enforcement agencies. This Perk is in addition to the *Police Powers Fringe Benefit*; for national police forces, many high-ranking personnel will also have the *Security Clearance Fringe Benefit* (see below).

LAW ENFORCEMENT RANK TABLE

Value	Position
1	Police officer (i.e., typical low-ranking street cop)
2	Police sergeant, police detective
3	Police lieutenant, police inspector, FBI Special Agent
4	Police captain, deputy commander of police for a town or small city
5	Commander of police for a town or small city
6	Deputy commander of police for a large city
7	Commander of police for a large city (e.g., Commissioner of the NYPD), Special Agent in Charge (SAC) of an FBI office
10	Assistant Director of an FBI division
12	Executive Assistant Director of an FBI division
14	Deputy Director of the FBI
15	Director of the FBI

MILITARY RANK

The accompanying text box lists suggested Perk values for the various ranks of various branches of the United States military (you can adapt it for other nations' militaries by changing the names of the ranks). For enlisted personnel, multiple ranks are sometimes condensed into one point value to keep the officer ranks from becoming too expensive; in this case a character won't always have to pay another Character Point to upgrade his *Military Rank* Perk when he receives a promotion. (In *Dark Champions* campaigns focusing on the military, the GM may wish to expand the chart so that each rank has its own cost, and to

include warrant ranks.)

In addition to the values listed in the Military Rank Table, the GM may want to charge a separate Perk value for military personnel who belong to special or elite units (see pages 52-55), or who have particularly important or influential positions regardless of rank.

OTHER FRINGE BENEFITS

Here are a few more Fringe Benefits of particular interest to *Dark Champions* characters.

Heavy Weapon Permit (2 Character Points)

A character with this Fringe Benefit has a permit to own a heavy weapon, such as a machine gun. That doesn't necessarily give him the right to carry it around in public.

Security Clearance

Here's how the various levels of Security Clearance relate to the standard U.S. government system for classifying, declassifying, and safeguarding national security information. You can easily adapt this system for other nations or organizations as required.

Unclassified (no Security Clearance required): Standard, non-classified information. The vast majority of the information and documents generated by the government fall into this category.

Confidential (Security Clearance 1 or higher): "Confidential" information is information that, if disclosed without proper authorization, could reasonably be expected to cause damage to national security. Examples include data on most weapons or other military systems, information on troop

OTHER DISTRIBUTION CONTROLS

In addition to the Classified/Secret/Top Secret system, the U.S. government uses some other designations to control the release and distribution of information. These do not require the *Security Clearance* Fringe Benefit, but may restrict a character's ability to obtain certain documents.

ACCM (Alternative or Compensatory Control Measures): classified information that requires special security measures.

CNWDI (Critical Nuclear Weapons Design Information): information pertaining to the design or operation of nuclear weapons.

COMSEC (Communications Security): information pertaining to telecommunications methods or technologies, including encryption and decryption systems and methods.

CRYPTO (Cryptographic Materials): information that must be handled through special cryptographic channels or methods.

LIMDIS (Limited Dissemination): information only for distribution to certain persons.

NATO: information that can be released to members of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization.

NOCONTRACT (Not Releasable to Contractors): information that may not be released to contractors or consultants.

NOFORN (Not Releasable to Foreign Nationals): information that may not be released to foreign nationals (even from allied nations).

MILITARY RANK TABLE

Value	Army Rank	Navy Rank	Air Force Rank	Marines Rank
0	Private (PV1/PV2) Private First Class	Seaman Recruit Seaman Apprentice Seaman	Airman Basic Airman Airman First Class	Private Private First Class Lance Corporal
1	Corporal/Specialist	Petty Officer Third Class	Senior Airman	Corporal
2	Sergeant Staff Sergeant Sergeant First Class	Petty Officer Second Class Petty Officer First Class Chief Petty Officer	Staff Sergeant Technical Sergeant Master Sergeant	Sergeant Staff Sergeant Gunnery Sergeant
3	Master Sergeant First Sergeant Sergeant Major Command Sergeant Major Sergeant Major of the Army	Senior Chief Petty Officer Master Chief Petty Officer Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy	Senior Master Sergeant Chief Master Sergeant Command Chief Master Sergeant Chief Master Sergeant of the Air Force	Master Sergeant First Sergeant Master Gunnery Sergeant Sergeant Sergeant Major Sergeant Major of the Marine Corps
4	Second Lieutenant First Lieutenant	Ensign Lieutenant Junior Grade	Second Lieutenant First Lieutenant	Second Lieutenant First Lieutenant
5	Captain	Lieutenant	Captain	Captain
6	Major	Lieutenant Commander	Major	Major
7	Lieutenant Colonel	Commander	Lieutenant Colonel	Lieutenant Colonel
8	Colonel	Captain	Colonel	Colonel
9	Brigadier General (1 star)	Rear Admiral Lower Half	Brigadier General	Brigadier General
10	Major General (2 stars)	Rear Admiral Upper Half	Major General	Major General
11	Lieutenant General (3 stars)	Vice Admiral	Lieutenant General	Lieutenant General
12	General (4 stars)	Admiral	General	General

Continued on next page

Continued from last page

ORCON (Dissemination and Extraction Controlled by Originator): information whose release and distribution is controlled by the person who originated it — “for your eyes only” information, in other words.

RD (Restricted Data): information related to atomic energy.

REL TO (REL_____) (Authorized for Release To): information that can be released to the designated foreign governments or organizations (such as RELCANUKAUS, which can be released to Canada, the U.K., and Australia).

SCI (Sensitive Compartmented Information): information and intelligence sources subject to an access control system established by the Director of Central Intelligence; special permission is required for access to SCI data.

WNINTEL (Warning Notice — Intelligence Sources or Methods Involved): information containing references to sensitive intelligence sources (the names of agents or intelligence sources, for example). WNINTEL has been discontinued, but still appears on older documents.

training methods, and the like.

Secret (Security Clearance 5 or higher): “Secret” information is information that, if disclosed without proper authorization, could reasonably be expected to cause serious damage to national security.

Examples include many espionage operations, key defense technological data, information about troop deployment and force composition, and most things that would harm or strain foreign relations. In most campaigns, this is the highest level of information PC spies or special forces soldiers will receive.

Top Secret (Security Clearance 7 or higher): “Top Secret” information is information that, if disclosed without proper authorization, could reasonably be expected to cause exceptionally grave damage to national security. Examples include the keys to most cryptological systems, much wartime data, and anything that might cause a war with a foreign power if revealed.

Top Secret — Special Compartmentalized Intelligence (SCI) (Security Clearance 9 or higher): “TS-SCI” information is “above top secret” information that’s strictly controlled by its originator. It’s usually divided into categories based on the type of information and the agency(ies) involved. Examples include SI (Special Intelligence, which deals with communications and signals intelligence) and TK (Talent-Keyhole, which deals with information obtained via satellite or aerial reconnaissance). Technically, SCI can fall within any of the three standard confidentiality categories, but regardless of what category it’s assigned to it’s protected with greater security than Top Secret information.

When the government reveals SCI information to a character, he gains access to (or becomes part of) a *Special Access Program* (SAP). Each SAP has a code name that does not relate to its purpose or nature, such as “Project THUNDERCLAP.”

Just because a character has an appropriate Security Clearance doesn’t mean he has access to any and all information that falls within that category. He still has to have a “need to know” before information will be revealed to him.

Top Man (4 Character Points)

“Who do you have analyzing the latest data on the Mexican drug cartels, Mr. Secretary?”

“Top men, Senator.”

“Who?”

“*Top* men, sir. Don’t worry, it’s all being taken care of.”

A character with the *Top Man* Fringe Benefit is one of the “top men” so often referred to in the highest government circles. In short, he’s an expert kept on retainer by the government (or a government agency) as a consultant and “problem solver.” Unlike Security Clearance, this Perk does not give the character access to any information. Instead, it means he’s on call and *may* be asked to help with a particular problem — the GM controls the character’s access to information. However, a Top Man might be asked to look at data that exceeds his Security Clearance (if any), since desperate times may call for desperate measures.

Before the GM allows a character to buy Top Man, he should satisfy himself that the character has the qualifications necessary to be a top man — plenty of relevant KSs, SSs, and so forth.

Improved Equipment Availability (3-10 Character Points)

Characters with this Perk have access to better forms of weapons, equipment, and gear that they purchase with their Equipment Points and Vehicle/Base Points (see *Resource Points*, page 150, for more information). All characters have access to Standard equipment for free. For 3 Character Points, the character has access to Street-Level equipment; for 5 Character Points, he has access to Military equipment; and for 10 Character Points, he can obtain Advanced Military equipment.

Reputation

Reputation is a popular Perk for *Dark Champions* characters — after all, it's not only fun to be well-known, anything that makes a character's Presence Attacks more effective is a big help in the game.

It's not possible for a character to pay zero Character Points, or negative points, for Reputation. The minimum cost is 1 point per level of Reputation.

In some cases, characters may want to have a Reputation that only applies to one of a character's identities. This is allowed, but the cost for Reputation remains the same. However, depending on circumstances, a Reputation that only applies to one of a character's identities might affect how widely known the Reputation is, which could change the cost.

Vehicles And Bases

Vehicles are a very common Perk in *Dark Champions* games. Whether they're standard cars and motorcycles that are a little bit "souped up" for better street performance, a cinematic spy's gadget-laden sports car, a heavily-armed combat helicopter, or something even stranger, they add a lot to the game — after all, what's an action-adventure campaign without a car chase every now and then? See *The Ultimate Vehicle* and *The HERO System Vehicle Sourcebook* for approximately 200 sample vehicles, most of which are appropriate to modern-day games.

Characters can buy Vehicles with Character Points, or with their Resource Points if the GM uses that optional rule (see page 154). In either case, the GM may find that the cost of Vehicles becomes prohibitive in a *Dark Champions* campaign, since Vehicles can quickly become expensive compared to the Heroic characters played in the genre. In that case, the GM may want to reduce the cost of the *Vehicle* Perk to 1 Character Point per 10 points in the Vehicle (or 20 points, or some other divisor). Alternately, he might waive the rule that increases the cost of a Vehicle once it's built on more points than the character who buys it.

The same considerations apply to Bases. Characters can buy them with Character Points or Resource Points, and the GM may want to consider reducing the cost by changing the divisor. Alternately or in addition, the GM might permit characters to buy small, simple, "safehouse" bases for 1 Character Point per safehouse. This would entitle the character to an apartment-sized base equipped with some furniture, a few appliances, and perhaps a personal computer or a small laboratory of some sort. Safehouses function as hideouts and storage depots, but don't really provide a character with any other resources.



TALENTS



Almost all of the Talents are appropriate for any street-level campaign. Some Talents have special applications or implications in *Dark Champions* campaigns.

EXISTING TALENTS

COMBAT LUCK

This Talent works well for any Heroic genre. By providing a way for characters to have some innate Resistant Defense, it keeps them from dying too quickly during ambushes, assassination attempts, and other situations when they might not wear body armor.

The defense provided by Combat Luck adds to other types of defense, such as PD or the DEF of body armor. Because of this, the GM may want to restrict characters' ability to buy this Talent — it could make them too tough. If only characters who wear no armor, or light body armor, can buy it, the game may have a better defensive “balance.”

COMBAT SENSE

Combat Sense does not require a character to wait for someone to attack him before he can strike. He can make his roll (which requires a Half Phase) to proactively attempt to locate targets for HTH Combat. However, he can only find targets within HTH range (*i.e.*, in his hex or an adjacent hex), even if he has a long weapon or some other means of extending his reach.

RESISTANCE

Besides using Resistance to withstand Interrogation, characters can use it to pass lie detector tests. Each point of Resistance imposes a -1 penalty on the lie detector operator's PS: Operate Polygraph roll.

Because it helps a character withstand pain, Resistance can also add to a character's EGO Rolls when Wounded (if the GM chooses to use the Wounding rules; see page 186). Every point of Resistance a character has adds 1 point to the character's base EGO Roll when Wounded.

SIMULATE DEATH

Simulate Death is even better than Resistance for fooling lie detectors. Characters with this Talent who make their roll at +2 can completely fool any polygraph, regardless of how skilled the operator is.

When a character Simulates Death, no non-Persistent powers function, and he cannot spend END on anything. He cannot make PER Rolls of any sort; he has no awareness of his surroundings (except insofar as his predefined “wake-up” condi-

tion implies a specific need to “perceive” things). He does not gain any of the benefits of Life Support of any type, unless the GM chooses to give them to him in the interest of dramatic sense (though you should consider him to be “sleeping,” so there's no need for Diminished Sleeping). Even if the GM chooses to allow some Diminished Eating or Extended Breathing, he probably shouldn't allow Longevity. If the character wants those effects, he can buy them Linked to his Simulate Death.

NEW TALENTS

Here are some new Talents appropriate to many *Dark Champions* campaigns and characters. See also the *Super-Skills* section beginning on page 106; many of those abilities could easily be designed as Talents, and vice-versa.

COMBAT SHOOTING

A character with this Talent is an expert at firing guns into melee — he can do so with much less risk of accidentally hitting a friend or ally.

In game terms, this Talent provides +5 OCV with Firearms that only serves to prevent the character from accidentally hitting non-enemies when firing into a melee. If he fires into a melee and misses, but misses by 5 or less, he does not hit his intended target, but he does not hit any friends either (he could still hit another enemy, as described by the rules on page 179). If he misses by 6 or more, he still accidentally hits someone other than his intended target.

At the GM's option, characters can buy this Talent for other types of attacks than shooting — Combat Knife Throwing, for example — by redefining what the Combat Skill Levels apply to.

■ **Combat Shooting Cost:** 8 Character Points (bought as +5 OCV with Firearms, Only To Prevent Hitting Non-Enemies When Firing Into Melees (-2))

COMBAT-READY

As noted on page 61, sometimes trying to use certain Skills in combat conditions, or other high-stress crisis situations, imposes a -1 to -3 penalty on the Skill Roll. A character with this Talent does not suffer that difficulty; he knows how to keep his head and focus on the job at hand regardless of distractions. Characters must buy this Talent *per Skill*, unless the GM rules otherwise.

■ **Combat-Ready Cost:** 3 Character Points (bought as three 3-point Skill Levels with Noncombat Skills, Only To Counteract The Combat Conditions Penalty With A Specific Skill (-2)).

CRIPPLING BLOW

A character with this Talent knows how to strike blows that cripple his targets, or inflict other long-lasting injuries. By hamstringing an enemy, he can reduce that enemy's ability to walk or run. By striking a blow to the arm, he can reduce a target's manual dexterity and ability to attack accurately. A thrust to the right vital organ can reduce a target's health and hardiness. However, healing methods can reduce the effects of this attack.

In game terms, this Talent allows a character to use various Drains against a target — Drain Running, Drain DEX, and Drain CON, in the above three examples. The character must have a bladed weapon to do this, and the attack does not also inflict BODY damage (it just causes a Drain). The GM decides what types of Drains he will and will not allow a character to make with this Talent. Additionally, the victim can heal the injury more quickly via medical treatments or the like: every point of BODY obtained by applying Paramedics or Healing to the injury removes 2 points of the Drain effect.

Crippling Blow costs the character 3 END to use.

■ **Crippling Blow Cost:** 16 Character Points (bought as Drain 1d6, any physical body-based power one at a time (+¼), Delayed Recovery Rate (character heals the damage as if Recovering BODY; +2); OIF (bladed weapons of opportunity; -½), Healing BODY Heals Effect (see text; -½))

DEADLY BLOW 

The character's combat skill allows him to strike highly accurate and deadly blows, though usually only in limited circumstances (such as only with a specific type of weapon, or only when the target is Surprised). Characters often rename this Talent to represent exactly what targets it works against (see examples below).

Deadly Blow adds +1d6 to appropriate Killing Attacks involving weapons. The character must decide when buying the Talent whether it applies to HKAs or RKAs; to apply it to both, he must buy it twice. Characters may buy Deadly Blow multiple times, thus increasing its damage to +2d6, +3d6, and so forth.

The damage added by Deadly Blow counts as *base damage*. That means it not only increases the damage a character's weapon does, it improves his ability to increase the weapon's damage further via STR, Combat Skill Levels, Combat Maneuvers, and the like.

Deadly Blow comes in three forms. The first form applies only in *very limited circumstances*, as defined by the character when he buys the Talent. This form costs 4 Character Points. Typical examples include:

Blademaster: only works with knives

Expert Sniper: only works with rifles

Pistol-Fighter: only works with handguns

The second form applies only in *limited circumstances*, as defined by the character when he buys the Talent. This form costs 7 Character Points. Typical examples include:

Assassin's Touch: only works against humans

Expert Hunter: only works against animals

Expert Shooter: only works with firearms

Sneak Attack: only works with blows struck from behind or against Surprised targets

The third form works in any circumstance, with any HTH attack the character uses (or Ranged attacks, if he so defines the Talent). This form costs 10 Character Points.

Each die of Deadly Blow costs a character 1 END to use.

■ **Deadly Blow Cost:** 4, 7, or 10 Character Points (bought as KA +1d6; OIF (weapons of opportunity; -½), -2, -½, or -0 Limitation based on circumstances in which bonus die applies)

Deadly Blow Variant

Some GMs may be more comfortable allowing characters to buy the *Deadly Blow* Talent if it has a chance of failing — in other words, if it Requires A Skill Roll. This means the Talent represents a learned skill that might not always work.

If you apply Requires A DEX Roll (-¾, assuming a DEX Roll of 12- or 13-) to Deadly Blow, the costs for the three forms become 3, 5, and 7 points, respectively.

EVASIVE

The character has a special knack for dodging blows, deadly traps, and sometimes even gunfire at the last second.

In game terms, this Talent functions as Desolidification that only serves to protect the character from damage — and only when he Aborts and makes a DEX Roll at -6. The special effect is that the character ducks, dodges, or otherwise avoids the attack. If that's not possible (as with some area-affecting attacks), this Talent won't work.

At the GM's option, a character can buy this Talent as requiring a normal DEX Roll (with no penalty) for +4 Character Points.

■ **Evasive Cost:** 18 Character Points (bought as Desolidification (affected by any attack if Skill Roll fails, and by some area-affecting attacks), Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½); Only To Protect Against Attacks (-½), Character Must Abort To Use (-1), Requires A DEX Roll (assumes a DEX Roll of 12- or 13-; -¾))



HOTSHOT PILOT

This Talent represents a character who's a naturally gifted or highly-trained pilot. This has two effects. First, he receives a +2 bonus for all Combat Piloting rolls. Second, when piloting an aircraft no heavier than 50 tons in aerial combat, his piloting skills make the vehicle harder to hit (granting it +2 DCV).

■ **Hotshot Pilot Cost:** 16 Character Points (+2 to Combat Piloting plus +2 DCV, Usable By Other [any aircraft of up to 50 tons; +2½]; Only For An Aircraft Character Is Piloting [-2])

RAPID HEALING

The character recovers from the effects of wounds quickly. For every full hour he rests, he regains 1 BODY. He may still *look* injured, but a short period of rest is all he needs to return to fighting trim despite his appearance.

For purposes of this Talent, the GM defines what constitutes “rest.” Sitting and relaxing in even slightly comfortable surroundings (in a cave, beside a campfire, in bed, while riding in a car) should qualify. In some cases a GM may even allow a character to “rest” when walking or riding easily. Any significant exertion, including running or a bumpy car ride, prevents the character from regaining 1 BODY that hour.

■ **Rapid Healing Cost:** 5 Character Points (bought as Healing BODY 1d6 (Regeneration; 1 BODY per Hour), Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½), Persistent (+½); Self Only (-½), Extra Time + Increased Time Increment (1 BODY/Hour; -2¼), Character Must Rest For The Entire Hour To Regain 1 BODY (-½))

Rapid Healing Variant

For *really* cinematic forms of Rapid Healing — the kind where the character recovers in full from one scene to another, despite the fact that you can still see the blood from the cut on his skin — reduce the time increment to once per Minute. This increases the cost to 6 Character Points.

SKILL MASTER

The character has developed a high level of proficiency with a single Characteristic-based Skill, such as Climbing, Deduction, Navigation, or Stealth. He chooses one Skill when he buys this Talent, and receives a +3 bonus for all uses of that Skill.

Some characters have even greater mastery of Skills. They can apply the same +3 bonus to all Skills based on a single Characteristic.

■ **Skill Master Cost:** 6 Character Points (bought as +3 with one Skill) or 15 Character Points (bought as +3 with all Skills based on DEX, INT, or PRE [choose one])

POWERS



In most *Dark Champions* campaigns, Powers are used in much more restrictive ways than in *Champions* or *Fantasy Hero* campaigns. In most games, characters use them primarily to create weapons, equipment, and the like. In some campaigns, characters can also buy Powers to represent enhanced physical abilities (like Running), or in more cinematic games to create “super-skills” that represent Skill-like abilities but which are more effective than Skills usually are (see pages 106-49 for dozens of Super-Skills). Only in some *Dark Champions: The Animated Series* games, or games featuring “weird” abilities, paranormal powers, and mysticism, are Powers used in the more traditional manner implied by the name.

DEFENSE POWERS

In most *Dark Champions* campaigns, Armor is the preferred Defense Power for creating protective equipment and defensive abilities/Super-Skills. Damage Reduction crops up occasionally, but the other Defense Powers are rarely used (if at all).

AID; CHARACTERISTICS

Aid and the *Characteristics* Power both have a wide variety of uses in *Dark Champions* games to simulate abilities or devices that temporarily boost a character’s innate attributes. Aid (usually with the Limitation *Self Only*) works best when a degree of unpredictability or variation is appropriate; Characteristics work better when the ability should affect the character’s attributes the same way every time. The Super-Skills section has several examples; here’s another one:

Enhancement Drugs: The character has some pills or shots that he can use to boost his strength temporarily — a “super-steroid,” if you will. (For dramatic purposes, this drug works much faster and more effectively than “realistic” drugs would.)

Enhancement Pill: *Aid STR 2d6 (20 Active Points); OAF (-1), Gradual Effect (1d6 per Turn for two Turns; -¼), 6 Charges (-¾). Total cost: 7 points.*

Enhancement Injection: *Aid STR 2d6 (20 Active Points); OAF Fragile (-1¼), Extra Time (Full Phase; -½), Gradual Effect (1d6 per Turn for two Turns; -¼), 4 Charges (-1). Total cost: 5 points.*

CHANGE ENVIRONMENT

Cinematic *Dark Champions* characters can use this Power to create eerie “special effects” that accompany them and disquiet their enemies: feelings of unease and gloom that affect everyone near the character; a fog which seems to follow the character everywhere he goes; and strange sound effects and eerie voices are just a few of the many ways to use Change Environment in this fashion. These abilities don’t have powerful combat effects, but in combination with other abilities or Skills they can not only help a character, they make him more fun to play. *Disquieting Aura* on page 109 is an example.

Characters can also use Change Environment for any effect that involves worsening another character’s chance to perform a Skill. For personal abilities, this means taking the Limitations *No Range* and *Self Only*, meaning the ability only affects characters who try to use a particular Skill against the character himself. For example, some forms of “super-stealth” could be bought as penalties to onlookers’ PER Rolls.

CLAIRSENTIENCE

Dark Champions characters most often use Clairsentience to create surveillance scopes, shotgun microphones, and other devices that allow them to perceive things at a distance or through walls. However, the Power also has several Super-Skill uses to represent a character’s preternatural ability to reconstruct the events of a crime in his mind, anticipate danger, or the like. In campaigns featuring paranormal powers, a psychic character might have innate Clairsentience or Precognition powers, albeit unreliable and heavily Limited ones.

DAMAGE REDUCTION

Characters can use Damage Reduction at low levels (no more than 50%) to represent their ability to take a lot of punishment and still keep fighting, resist the effects of drugs, or the like. *Can Take A Punch*, page 124, is a good example of this sort of ability.

DARKNESS

Darkness is perfect for building many different weapons like radio jammers and “screamer grenades” that have an absolute sense-blocking effect (weapons that simply interfere with a character’s senses, but don’t necessarily make it impossible to use them, are bought with Change Environment).

DRAIN

Dark Champions characters can simulate a wide variety of attacks and abilities with Drain, primarily poisons and drugs. For example:

Blade Knockout Poison: This poison, designed to be smeared on a blade so that it affects anyone who's cut with that blade, makes the victim sleepy. Once all the Charges are used up, the character has to obtain more poison and coat the blade again (in the GM's judgment, leaving the poison on the blade too long may dilute it, and eventually cause it to become ineffective).

Drain STUN 4d6, Delayed Recovery Rate (points return at the rate of 5 per 5 Minutes; +½) (60 Active Points); OAF Fragile (-1¼), HKA Must Do BODY (-½), 4 Charges (-1). Total cost: 16 points.

Interrogation Serum: This drug softens up the victim, reducing his willpower and making it easier for the interrogator to force information out of him.

Drain EGO and PRE 4d6, two Characteristics at once (+½), Delayed Recovery Rate (points return at the rate of 5 per 20 Minutes; +¾) (90 Active Points); OAF Fragile (-1¼), 1 Charge (-2). Total cost: 21 points

Weakness Drug Darts: If these darts penetrate the character's skin, the drug on them causes his muscles to weaken.

*RKA 1 point (5 Active Points); OAF (-1), Range Based On STR (-¼), 4 Recoverable Charges (-½) (total cost: 2 points) **plus** Drain STR 2d6, Delayed Return Rate (points return at the rate of 5 per Minute; +¼), Range Based On STR (+¼) (30 Active Points); OAF (-1), RKA Must Do BODY (-½), Linked (-¼), 4 Charges (-1) (total cost: 8 points). Total cost: 10 points.*

ENERGY BLAST

Energy Blast is a much less common Power in *Dark Champions* campaigns than it is in *Champions* campaigns — Killing Attacks are the standard Attack Power on the streets. But it is used to create blunt ranged attacks (rubber bullets, blunt arrows, and the like), some types of grenades and other explosives, and “throwing master” abilities (see page 123).

ENHANCED SENSES

The character who can perceive his foe before his foe perceives him has an enormous tactical advantage, so sensory devices — nightsight scopes, thermalvision goggles, rifle scopes, binoculars, sonar and radar, and the like — are commonplace in most *Dark Champions* campaigns. See page 276 for several examples. Characters sometimes buy a small amount of Enhanced Perception, Telescopic, or other Enhanced Senses to reflect their observational skills.

FLASH

Flash is used in *Dark Champions* games much the same way Darkness is, but for effects that don't last for a long period of time or require maintenance. The most common example is the Flash Pellet, a small thrown weapon that creates a burst of blindingly bright light (Sight Group Flash 6d6

(30 Active Points); OAF (-1), Range Based On STR (-¼), 6 Charges (-¾); total cost: 10 points). Other possibilities include thrown pepper or sand, “flashbang” grenades that both blind and deafen, powdered spice used to Flash a guard dog's sense of Smell, and so forth.

Some disabling or harassing weapons, such as tear gas and pepper spray, are bought a Sight Group Flashes. However, realistically the effects of such weapons last longer than even a high-dice Flash — a few minutes, at the very least. At the GM's option, characters can build such weapons by applying the Advantage *Delayed Recovery* (+2) to Flash. For a Flash with this Advantage, each “Normal Damage BODY” rolled on the Flash dice represents 1 Turn of sensory deprivation, rather than 1 Segment. The GM may adjust the recovery rate based upon curative measures the characters take, for the sake of drama, or for any other appropriate reason — after all, it's not always conducive to enjoyable game play to have PCs and NPCs incapacitated for long periods of time.

HAND-TO-HAND ATTACK

Hand-To-Hand Attack is extremely useful for building all sorts of offensive abilities. If a character wants to be a little better than normal at unarmed HTH Combat, but not as good as a trained martial artist, one or two dice of HA, perhaps with a Combat Skill Level or two, can represent his fighting prowess nicely. The *Brawler* (page 107) and *Kick* (page 115) abilities are good examples of this.

Damage added to STR by an HA counts as “base damage done by STR” for purposes of the “doubling damage” rule. However, characters in Heroic campaigns (such as most *Dark Champions* games) with weapons defined as HAs still cannot more than double the weapon's damage by applying STR.

IMAGES

As one of the most flexible Powers, Images has lots of uses in just about any genre, including *Dark Champions*. The most obvious is to create flashlights and other sources of light. Other possibilities include advanced ventriloquism (page 149), and in high-tech campaigns perhaps even limited holography.

A character can use Sight and Sound Images to create “props” — fake guns, fireworks which sound like gunfire, dummies that bear an uncanny resemblance to the PC, and the like — to distract enemies, lose pursuers, and throw investigators off the trail of his Social Limitation: Secret Identity (“Jack Clauson *can't* be the Scarecrow — I've seen the two of them together!”). Characters with this sort of Images power can only carry one or two props at a time, which they have to define at the beginning of the adventure (or whenever they last leave their source of supply, such as their Base or car). They can only switch to a different Image by returning to their source of supply. It may require a little time to dismantle one prop and set up another; the amount of time depends on how complex the props are.

Tactical Props: Sight and Hearing Group Images, -4 to PER Roll (27 Active Points); IIF (various props, -¼), Extra Time (requires a Full Phase, and possibly much longer, to set up Image; -½), No Range (character has to place the Image by hand before activating it; -½), Set Effect Until Changed (-½). Total cost: 10 points.

INVISIBILITY

Invisibility is the basis for many Super-Skills representing the character's ability to hide or be stealthy. See *Blend With Shadows* and *Can Hide Anything*, pages 139 and 140, for some examples. It's also used to create some forms of "stealth technology" for Vehicles; in a high-tech campaign, a character might even have a "stealth suit" that provided similar protection for him. (For less absolute "stealth effects," use Change Environment.)

KILLING ATTACK, HTH AND RANGED

Killing Attacks are the most common Attack Powers in many *Dark Champions* campaigns, since they're used to build guns, knives, and most other weapons. To provide greater variation, you can adjust the cost of the "-1" Damage Class level of Killing Attack, as indicated in the accompanying table; these values were used when creating the weapons in this book.

KILLING DAMAGE COST

Dice	Base Cost
1 point	5 points
½d6	10 points
1d6-1	12 points
1d6	15 points
1d6+1	20 points
1½d6	25 points
2d6-1	27 points
2d6	30 points
2d6+1	35 points
2½d6	40 points
3d6-1	42 points
3d6	45 points
3d6+1	50 points
3½d6	55 points
4d6-1	57 points
4d6	60 points
...and so on	

LACK OF WEAKNESS

Find Weakness doesn't work if an attacker can't perceive a character's defenses — what cannot be perceived, cannot be analyzed for weaknesses. Thus, any character wearing an overcoat (a staple of costuming for mystery men everywhere) over his body armor could define the overcoat as Lack Of Weakness on an OAF (since the coat could easily be ripped away).

LIFE SUPPORT

Life Support occurs most frequently in *Dark Champions* games as the Power used to build gas masks, SCUBA gear, and similar forms of equipment. However, characters can also use it to buy some innate abilities. A character who exposes himself to tiny doses of a drug or poison might build up an Immunity to it. A strong-willed character might train himself to hold his breath for a long time (Extended Breathing) or to go without sleep for long periods of time (1 point of Diminished Sleep, usually defined as "only has to sleep eight hours every three days" or the like).

Extended Breathing only alters the rate at which a character spends END to hold his breath — it lets him drown more slowly, in other words. It does not allow him to take any Recoveries (he's still holding his breath, after all), nor does it change the rate at which the character spends END for any actions he takes.

MISSILE DEFLECTION AND REFLECTION

Missile Deflection is a good defensive ability for *Dark Champions* characters when defined as either "block incoming attacks" or "dodging incoming attacks." The former usually requires a Focus of some kind (a shield, a billy club, or the like) but tends to be limited to physical projectiles only; on the other hand, the character can protect persons in adjacent hexes as well as himself. The latter covers all Ranged attacks, but only applies to the character.

Reflection is also appropriate for *Dark Champions* PCs, but only up to the level of thrown weapons such as shuriken. Reflecting bullets, arrows, or other such attacks is not appropriate for the genre.

Billy Club Blocking: *Missile Deflection* (any physical projectile), *Range* (adjacent hexes; +½) (22 Active Points); *OAF* (billy club; -1), *Costs Endurance* (-½), *Will Not Work Against Heavy Missiles* (-¼). Total cost: 8 points.

Advanced Dodging: *Missile Deflection* (all Ranged Attacks). Total cost: 20 points.

Catch And Throw Back: *Missile Deflection* (thrown missiles), *Reflection* (back at attacker only) (25 Active Points); *Requires A DEX Roll* (assumes a DEX Roll of 12- or 13-; -¾). Total cost: 14 points.

MULTIFORM

Classic Multiform powers, where the character changes his shape into creatures like a wolf, a dinosaur, or a bird, are not appropriate for *Dark Champions* campaigns (except perhaps for occult-oriented campaigns featuring werewolves and vampires). However, a character who maintains two distinct heroic identities, each with its own equipment or the like, might (with the GM's permission) use Multiform (with appropriate Limitations) to represent his "second identity." In some cases you might use Multiform to build a character with severe multiple personality disorder (or the like) where each of the character's "identities" have different opinions, memories, or Psychological Limitations.

PIERCING 

Piercing is a new optional Power which *Dark Champions* characters can use to more precisely differentiate attacks. It is an Attack Power and a Special Power. Its Duration, Range, and Target depend on the Power for which Piercing points are bought (e.g., they're Instant and affect a single target if applied to an Energy Blast, Constant and cover an area if bought for Change Environment). Piercing costs END to use (in other words, the END cost of a Power with Piercing points is calculated from the power's Active Points plus the Active Points of the Piercing points).

The cost for Piercing depends on the type of defenses the attack reduces, as indicated in the accompanying table.

To use Piercing, a character must buy points of it for use with a specific attack or weapon; Piercing does not function on its own, and cannot be bought to affect more than one attack or weapon. The number of Piercing points purchased directly reduce the total applicable defense on a one-for-one basis. For example, if a gun fires a bullet bought with two Piercing points, the total Resistant PD applied against it is reduced by 2. A Piercing point affects both Physical and Energy defenses, if appropriate.

If an attack that has Piercing points is also Armor Piercing or Semi-Armor Piercing, subtract the Piercing points first, before the reduction of defenses caused by those Advantages.

Because Piercing is bought for a specific attack or weapon, the Advantages and Limitations taken for that attack or weapon apply to Piercing as well. The Piercing points increase the cost of the base power before Advantages are applied.

Example: *Firefight is building a new gun exclusively for firing a special type of APHC (armor piercing hardcore) ammunition. He decides he*

wants an RKA 2d6 with 1 point of Piercing (Resistant). That gives him a base cost of 33 points, to which he applies the Armor Piercing Advantage and various Limitations. Here's what he ends up with:

RKA 2d6, 1 point of Piercing (Resistant), Armor Piercing (+½) (49 Active Points); OAF (-1), Beam (-¼), Real Weapon (-¼), STR Minimum (11; Minimum Doesn't Add Damage; -1), 12 Charges (-0). Total cost: 14 points.

If this Power didn't have Charges, it would cost Firefight 5 END per shot to use (as opposed to 4 END for an RKA 2d6, Armor Piercing without any Piercing points).

SKILLS

There are many possibilities for building Skills as Powers in *Dark Champions* game, primarily in the form of gadgets that provide a character with a Skill, or which help him perform a Skill. For example:

Improved Lockpicks: +2 to Lockpicking (4 Active Points); OAF (-1). Total cost: 2 points.

Line-Gun: Climbing 14- (13 Active Points); OAF (-1). Total cost: 6 points.

Loaded Dice: +2 to Gambling (Dice) (4 Active Points); OAF (-1). Total cost: 2 points.

If a Skill normally provides a character with another Skill or ability for free (such as Combat Driving, which provides a free TF), in most cases the Skill does so even if bought as a Power. However, the GM should evaluate each proposed power in light of common sense and dramatic sense; there may be some instances where it wouldn't be appropriate for a Skill-as-Power to provide a free ability.

Characters sometimes want to buy Background Skills as Powers — through Foci, primarily. Such Skills get the normal 11- roll for 2 Character Points even if bought through a Focus. However, Background Skills bought as Powers do not get any bonus or cost savings for any relevant Skill Enhancers the character has.

Skills bought as Powers do not cost END unless the Skill itself ordinarily costs END (which almost none of them do — the primary exception is Negative (Combat) Skill Levels).

PIERCING POINTS

Defense Pierced	Cost
Normal Defenses	2 Character Points per point of defense removed
Resistant Defenses	3 Character Points per point of defense removed
Mental Defense	3 Character Points per point of defense removed
Power Defense	3 Character Points per point of defense removed
Flash Defense	3 Character Points per point of defense removed

POWER ADVANTAGES



Advantages are most often used in *Dark Champions* when constructing weapons. Grenades and bombs need Explosion, armor-piercing bullets need Armor Piercing, and tasers and knockout gas need NND. This section provides a few notes and options for some of the more common *Dark Champions* Advantages.

AREA OF EFFECT

Area Of Effect is used in *Dark Champions* mainly to create weapons like flamethrowers, explosives, and so forth. (See below under *Explosion* for some general rules.)

Accurate

Dark Champions characters sometimes use the *Accurate* form of Area Of Effect (One Hex) to create weapons that rarely miss, or hyper-accuracy abilities.

As noted in the rulebook, the target of an Accurate attack can Dodge it. The bonuses from the Dodge (or Martial Dodge) add to the base DCV of 3, and the character can apply relevant Combat Skill Levels to increase his DCV if he wants. He may not apply defensive CSLs unless he Dodges or takes some other defensive action; similarly, if he wants to obtain any bonuses from Concealment or the like, he has to Dodge or take other active steps to obtain them. (However, the Range Modifier applies to Accurate attacks as normal, regardless of what the target does.)

With the GM's permission, a character may target a specific Hit Location with an Accurate attack. The normal Hit Location OCV modifier applies to the base DCV of 3, effectively negating much of the benefit of Accurate.

ARMOR PIERCING

In many *Dark Champions* campaigns, characters have relatively low defenses. This may make Armor Piercing an unbalancingly effective Advantage. If necessary, the GM can increase its value to +¾ or +1 to remedy this situation.

Semi-Armor Piercing (+¼)

Sometimes characters don't want the full halving of defenses that AP provides. They can use this +¼ Advantage to create attacks which penetrate armor more easily than regular attacks, but not as well as Armor Piercing attacks. Semi-Armor Piercing subtracts one-fourth of the target's defenses or 3 points of defense (whichever is less) before damage is applied. The *Hardened* Advantage negates the Semi-Armor Piercing effect. Characters cannot buy this Advantage multiple times.

AUTOFIRE

Autofire is one of the most popular Advantages in *Dark Champions*, since it's necessary to build submachine guns and various "gunfire tricks." See page 177 for expanded rules for using Autofire attacks.

As explained in the text of the *Autofire* Advantage, several types of attacks (any area-affecting attack, NNDs, Mental Powers, and so on) increase the cost of Autofire by +1. This is an increase in the cost of Autofire, not the other Advantage. If a character buys a power with several of the Advantages that add the +1 "surcharge" to Autofire, he only has to pay for it once (not once per Advantage).

EXPLOSION

If a character wants to use Combat Skill Levels to increase the damage of an Explosion attack, the CSLs increase the damage done by the highest die. That means they only affect targets in the very center of the Explosion, since the highest die is the first one removed as the Explosion decreases in effectiveness.

A character can define an Explosion (or Area Of Effect) as covering a smaller part of its defined area (say, only half the area the Advantage would normally provide). However, he must still pay the full cost of the Advantage.

Neither an Explosion nor an Area Of Effect attack can be Spread, or take the *Beam* Limitation.

Calculating Explosion Damage

Determining the damage done by an Explosion is a little trickier for attacks that don't cost 5 Character Points for 1 Damage Class.

For Killing Attacks, where each die of damage is three DCs, two possible solutions exist. The first is to subtract one die, starting with the highest die, for every 3" of expansion (full dice for 3", -1 die for the next 3", and so on). The second is to subtract 2 points of damage for every 1" of expansion. Alternately, you could try to calculate DCs by subtracting pips and half-dice, but that could become more troublesome and time-consuming than it's worth.

For Entangles, the easiest method is to remove 1 BODY and 1 DEF from the Entangle each hex. If you're willing to do a little more work, you can subtract 1 BODY or 1 DEF, alternating, from the Entangle for each hex (thus approximating a loss of 1 DC per hex).

For a Flash, the attack loses 1d6 of effect per hex, regardless of the cost per die.

For Explosions with other Advantages, the standard rule applies — each hex out from the center subtracts one Damage Class. Page 404 of the



HERO System 5th Edition, Revised have rules regarding how to calculate DCs for an Advantaged power. For an NND, for example, each DC amounts to $\frac{1}{2}d6$, so you'd subtract $\frac{1}{2}d6$ for each hex out from the center of the Explosion.

INDIRECT

Characters use Indirect at the $+\frac{1}{4}$ level to represent artillery and similar types of attacks, which can arc over hills and other intervening obstacles.

Characters can use Indirect at the $+\frac{1}{2}$ level to simulate certain armor-piercing weapons. Some powerful weapons are designed to penetrate a wall or heavy armor before exploding or hitting the target. A special bullet designed to penetrate most forms of cover while still retaining enough energy to seriously injure someone could be bought this way as well.

Example: *Renegade* wants to buy a special form of tear gas grenade for use in hostage crises. The grenades have a special steel tip to enable them to penetrate walls before releasing the tear gas. He buys this as follows:

Sight Group Flash 6d6, *Area Of Effect* (5" radius, +1), *Indirect* ($+\frac{1}{2}$) (75 Active Points); *OAF* (-1), *4 Charges* (-1). Total cost: 25 points.

PENETRATING

Since few targets in *Dark Champions* games have Hardened defenses, Penetrating attacks are often quite deadly. The GM should carefully monitor the use of Penetrating attacks in his campaign to make sure they don't become the dominant form of attack. Penetrating should indicate something especially deadly about a particular gun or attack. If Penetrating becomes too common, it loses some of its mystique, characters start dropping too quickly, and the game suffers. Keeping a proper grip on the problem lets the characters have fun with Penetrating attacks but keeps them from ruining the campaign.

RANGED

Characters creating throwing weapons can use a variant of this Advantage, *Range Based On Strength* ($+\frac{1}{4}$). It functions the same as the Limitation of the same name, but for powers that aren't inherently Ranged (such as Drain). Similarly, characters may take *Limited Range* as a $+\frac{1}{4}$ Advantage for powers they want to have Range, but less Range than the standard 5" times Active Points.

VARIABLE ADVANTAGE

A gun can be bought with Variable Advantage ($+\frac{1}{2}$ Advantages) to reflect a character's ability to shift between different clips of bullets: AP bullets one Phase (Armor Piercing); Penetrating Frangible bullets the next time (Penetrating); and so forth. This sort of gun/attack should take the $-\frac{1}{4}$ Limitation *Extra Time* (requires a Full Phase to change Advantages; $-\frac{1}{4}$). See Chapter Five for information on different types of ammunition.

POWER LIMITATIONS



Most of the Limitations in the *HERO System 5th Edition, Revised* are appropriate for *Dark Champions* campaigns in at least some respects. Some, such as *Focus*, *Charges*, and *Requires A Skill Roll*, appear frequently; others are rare.

ACTIVATION ROLL

Characters sometimes use the *Jammed* variant of this Limitation when building guns (especially experimental ones). At the GM's option, a character can "unjam" a Jammed gun for re-use in 2 Phases, or 1 Phase if the character has Weaponsmith (Firearms) (no roll is required).

At the GM's option, a Jammed Autofire weapons may "runaway": fire all of its bullets in one or two Segments. The bullets are simply wasted — the character cannot point the weapon at his enemies and make use of a runaway, unless he makes a Luck roll (and even then, he should roll to hit as if Blazing Away).

Activations And Defensive Powers

The *HERO System 5th Edition, Revised* rulebook notes that Activation Roll is useful to represent defensive powers which only protect part of the body (such as body armor), or which only work if the character can use them in time (such as a shield). Since these types of defenses are common in *Dark Champions* campaigns, GMs need to keep a few facts about them in mind.

First, a character can avoid body armor that only covers part of the body by targeting uncovered areas (standard Hit Location penalties apply). If a character wears that sort of body armor, and an attacker successfully hits an uncovered area, the character does not get to make his Activation Roll; the body armor automatically fails to protect him. Use the Armor Coverage Table (page 334 of the main rulebook) to determine the coverage of body armor with an Activation Roll.

As for shields and other defenses where the Activation Roll simulates the character's skill at "getting the defense in the way" of the attack, the character must be able to sense and/or react to the attack to make the Activation Roll. If the character cannot sense the attack, he cannot make the Activation Roll or apply the defense (or, at the GM's option, must make it by half to apply the defense). Likewise, if he cannot move his defense into position (for example, he's Entangled or Grabbed), he doesn't get to make the Activation Roll. At the GM's option, to reflect the greater drawbacks to this sort of Activation Roll, characters can take an additional $-\frac{1}{4}$ Limitation for it.

CHARGES

It takes a Full Phase for a character to change Clips (unless he has Fast Draw). If a character wants reloading to take longer than that, he can increase the value of the *Charges* Limitation as indicated in the Increased Reloading Time table.

INCREASED RELOADING TIME

Value	Increased Reloading Time
Additional $\frac{1}{4}$ Limitation	2 Full Phases
Additional $\frac{1}{2}$ Limitation	1 Turn
Additional $\frac{3}{4}$ Limitation	1 Minute
Additional 1 Limitation	5 Minutes
...and so on.	

A character with Fast Draw can reduce the increased reloading time by half with a successful roll.

CREW-SERVED

Some weapons require more than one person to operate properly. Such weapons take the Limitation *Crew-Served*. The value of the Limitation depends on the size of the crew needed to fire the weapon without penalty, as indicated by the accompanying table.

CREW-SERVED

Value	Required Crew	Penalty for Single Character To Operate
$-\frac{1}{4}$	2	-3
$-\frac{1}{2}$	3-4	-6
$-\frac{3}{4}$	5-8	-9
-1	9-16	Not possible
...and so on		

If more than a single character, but fewer than the required number of characters, attempts to fire a weapon, reduce the penalty by the number of characters beyond one (though the minimum penalty remains -1 regardless of how many characters participate). For example, if four characters try to fire a weapon needing a crew of 8, the normal -9 penalty becomes -6 (-9, reduced by 3 for each person beyond the first).

To determine the OCV of a Crew-Served weapon, use the chief operator's OCV, or at the GM's option take the average OCV of the crew. If a Crew-Served weapon requires a Weapon Familiarity, at least half of the crew must have that WF, or the crew suffers the standard Unfamiliar Weapon penalty (-3 OCV).

If a Crew-Served weapon costs END, all members of the crew must pay that END cost.



POWER FRAMEWORKS

Power Frameworks are generally allowed in *Dark Champions* games. Elemental Controls and Variable Power Pools tend to be rare. On the other hand, Multipowers are quite common, usually in the form of “one-weapon Multipowers” (a single weapon with multiple settings, uses, or attachments) or a Multipower containing several unique weapons the character carries.

Weapons with this Limitation should also take the *Focus* Limitation with the additional *Bulky* or *Immobile* Limitations. They usually take the *Extra Time* Limitation as well. Generally they do not take the *STR Minimum* or *Required Hands* Limitations, since they’re mounted on bipods, tripods, or vehicles.

GESTURES

While normal guns do not require Gestures to use, some advanced weaponry might. For example, a man-portable rocket launcher might need to have several rangefinders set and a few electronic switches turned on before the rocket would be primed to fire (“Step One: Extend firing tube. Step Two: Defilerate the framistat; then enter activator code. Step Three:”). Characters could represent this with Gestures (and possibly also Extra Time; in some cases a special WF might be required for a complex weapon).

INCANTATIONS

Some high-tech weapons might only work when they “hear” a special verbal command. For example, perhaps a new, advanced chaingun can only be activated by hearing a designated operator say “Fire at [target].” Such a phrase is loud and out of the ordinary — everything needed for an Incantation. If another character is good enough at Mimicry, he may be able to get a voice-activated weapon that’s keyed to a specific voice to work with a successful Skill Roll.

LIMITED POWER

Some examples of this Limitation that occur in *Dark Champions* games include:

Autofire Only (-0): Some weapons with automatic fire capability can *only* fire in automatic mode; characters can’t take single shots with them. When a character uses a weapon with this Limitation, he has to fire a minimum of three shots for every 5 shots’ worth of Autofire purchased (for example, six shots for an Autofire (10 shots; +1) weapon). The GM can vary this as he deems appropriate, and can set an appropriate rate for weapons whose maximum rate of Autofire is less than 5 shots.

Minimum Range (-¼): Some ranged weapons — rockets, missiles, and the like — don’t work unless they can travel a certain distance. That gives them time to arm themselves, acquire the target, prepare to detonate, and so on. They do not work against targets who aren’t this minimum distance from the location they’re fired from, or further.

RANGE LIMITATIONS: REDUCED BY RANGE

The standard rules for Reduced By Range specify that you should subtract Damage Classes for every doubling of Range beyond 4”. Rather than re-rolling the damage with fewer dice, you may find it easier to take the damage rolled and reduce it by a percentage for each doubling of Range: -25% from 5-8”; -50% from 9-16”; -75% from 17-32”; and -90% for targets from 33” to the attack’s maximum Range away from the attacker.

DISADVANTAGES



Most Disadvantages work in the normal fashion in *Dark Champions* campaigns. Here are a few notes on non-standard applications. Gamemasters should also refer to page 327 for information on using Disadvantages in the campaign.

DEPENDENCE

Traditional comic book Dependencies, such as characters who can't stay out of the water for more than an hour, have little (if any) place in *Dark Champions*. In the modern-day action-adventure genre, the most common form of Dependence is an Addiction, as described on page 331 of the *HERO System 5th Edition, Revised* rulebook.

The "Addiction" modifier is bought in place of the standard Time Increment for dependence, using the specific rules from page 214 of the rulebook. It's helpful if the character defines a "Time Increment" for his Addiction, but he doesn't get any points for it, and falls back on the default time period (roughly one day at first, getting shorter as time goes by) if he doesn't specify something else.

If a character takes the "weakness" option for his Dependence, he loses 3 points from his Characteristics (*not* 3 Character Points' worth). For example, if a character has DEX 20 and suffers weakness, he drops to DEX 17. The GM can decide whether to apply the weakness to all Characteristics, or only a few, based on the nature of the Dependence.

DEPENDENT NPC

Many *Dark Champions* characters steer away from this Disadvantage. For example, one standard "origin" for a vigilante character is seeing his loved ones slain by criminals. This drives him both to fight crime and to avoid "entanglements" which might interfere with his crusade. But players should turn this stereotype on its ear if they want to. Maybe a character has taken up crimefighting because the street is no longer safe for his kids. Or the man driven to vigilantism when he saw his daughter gunned down before his eyes may still have to care for a wife driven slightly insane by the same sight. The conflict between a gentle DNPC's beliefs and the player character's vigilante attitudes can make for interesting roleplaying.

At the GM's option, characters can apply the "Floating" concept described below for Hunted to DNPCs. Thus, a character could define his DNPC as "girlfriend of the week" or "a girl in every port," rather than having to list a specific person as his DNPC.

DISTINCTIVE FEATURES

This Disadvantage is common in *Dark Champions* campaigns, though most of the Features in question are Easily Concealed: uniforms; scars; tattoos; yakuza members' ritual mutilation of their hands; and so forth. Among other reasons, these qualify as Distinctive Features because they make it easier to identify the character if (when) he's wanted by the law. Similarly, even if a character's not wanted by the law, his enemies can use his Distinctive Features to find him, put assassins on his trail, and so forth.

HUNTED

Hunted occurs frequently in the *Dark Champions* genre — action-adventure heroes seem to make a lot of enemies, though the prevalence of lethal force makes it much less likely for a foe to return again and again as they villains in traditional comic books.

The most common Hunteds for many *Dark Champions* PCs are the police and organized crime groups. The police are discussed below. Organized crime groups vary. The largest and toughest are usually More Powerful and have NCI. Smaller criminal groups and gangs may only be As Powerful (or even Less Powerful), probably lack NCI (unless the campaign takes place in a *very* small area), and may even have Limited Geographical Area (since they don't dare pursue a PC to another city or into another gang's "turf").

Floating Hunteds

At the GM's option, a *Dark Champions* character can buy a "floating Hunted" (also known as a "generic Hunted"). This is a Hunted which isn't defined as a precise person or group, but rather as a type of person or group:

Example: *Floating Hunted: any organized crime group 11- (Mo Pow, NCI): 25 points.*

Example: *Floating Hunted: an assassin 8- (As Pow): 10 points.*

This sort of undefined Hunted allows the GM to tailor the Disadvantage to fit the scenario. If the GM wants to run a game featuring the Mafia, the character's Hunted by the Mafia for a while. When the focus of the campaign shifts to the yakuza, so does the Hunted. This is helpful in *Dark Champions* campaigns because *Dark Champions* enemies don't necessarily have the longevity of enemies in other genres — they're all too likely to fall victim to a fatal case of lead poisoning. If PCs have to buy off Hunteds every time they go out to fight crime, they'll never get to spend their Experience Points

DISADVANTAGE POINTS

Most *Dark Champions* campaigns are Standard or Powerful Heroic campaigns. The rules typically limit characters in such campaigns to no more than 25 points' worth of Disadvantages from any one type of Disadvantage — up to 25 points' worth of Hunteds, 25 points' worth of Psychological Limitations, and so forth.

This may cause some problems, since characters in Heroic campaigns usually don't have access to as many Disadvantages as Super-heroic characters do. Disadvantages like Accidental Change, Enraged/Berserk, Susceptibility, and Vulnerability don't occur nearly as often in Heroic games. *Dark Champions* characters may run into trouble trying to come up with 75 or more points' worth of Disadvantages from the ones they can, realistically, take.

Gamemasters concerned about this problem have several options. First, they can waive the 25 point limit — either get rid of it altogether, or increase it to, say, 30 or 40 points. Second, they can increase the characters' Base Points, thus diminishing the number of points they have to acquire via Disadvantages.

on anything else. Floating Hunteds let them keep their Disadvantage points when they kill a Hunted because they'll soon acquire another.

Being Hunted By The Police

Many costumed vigilantes and other *Dark Champions* characters are Hunted by the police or other law enforcement agencies (whether they actually take it as a Disadvantage or not). Law enforcement agencies take a dim view of killing and crimefighting, even if the victims are criminals.

The police have extensive non-combat influence (NCI). Most local law enforcement agencies only have jurisdiction within a particular city or county, so Limited Geographical Area is definitely a possibility. However, since one police department can easily alert another to the presence of a criminal or fugitive and enlist its help, or even call on national agencies such as the FBI for assistance, characters can usually forego Limited Geographical Area if they prefer.

The police should almost always be taken as a More Powerful group. Certainly the police force in a large city is going to be more powerful than a 200-point Heroic character... but the police should also be considered more powerful than most 250+-point Superheroic characters as well. Bullets may bounce off of superhumans in battle, but there's more to life than just combat. Compared to most characters, the police have an enormous resources to call on. They have access to manpower, money, special equipment, massive amounts of crimefighting data (and other information), other governmental agencies, and public opinion. The police also have a squad of detectives — and even a 25-point detective NPC can make a lot of progress toward cracking Secret Identities and finding characters. If the police decide to focus all these resources on a particular character, that character is in a lot of trouble, despite his superpowers or vigilante skills. And this analysis assumes a police agency like those in the “real world” — in some campaigns, the police may have NPCs as skilled and powerful as the PCs working for or with them. There might even be a special police combat unit whose job is to handle characters like the PCs. Any character who thinks he's tougher and more powerful than the police department is in for a rude awakening sooner or later.

The police normally Hunt a character to capture him; they only Hunt to kill if the target is considered too dangerous to take alive. They only Watch a character if they just suspect him of being involved in crime and can properly monitor him.

If the police Hunt a character on an 8-, he's just one of many persons they're after. He may be the “pet project” of one or two devoted cops, but the force as a whole isn't really looking for him, just keeping their eyes open in case they run across him. The police are unlikely to come after the character with any special equipment, or otherwise give him any special attention above and beyond what other dangerous wanted criminals get.

If the police Hunt a character on an 11-, he gets some special attention the average wanted

person does not. The department may assign several officers to the character's “case,” at least part-time, and the PC is those officers' chief priority. Depending on why the cops are Hunting the character, there may even be a task force specifically devoted to capturing him. At the very least, the character is one of several whose case is assigned to a “Vigilante Squad” (or some other special unit). The police probably have a thick file on the PC, and may even know things he wishes they didn't (Vulnerabilities, forensic data, habits, and so forth). The police will try to develop special tactics for dealing with the character.

If the police Hunt a character on a 14-, he's a major priority for the organization. There's a task force or special squad whose sole purpose is to find the character and deal with him. This task force has as much information on the character as it can possibly find, as well as special equipment and tactics to help it capture him.

Of course, the guidelines above should not be taken to mean that the police are going to be a constant problem for any PC they are Hunting. Many *Dark Champions* characters seem to be pretty talented at avoiding the police, so don't make the cops too much of a factor in your game. Keep the wanted characters on their toes, but don't make them paranoid.

These guidelines generally apply to any government agency or like organization. Instead of the local police department, characters could choose to be Hunted by the State Bureau of Investigation, the FBI, agencies such as the CIA or DIA, or many similar groups. They have just as many resources and as much influence as the local police, if not more, even if they use them in different ways.

PSYCHOLOGICAL LIMITATION

A *Dark Champions* character's Psychological Limitations are perhaps the most important Disadvantages he takes. They do more than anything to help define him, his approach to his “job,” and why he does what he does. Becoming a vigilante (or spy, or elite soldier...) isn't something someone does on the spur of the moment; it typically requires years of intense training, and that in turn requires an equally intense drive and discipline. It's that drive and its implications which the character's Psychological Limitations represent.

Some of the Psychological Limitations common to the modern-day action-adventure genre are listed below, with suggestions as to value. (See also the *Dark Champions Personalities* section on page 28 for other Psychological Limitations.)

Casual Killer (Very Common, Strong; 20 points):

This Limitation is most often taken by criminals and villains; it's not really appropriate for most PCs. It signifies a person who has no compunctions about killing, and who's prone to using lethal force to resolve problems. He can kill quickly and unhesitatingly, without a second thought — and he often does so, even when it would be better to leave someone alive (for example, to avoid arousing suspicion, or for interrogation). While his other Psychological Limitations may dictate who he kills,

a Casual Killer feels no remorse when he kills those targets.

Code Of The Mercenary (Common, Strong; 15 points): Most commonly used for certain criminals and villains, this Limitation (and its counterpart, *Code Of The Assassin*) signifies a character who maintains a professional code of honor. If someone hires him to do a job, he becomes absolutely loyal to that employer. He does his best to finish the job, won't betray his employer (either then or after the job), and can't be "bought off." Convincing someone with Code Of The Mercenary to back off and leave a job unfinished usually means having to prove to him that finishing the job would somehow be a worse violation of the Code, or that his employer has betrayed or abandoned him.

Devoted To Justice (Common, Total; 20 points): A character who's Devoted To Justice puts the ideals of Justice (or his conception of them) above everything else. Most of the character's actions in life, and certainly all of his actions as a crimefighter, are taken with a view towards increasing the "amount" of Justice in the world, or doing the "just" thing. But this doesn't necessarily mean the character *is* doing the just thing — he may be mistaken, confused, or have odd ideas about what constitutes Justice (possibly bringing him into conflict with the authorities or other PCs).

A similar Psychological Limitation is *Devoted To Talion*. The law of *talion*, sometimes known as the Mosaic law, is summed up by the phrase "An eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth." A character with this Psychological Limitation believes the evil a man does should be done to him in return. For example, if a street gang member stabs a robbery victim in the stomach with a knife, a character who's Devoted To Talion would stab the gang member in the stomach.

Ego Signature (Uncommon, Strong; 10 points): The character has a distinctive emblem or *modus operandi* and usually can't resist using it, even though doing so reveals his participation in a criminal act, exposes him to possible capture, and/or makes it easier for "copycats" to imitate him or frame him. For example, the twisted costumed criminal Anagram can't resist leaving puzzles at the scenes of her crimes which, if solved, reveal clues to her next crime or her hideout; the vigilante Black Scorpion stamps the forehead of each criminal he defeats or kills with his distinctive black scorpion logo.

Hatred Of Killing Attacks (Common, Strong; 15 points): A character with this Psychological Limitation despises the use of lethal force and the weapons that allow people to inflict it. If he sees a character using lethal force, he'll try to stop him (and/or save the target), even if the target deserves to die. If he discovers someone's carrying a gun or a knife without authorization, he'll do his best to take it away.

Most characters with Hatred Of Killing Attacks also have a strong Code Versus Killing (see below).

Hunting (frequency varies, Strong; see text): For whatever reason — hatred, a desire for revenge, a need to capture or kill him — the character is

Hunting another character, or even an entire organization (such as the KGB or the Mafia). He feels compelled to try to track his quarry down and confront him in some fashion, and does so even though his singleminded pursuit may expose him to danger, cause problems in other aspects of his life, or the like.

In game terms, if the character is Hunting someone on an 8- (*i.e.*, the target would note the character as an 8- Hunted under his Disadvantages), that's an Uncommon Psychological Limitation. An 11- is Common, and a 14- is Very Common. The GM should roll the character's Hunting each adventure, and if the roll succeeds, work an event or scene into the scenario that focuses on the character's quest (usually to his detriment in some way).

Loner (Common, Strong; 15 points): Characters with "Loner" (or its near relatives *Mysterious And Enigmatic* and *Secretive*) want to work by themselves, without help from others. Maybe the character believes other heroes, not understanding his motivations, will get in his way or try to stop him. Maybe he's afraid his objectives are so dangerous that he doesn't dare risk the lives of others in pursuit of his own goals. Much like a character with Overconfidence, he often takes on challenges he's not equipped to handle.

Characters who are Mysterious And Enigmatic have a somewhat different outlook on things. While they may work with others, they never reveal any secrets to them — they always keep their identities, information sources, and abilities as secret as possible, and if necessary concoct elaborate schemes to maintain these secrets. They also like to "appear out of nowhere" with crucial information. In short, they spend a lot of time protecting their secrets when they could be doing other, often more productive, things. It often requires good roleplaying and fast thinking to pull this Psychological Limitation off; a player should only take it for his character if he's willing to develop the character's background (and thus secrets) in detail.

Players who want to take one of these Psychological Limitations for their characters should make sure the GM agrees to it. Having a Loner in a campaign often proves disruptive and frustrating, largely for the GM but also for the other players.

Obsessed With Crimefighting (Common, Strong; 15 points): This Psychological Limitation signifies a character who lives and breathes crimefighting. He regards crimefighting, the foiling of criminal plans and the defeat of criminals, as the best possible thing he can do (and possibly also the most enjoyable). He feels that if he stops or falters, he'll be responsible for the people who get hurt or killed because he didn't do everything he could to protect them. He may push himself to go without sleep for days at a time, ignore normal human activities (such as bathing or eating), or do other unhealthy things in pursuit of his goals.

Of course, crimefighting isn't the only thing a character could become obsessed with. A spy or soldier might be Obsessed With Completing Cur-

rent Mission, for example. In Disadvantage terms, the subject of the obsession is less important than how it negatively affects the character's life and relations with others.

Thrillseeker (Common, Strong; 15 points): Characters who are Thrillseekers are action-adventure heroes at least in part because of the danger and excitement involved. (Sometimes Thrillseekers have some deeper, subconscious motivation for their behavior: a death wish; insecurity with their role as a hero; a fear they're masking.) They take risks most characters would never even dream of just for the "rush" of putting themselves in danger and then overcoming it. If confronted with a dangerous situation, the character has to make an EGO Roll not to get involved.

Triggerhappy (Common, Moderate; 10 points): A Triggerhappy character thinks guns are *fun!* — and he's always on the lookout for a chance to shoot them. He regards gunfire as a good way to solve most problems. Shoot first, ask the remains questions later; that's his motto. Triggerhappy characters are often poor choices for infiltration missions and other activities that require stealth, circumspection, and tact, but they're great for combat missions (after all, they probably have more guns than the rest of the PCs combined).

Triggerhappy also carries some of the implications of being "hair-triggered": a Triggerhappy character often goes off half-cocked, ready to fight over some imagined insult. This makes a Triggerhappy character dangerous to be around in some instances. If a Triggerhappy character is strong-willed (*i.e.*, has a high EGO), other characters may have problems calming him down, convincing him not to shoot, and keeping him from starting fights at inopportune moments.

Vengeful or Wants Revenge Against X (frequency varies, Total): These Psychological Limitations apply to a character who's out to get someone else. A *Vengeful* character tends to be revenge-minded; he wants to wreak vengeance on any NPC who offends him, shoots at him, or gets on his nerves. His Psychological Limitation is usually Common or Very Common, depending on just how easily offended he is.

A character who *Wants Revenge* is seeking revenge against a specific target (either an individual, or a group). If and when he gets his revenge, he has to find some other outlet for his rage (a great opportunity for roleplaying and character development) or buy off the Disadvantage.

Both types of characters sometimes take other Psychological Limitation such as *Hunting* or *Triggerhappy*. However, the GM should not let a character take more than one of these Limitations unless they're distinct enough that they each limit the character in different ways.

Vigilante Mentality (Common, Total; 20 points): A character with this Psychological Limitation has set himself up as judge, jury, and executioner. He has a set of standards by which he judges people, and he harshly (or fatally) punishes those who fail

to live up to these standards. His standards may be well-known (the laws on the books, the Ten Commandments), or they may be completely personal to him. He justifies his actions on various grounds — deterring crime; punishing evildoers; "doing the work the cops can't do." Unlike many crimefighters, who simply fight crime when they encounter it, characters with Vigilante Mentality actively seek out crime, deal with it, then look for more.

It's not uncommon for characters with Vigilante Mentality to try to kill those they deem deserving of death. In some ways, this Psychological Limitation is like a focused version of Casual Killer, though it implies a more philosophical, well-thought-out justification for the character's deadly deeds.

Code Versus Killing

In some *Dark Champions* campaigns, including *Dark Champions: The Animated Series* games, it's not uncommon for characters to eschew the deadly ways of other action-adventure heroes, and even to refuse to use lethal force — in short, they have the Psychological Limitation *Code Versus Killing*.

The typical Code Versus Killing (CVK) is Common, Total, for a value of 20 points. But there's more than one type of CVK — not every character has to be completely idealistic about deadly force, or a cold-blooded killer (in fact, most *Dark Champions* PCs fall between these two extremes). Some characters are less opposed to killing than others, just as some are more inclined to kill than others. Characters can buy different Codes Versus Killing this way:

20 points (Common, Total): This is the standard CVK in four-color *Champions* campaigns. A character with this Code will never kill, and to the extent he can will try to prevent other characters, be they PCs or NPCs, from killing as well. He doesn't insist that any character with a gun or a knife get rid of it, but monitors the use of Killing Attacks closely. If a 20-point CVK character accidentally kills someone, he feels pangs of guilt so strong they may change his life — he might give up adventuring, rededicate himself to his ideals with renewed vigor (*i.e.*, temporarily have a Hatred Of Killing Attacks), or experience any other appropriate reaction.

15 points (Common, Strong): A 15-point CVK is like a 20-pointer, only less so. A character with this CVK would never kill anyone himself, but he might tolerate other characters who killed on rare occasions and with good reason. A 15-point CVK character feels terribly guilty if he accidentally kills someone, and may even make major changes in his life, but won't be totally changed by the experience the way a 20-point CVK character would.

10 points (Common, Moderate): A character with a 10-point CVK generally opposes the use of lethal force by anyone. However, he's willing to consider killing in certain extreme situations — when an enemy triggers his Psychological Limitation or Enraged, his DNPC or loved one is threatened, or similar circumstances. He feels remorseful if he

kills someone, of course, but his guilt won't debilitate him for a long period of time. Furthermore, a character with a 10-point CVK is usually willing to work with characters of more vigilante-like philosophies — they're not his methods, and he doesn't approve of them, but it's not his place to dictate to another hero how to do his job. Persuasion and example are more likely to win his comrades over than forcefully confronting them would be.

5 points (Uncommon, Moderate): This CVK is so feeble it almost doesn't exist. It represents a character who's a "warrior with morals." He prefers not to kill in most situations (the average battle, for example). But if he feels killing is called for (he's outnumbered in battle, he's seriously injured, he's fighting an extremely evil opponent, his opponent hurt one of his DNPCs or a PC friend), a 5-point CVK character will strongly consider using lethal force, and may decide to use it in some cases (*i.e.*, if he makes an EGO Roll at +5). If other characters want to use deadly force in combat, that's their business — but *any* character with a CVK, no matter how many points he gets for it, despises (and tries to stop) outright assassination and cold-blooded killing.

REPUTATION

Many *Dark Champions* characters have negative Reputations. (Even more have ones that help them, bought as the *Reputation* Perk.) Some Reputations commonly found in the *Dark Champions* genre include:

Criminal: A character with this Reputation is widely believed to be a criminal, even if he hasn't been convicted of a crime, or even arrested for one. This can negatively effect how other people react to him and treat him. If appropriate, the character can rename the Reputation to more accurately reflect what he's thought to have done: Organized Crime Figure; Insurance Swindler; Sexual Predator; or the like. This is usually an Extreme Reputation.

Racist: The media and many citizens will quickly slap this negative Reputation on any hero who appears to be prejudiced toward one or more minority groups — maybe for no other reason than that he seems to focus his activities on minority criminals. Whether the character is actually a racist is up to the player (he usually isn't, of course, but who said a Reputation had to be deserved?). This is an Extreme Reputation.

Renegade Cop: This Reputation is taken by the classic "maverick cop" who's known for his unconventional attitudes and crimefighting methods. While some people consider him a hero, many more (including most other cops) see him as too unpredictable, dangerous, and bad for the department's image.

By renaming this Reputation, you can use it for Renegade Soldiers, spies, and the like. It may or may not be an Extreme Reputation.

Ruthless Vigilante: Sometimes phrased as *Cold-Blooded Killer*, *Murderous Vigilante*, or the like, this Reputation represents a crimefighter who's not trusted by people because he's perceived as too violent, dangerous, and deadly. Civilians won't help him, the cops pursue him, and so forth. This Reputation may or may not be Extreme.

SOCIAL LIMITATION

Many different Social Limitations are appropriate for *Dark Champions*. Soldiers, law enforcement officers, and spies are all Subject To Orders. Costumed crimefighters may maintain Secret Identities, and many action heroes have Harmful Secrets. A character who's a convicted felon has a criminal record, making it easier to find out information about him (and automatically making the cops suspicious of him); he may also have lost many of his civil rights, such as the right to vote (Occasionally, Major; 10 points).

VULNERABILITY

Dark Champions characters can take Vulnerabilities to forms of attack used in the genre. They can't take 2 x STUN from Cold Attacks or 1½ x BODY from Magic, but many other possibilities exist. For example, a character who was shell-shocked during the Gulf War might be Vulnerable to Explosions (Common, 1½ x STUN, 10 points) or to Hearing Group Flash Attacks (Uncommon, 1½ x effect, 5 points). A character whose eyesight has been weakened by a strong dose of tear gas might be Vulnerable to Sight Flash Attacks (Common, 2 x effect, 20 points). A character who once took a wound in the arm that healed badly might be Vulnerable to attacks which hit Locations 7-8, because of the extra pain they cause him (Uncommon, 1½ x STUN, 5 points; if an *Arm* Hit Location is rolled, the bad arm will be the one hit on a roll of 1-3 on a d6). *Dark Champions* Vulnerabilities should be limited to STUN only in most cases.

SUPER-SKILLS



Also known as *Skill Tricks*, *Action Stunts*, or the like, Super-Skills represent various abilities *Dark Champions* characters might have to reflect their superior level of skill, fighting ability, or cleverness.

Some Super-Skills are built as naked Advantages to apply to various weapons, or the like. At the GM's option, characters can place these powers in a Multipower or other Power Framework, even though that's normally not allowed.

See the text elsewhere in this chapter, and *The Ultimate Martial Artist*, *Ninja Hero*, and *The Ultimate Vehicle* for other abilities appropriate for *Dark Champions* characters.

THE SUPER-SKILL TEMPLATE

This section describes each ability with a standard template. The information provided applies only to the standard ability; the options may have different areas of effect, ranges, END costs, and so forth.

Name indicates the name of the ability. Of course, you can rename it to suit your own character if you prefer.

Effect lists the basic game effect of the ability in simple terms: Energy Blast 8d6, Explosion; Desolidification; Autofire for any gun built on up to 90 Active

Points. This tells you quickly what an ability can do so you don't have to delve into the full game write-up.

Target/Area Affected describes who or what the ability affects. An Attack Power usually indicates "One character" or the area covered due to the *Area Of Effect* or *Explosion* Advantages. (Of course, sometimes even a "one character" ability can be Spread, or used with Rapid Fire or Sweep to affect more than one target; an ability's shorthand description doesn't override the rules.) "Self" indicates the ability only works on the character using it (though it may still "affect" other characters; for example, other characters can perceive the effects of Shape Shift, even though it's a "Self" ability.)

Duration lists the ability's duration, typically Instant, Constant, Persistent, or Inherent (see the *HERO System 5th Edition, Revised*, page 98).

Range lists the range for the ability. Ranged abilities usually have a range in inches (Active Points x 5" in most cases), but may have "LOS" (Line Of Sight) range. "No Range" indicates that the ability has No Range; "Self" that the ability only affects the character using it; "Touch" that the ability involves having to touch another character (which usually requires an Attack Roll).

END Cost lists the ability's Endurance cost.

Skill Roll Penalty indicates the penalty for using a Skill Roll to use the ability, either because the ability has the *Requires A Skill Roll* Limitation or for times when the GM permits the character to use the ability as an impromptu "action hero trick" based on a Skill Roll. It's calculated by dividing the Active Point cost of the ability by 10 (the options list other possibilities). As usual, a character shouldn't use a Skill to perform one of these abilities repeatedly; if he wants to use a Super-Skill frequently, he should pay Character Points for it. "N/A" indicates that characters can't activate that ability with a Skill Roll — it's not a "trick" so much as it is an innate ability a hero might possess.

Description provides a (usually brief) textual description of the ability. This section notes any special rules or rules applications relevant to the ability.

Game Information is a full write-up of the ability in game terms, including Active Point and Real Point costs. (If only one point total is listed, that means the Active and Real Point costs are the same.)

Lastly, many abilities have *Options* listed below the game information. These describe various ways to alter the ability to create a slightly different ability.



OFFENSIVE ABILITIES

ACCURATE

Effect: Targeting Skill Levels: +4 OCV versus Hit Location Modifiers with Firearms

Target/Area Affected: Self
Duration: Persistent
Range: Self
END Cost: 0
Skill Roll Penalty: N/A

Description: The character is an extremely accurate shot, able to hit specific parts of targets (such as the parts not protected by Concealment or body armor) with relative ease.

Game Information: *Targeting Skill Levels: +4 OCV versus Hit Location Modifiers with Firearms. Total cost: 8 points.*

Options:

- 1) **Strong Accuracy:** Increase to +8 OCV. Total cost: 16 points.
- 2) **Can Shoot The Wings Off A Fly:** Increase to +12 OCV. Total cost: 24 points.
- 3) **Weak Accuracy:** Decrease to +2 OCV. Total cost: 4 points.
- 4) **Universally Accurate:** Increase to with All Attacks. Total cost: 12 points.

AWE-INSPIRING

Effect: +20 PRE, Only To Make Presence Attacks

Target/Area Affected: Special
Duration: Persistent
Range: Self
END Cost: 0
Skill Roll Penalty: N/A

Description: The character has such presence — such self-confidence, force of personality, and bravura — that he can easily impress others and persuade them to do what he wants.

Game Information: *+20 PRE (20 Active Points); Only To Make Presence Attacks (-½). Total cost: 13 points.*

Options:

- 1) **Strong Super-Skill:** Increase to +30 PRE. Total cost: 20 points.
- 2) **Weak Super-Skill:** Decrease to +10 PRE. Total cost: 7 points.
- 3) **Tough Super-Skill:** Add Requires A Presence Roll (assumes a PRE Roll of 12- or 13-; -¾). Total cost: 9 points.
- 4) **Fear-Inspiring:** The only emotion the character can inspire is fear. Change to Only To Make Fear-/Intimidation-Based Presence Attacks (-1). Total cost: Standard: 10 points; Strong: 15 points; Weak: 5 points.

BRAWLER

Effect: HA +4d6
Target/Area Affected: One character
Duration: Instant
Range: Touch
END Cost: 2
Skill Roll Penalty: N/A

Description: The character is a rough, tough scrapper who can dish out a much more powerful punch than the average person.

Game Information: *HA +4d6 (20 Active Points); Hand-To-Hand Attack (-½). Total cost: 13 points.*

Options:

- 1) **Strong Brawler:** Increase to HA +6d6. 30 Active Points; total cost: 20 points.
- 2) **Weak Brawler:** Decrease to HA +2d6. 10 Active Points; total cost: 7 points.
- 3) **Skilled Brawler I:** The character's also a more skilled fighter than the average person. Character also buys +2 OCV with HA. Total cost 4 points; total cost of ability 17 points.
- 4) **Skilled Brawler II:** The character's so good at fighting that he's also tougher to hit. Character also buys +2 with HA (can be applied to OCV or DCV). Total cost 6 points; total cost 19 points.

COMBAT INTUITION

Effect: +2 with All Combat, Requires An INT Roll

Target/Area Affected: Self
Duration: Constant
Range: Self
END Cost: 0
Skill Roll Penalty: -2

Description: The character is so experienced a combatant that he has an uncanny knack for predicting what his opponent's going to do, and reacting accordingly.

Game Information: *+2 with All Combat (16 Active Points); Requires An INT Roll (assumes a INT Roll of 12- or 13-; -¾). Total cost: 9 points.*

Options:

- 1) **Strong Intuition:** Increase to +3 with All Combat. 24 Active Points; total cost 14 points.
- 2) **Weak Intuition:** Decrease to +1 with All Combat. 8 Active Points; total cost 5 points.
- 3) **Easier Intuition:** Change to Requires An INT Roll (-1 per 20 Active Points; -½). Total cost: 11 points.
- 4) **Tougher Intuition:** Change to Requires An INT Roll (-1 per 5 Active Points; -1¼). Total cost: 7 points.
- 5) **Master's Intuition:** Remove Requires An INT Roll (-¾). Total cost: 16 points.

CORRIDOR OF DEATH

Effect:	Area of Effect (Line, x2 length; +1¼) for any Autofire firearm built on up to 90 Active Points
Target/Area Affected:	Area of Effect (Line, x2 length)
Duration:	Instant
Range:	No Range (see text)
END Cost:	11
Skill Roll Penalty:	-3

Description: The character can use an Autofire attack to fill a hall, corridor, or similar confined space with a hail of lead.

Game Information: *Area of Effect (Line, x2 length; +1¼) for any Autofire firearm built on up to 90 Active Points (112 Active Points); OIF (any Autofire firearm of opportunity; -½), Does Not Work With Hit Location Chart Or Targeting Skill Levels (-¼), Must Use Maximum Number Of Autofire Shots And Can Only Hit One Target Per Shot (-¼), No Range (Line begins in hex immediately in front of character; -½), Only Works In A Hall Or Similar Confined Space (-¼), Requires A Shooting Tricks Roll (-1 per 20 Active Points; -¼). Total cost: 37 points.*

Options:

- 1) Strong Super-Skill I:** Increase to any Autofire firearm built on up to 120 Active Points. 150 Active Points; total cost 50 points.
- 2) Strong Super-Skill II:** Increase to x4 length Line (+1½). 135 Active Points; total cost 45 points.
- 3) Weak Super-Skill I:** Decrease to any Autofire firearm built on up to 75 Active Points. 94 Active Points; total cost 31 points.
- 4) Weak Super-Skill II:** Decrease to x1 Line (+1). 90 Active Points; total cost 30 points.
- 5) Tougher Super-Skill:** Change to Requires A Shooting Tricks Roll (-1 per 10 Active Points; -½). Total cost: 34 points.
- 7) Toughest Super-Skill:** Change to Requires A Shooting Tricks Roll (-1 per 5 Active Points; -1). Total cost: 30 points.
- 8) Master's Super-Skill:** Remove Requires A Shooting Tricks Roll (-¼). Total cost: 41 points.

COVERING FIRE

Effect:	+5 OCV, Only Versus Suppression Fire Penalties
Target/Area Affected:	Self
Duration:	Constant
Range:	Self
END Cost:	0
Skill Roll Penalty:	N/A

Description: The character is an expert at using Suppression Fire to provide cover for his friends.

Game Information: *+5 OCV (25 Active Points); Only With Autofire (-1), Only To Counteract Suppression Fire OCV Penalties (-1). Total cost: 8 points.*

Options:

- 1) Strong Covering Fire:** Increase to +7 OCV. 35 Active Points; total cost 12 points.
- 2) Weak Covering Fire:** Decrease to +3 OCV. 15 Active Points; total cost 5 points.
- 3) Tough Covering Fire:** Add Requires A Shooting Tricks Roll (-1 per 20 Active Points; -¼). Total cost: 8 points.
- 4) Tougher Covering Fire:** Add Requires A Shooting Tricks Roll (-½). Total cost: 7 points.
- 5) Toughest Covering Fire:** Add Requires A Shooting Tricks Roll (-1 per 5 Active Points; -1). Total cost: 6 points.

CRIPPLING SHOT

Effect:	Drain DEX and Running 2d6, Uses Firearm Charge
Target/Area Affected:	One character
Duration:	Instant
Range:	10"
END Cost:	0 (uses a firearm's Charges; see text)
Skill Roll Penalty:	-7

Description: The character's such a skilled shooter he can shoot someone in the leg or arm just to wound them badly, causing such pain and injury that the victim becomes less able to move. (If the character shoots the victim in the arm, he simply doesn't use the Drain Running part of the ability.) This ability uses Charges, but those Charges come from the firearm used (in other words, each use of Crippling Shot requires the character to fire one bullet from a gun). Every point of BODY obtained from Healing BODY (or the like) removes two points of the Drain effect from both DEX and Running.

Game Information: *Drain DEX and Running 2d6, two Powers at once (+½), Limited Range (10"; +¼), Delayed Return Rate (character heals the damage as if Recovering BODY; +2) (75 Active Points); OIF (any firearm of opportunity; -½), Requires A Shooting Tricks Roll (-½), Uses 1 Charge From A Firearm RKA (-¼), Healing BODY Heals Effect (see text; -½). Total cost: 27 points.*

Options:

- 1) **Strong Crippling Shot:** Increase to Drain 3d6. 112 Active Points; total cost 41 points.
- 2) **Weak Crippling Shot:** Decrease to Drain 1d6. 37 Active Points; total cost 13 points.
- 3) **Easier Crippling Shot:** Change to Requires A Shooting Tricks Roll (-1 per 20 Active Points; -¼). Total cost: 30 points.
- 4) **Tougher Crippling Shot:** Change to Requires A Shooting Tricks Roll (-1 per 5 Active Points; -1). Total cost: 23 points.
- 5) **Master's Crippling Shot:** Remove Requires A Shooting Tricks Roll (-½). Total cost: 33 points.

DEADLY SHOOTER

Effect: Deadly Blow (RKA +2d6 with Firearms)
Target/Area Affected: One character
Duration: Instant
Range: Self
END Cost: 0
Skill Roll Penalty: N/A

Description: The character is deadly accurate when firing any type of gun.

Game Information: *Deadly Blow (RKA +2d6 with Firearms). Total cost: 14 points.*

Options:

- 1) **Even Deadlier Shooter:** Increase to Deadly Blow (RKA +3d6 with Firearms). Total cost: 21 points.
- 2) **Less Deadly Shooter:** Decrease to Deadly Blow (RKA +1d6 with Firearms). Total cost: 7 points.
- 3) **Tough Deadly Shooting:** Add Requires A Shooting Tricks Roll (-1 per 20 Active Points; -¼). 14 Active Points; total cost 11 points.
- 4) **Tougher Deadly Shooting:** Add Requires A Shooting Tricks Roll (-1 per 10 Active Points; -½). 14 Active Points; total cost 9 points.
- 5) **Toughest Deadly Shooting:** Add Requires A Shooting Tricks Roll (-1 per 5 Active Points; -1). 14 Active Points; total cost 7 points.

DISQUIETING AURA

Effect: Change Environment, -4 PRE
Target/Area Affected: 8" Radius
Duration: Constant
Range: No Range
END Cost: 3
Skill Roll Penalty: -3

Description: When the character wants, he can be pretty eerie and frightening — just being near him is enough to disturb and unnerve people.

Game Information: *Change Environment 8" radius, -4 PRE for purposes of resisting character's Presence Attacks (35 Active Points); No Range (-½), Requires A PRE Roll (assumes a PRE Roll of 12- or 13-; -¾). Total cost: 15 points.*

Options:

- 1) **Strong Super-Skill I:** Increase to -6 PRE. 45 Active Points; total cost 20 points.
- 2) **Strong Super-Skill II:** Add Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½). 52 Active Points; total cost 23 points.
- 3) **Weak Super-Skill:** Decrease to -3 PRE. 30 Active Points; total cost 13 points.
- 4) **Easier Super-Skill:** Change to Requires A PRE Roll (-1 per 20 Active Points; -½). Total cost: 17 points.
- 5) **Tougher Super-Skill:** Change to Requires A PRE Roll (-1 per 5 Active Points; -1¼). Total cost: 13 points.
- 6) **Master's Super-Skill:** Remove Requires A PRE Roll (-¾). Total cost: 23 points.
- 7) **Eerie Laugh:** When people hear the character's chilling laughter, they tremble in fear! Add Incantations (-¼). Total cost: 14 points.
- 8) **Other Disquieting Effects:** The fear a character inspires could have plenty of other effects besides just making his enemies more susceptible to his Presence Attacks. Here are some other possibilities, which a character could buy separately, or as one Change Environment power with the *Multiple Combat Effects* and/or *Variable Combat Effects* Adders:

-4 EGO for purposes of resisting the character's Interrogation rolls

-4 OCV because his enemies are too afraid to attack him effectively

-4 DCV because his enemies are paralyzed with fear

-4 STR as his enemies become weak with fear

Here's an example of how you might create such a power: Change Environment 8" radius (inspire fear in the character's enemies), -4 PRE for purposes of resisting character's Presence Attacks, Multiple Combat Effects, Variable Combat Effects (50 Active Points); No Range (-½), Requires A PRE Roll (assumes a PRE Roll of 12- or 13-; -¾). Total cost: 22 points.

DOUBLE TAP

Effect:	Autofire (2 shots; +¼) for RKA built on up to 60 Active Points
Target/Area Affected:	One character
Duration:	Instant
Range:	Self
END Cost:	1
Skill Roll Penalty:	-1

Description: The character is skilled at firing guns (primarily handguns) two times in rapid succession at a single target, increasing his chances of inflicting a lethal injury.

Even though the cost of this Super-Skill depends on the Active Points in the attack, the GM should consider letting the character apply it even to firearms that exceed the Active Point total. Some types of bullets significantly increase the Active Point cost of a gun, though they don't alter it in any way, so it may make common sense and dramatic sense to let the character use this ability with them.

Game Information: *Autofire (2 shots; +¼) for any non-Autofire RKA built on up to 60 Active Points (15 Active Points); OIF (non-Autofire firearm of opportunity; -½), Both Shots Must Be At The Same Target (-0), Requires A Shooting Tricks Roll (-½). Total cost: 7 points.*

Options:

- 1) Strong Double Tap:** Increase to any non-Autofire RKA built on up to 90 Active Points. 22 Active Points; total cost 11 points.
- 2) Weak Double Tap:** Decrease to any non-Autofire RKA built on up to 45 Active Points. 11 Active Points; total cost 5 points.
- 3) Easier Double Tap:** Change to Requires A Shooting Tricks Roll (-1 per 20 Active Points; -¼). Total cost: 9 points.
- 4) Tougher Double Tap:** Change to Requires A Shooting Tricks Roll (-1 per 5 Active Points; -1). Total cost: 6 points.
- 5) Master's Double Tap:** Remove Requires A Shooting Tricks Roll (-½). Total cost: 10 points.
- 6) Accurate Double Tap:** The character's also more likely to hit the target with at least one shot (if not both). Character also buys +2 OCV with Double Tap. Total cost 4 points; total cost of ability 11 points.
- 7) Variant Double Tap:** This version of Double Tap relies solely upon Combat Skill Levels. Change to +2 OCV with Non-Autofire Firearms (10 Active Points); Requires A Shooting Tricks Roll (-½), Requires 2 Charges Per Use (-¼). Total cost: 6 points.

DRAWING A BEAD

Effect:	+3 OCV, Only Versus Dodging
Target/Area Affected:	Self
Duration:	Instant
Range:	Self
END Cost:	1
Skill Roll Penalty:	-1

Description: The character knows how to track opponents with ranged attacks and hit them even when they're doing their best to get out of his line of fire. In game terms he has three Combat Skill Levels he can only assign to OCV to counteract the DCV bonus a target gets from Dodge, Martial Dodge, or any other Martial Maneuver with the Dodge Element. He can only apply as many Levels as the DCV bonus provided by the Maneuver, or three, whichever is fewer.

Game Information: *+3 OCV (15 Active Points); Only To Counteract Dodge DCV Bonuses (-½), Requires A Shooting Tricks Roll (-½). Total cost: 7 points.*

Options:

- 1) Strong Drawing:** Increase to +5 OCV. 25 Active Points; total cost 12 points.
- 2) Weak Drawing:** Decrease to +2 OCV. 10 Active Points; total cost 5 points.
- 3) Easier Drawing:** Change to Requires A Shooting Tricks Roll (-1 per 20 Active Points; -¼). Total cost: 9 points.
- 4) Tougher Drawing:** Change to Requires A Shooting Tricks Roll (-1 per 5 Active Points; -1). Total cost: 6 points.
- 5) Master's Drawing:** Remove Requires A Shooting Tricks Roll (-½). Total cost: 10 points.

EXTENDED PUSH

Effect:	+5 STR, Only When Pushing
Target/Area Affected:	Self
Duration:	Constant
Range:	Self
END Cost:	5
Skill Roll Penalty:	-1

Description: When the character really needs the strength to lift something heavy or punch someone as hard as he can, he has the willpower to call on normally-untapped reserves of muscular power.

Game Information: *+5 STR (5 Active Points); Increased Endurance Cost (x5 END; -2), Nonpersistent (-¼), Only When Pushing (-1), Requires An EGO Roll (assumes an EGO Roll of 12- or 13-; -¾). Total cost: 1 point.*

EYE POKE

Effect: Sight Group Flash 6d6, NND (solid eye coverings)
 Target/Area Affected: One character
 Duration: Instant
 Range: No Range
 END Cost: 4
 Skill Roll Penalty: N/A

Description: The character can hit someone in the eyes hard enough to temporarily blind him, but not hard enough to inflict permanent damage. The attack doesn't work if the target wears any sort of hard covering over his eyes — sunglasses, goggles, a helmet with faceplate, or the like.

Game Information: *Sight Group Flash 6d6, NND (the defense is solid coverings over the eyes; +½) (45 Active Points); No Range (-½). Total cost: 30 points.*

Options:

- 1) **Strong Poke:** Increase to Sight Group Flash 8d6. 60 Active Points; total cost 40 points.
- 2) **Weak Poke:** Decrease to Sight Group Flash 4d6. 30 Active Points; total cost 20 points.
- 3) **Tough Poke:** Add Requires A DEX Roll (assumes a DEX Roll of 12- or 13-; -¾). Total cost: 20 points.
- 4) **Eye Gouge:** The character can hit an opponent's eyes hard enough to damage them permanently. Change to Major Transform 6d6 (sighted being to blind being, heals back through eye transplant or the like), NND (the defense is solid coverings over the eyes; +½) (135 Active Points); All Or Nothing (-½), Limited Target (sighted beings with eyes placed within a handspan of each other; -½), No Range (-½). Total cost: 54 points.

FAVORITE GUN

Effect: Lightning Reflexes (+2 to act first with a single type and model of firearm) plus +2 OCV with a single type and model of firearm
 Target/Area Affected: Self
 Duration: Persistent/Constant
 Range: Self
 END Cost: 0
 Skill Roll Penalty: N/A

Description: Some characters seem to have an innate ability to use a particular type of pistol well. One might find that a Colt M1911A performs in an average way for him, but a Glock 17 somehow "fits him" so well that he's a much faster, more accurate shot. Another one might be lukewarm toward the Glock, but prefer the Colt.

Game Information: *Lightning Reflexes (+2 DEX to act first with a single type and model firearm) (total cost: 2 points) plus +2 OCV with a single type and model of firearm (total cost: 4 points). Total cost: 6 points.*

Options:

- 1) **More Favorite Gun:** Increase to +3 DEX and +3 OCV. Total cost: 9 points.
- 2) **Less Favorite Gun:** Decrease to +1 DEX and +1 OCV. Total cost: 3 points.

FEARFUL OBEDIENCE

Effect: Mind Control 10d6, Requires A Reputation Roll
 Target/Area Affected: One character
 Duration: Instant
 Range: No Range
 END Cost: 0
 Skill Roll Penalty: -0

Description: The character has so fearsome a reputation among members of the underworld that he can compel obedience from them, on pain of death or other dire fates if they disobey. Of course, the longer they're away from him, the more likely they are to shake off the effects....

Game Information: *Mind Control 10d6, Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½) (75 Active Points); Cannot Pay END To Prevent Deterioration Of Breakout Roll (-¼), Does Not Provide Mental Awareness (-¼), No Range (-½), Only Versus Criminals (-½), Requires A Reputation Roll (no Skill Roll penalty; -0). Total cost: 30 points.*

Options:

- 1) **Strong Obedience:** Increase to Mind Control 12d6. 90 Active Points; total cost 36 points.
- 2) **Weak Obedience:** Decrease to Mind Control 8d6. 60 Active Points; total cost 24 points.
- 3) **Tough Obedience:** Change to Requires A Reputation Roll (-1 per 20 Active Points; -¼). Total cost: 27 points.

4) **Tougher Obedience:** Change to Requires A Reputation Roll (-1 per 10 Active Points; -½). Total cost: 25 points.

5) **Toughest Obedience:** Change to Requires A Reputation Roll (-1 per 5 Active Points; -1). Total cost: 21 points.

GUN MUSCLE

Effect: +10 STR, Only To Meet STR Modifier For Using Firearms
Target/Area Affected: Self
Duration: Persistent
Range: Self
END Cost: 1
Skill Roll Penalty: N/A

Description: The character's trained himself to pick up and fire accurately weapons that are far larger and heavier than he could otherwise use. (This does not allow him to use crew-served weapons by himself without penalty.)

Game Information: +10 STR (10 Active Points); Only To Meet STR Modifier For Using Firearms (-2). Total cost: 3 points.

Options:

1) **Strong Muscles:** Increase to +15 STR. 15 Active Points; total cost 5 points.

2) **Weak Muscles:** Decrease to +5 STR. 5 Active Points; total cost 2 points.

HEADBUTT

Effect: HA +2d6 plus +2 OCV with Headbutt
Target/Area Affected: One character
Duration: Instant
Range: Touch
END Cost: 1
Skill Roll Penalty: N/A

Description: A favorite maneuver of brawlers in action movies, the headbutt rarely misses because it's quick, unexpected, and takes place at extremely close range.

Game Information: HA +2d6 (10 Active Points); Hand-To-Hand Attack (-½) (total cost: 7 points) **plus** +2 OCV with Headbutt (total cost: 4 points). Total cost: 11 points.

HIPSHOOTER

Effect: +1 OCV with Hipshot
Target/Area Affected: Self
Duration: Constant
Range: Self
END Cost: 0
Skill Roll Penalty: N/A

Description: The character's exceptionally skilled at hipshooting. He can fire quickly (usually from the hip after he's just drawn his gun) without taking time to properly aim but still have just as good a chance to hit as he normally would. In effect, this allows him to use the *Hipshot* Optional Combat Maneuver every Phase he's not using some other Combat Maneuver and thus gain +1 DEX to act first without losing -1 OCV.

Game Information: +1 OCV with Hipshot. Total cost: 2 points.

Options:

1) **Strong Hipshooter:** This form of Hipshooter works with the Optional Combat Maneuver *Hurry* instead. In effect, it lets the character use *Hurry* every Phase he's not using some other Combat Maneuver and thus gain +1d6 DEX to act first without losing -2 CV. He still suffers Skill and Characteristic Roll penalties, however. Change to: +2 OCV with *Hurry* (total cost: 4 Character Points) **plus** +2 DCV (10 Active Points); Only To Counteract *Hurry* DCV Penalty (-2) (total cost: 3 points). Total cost: 7 points.

HOLD HER STEADY

Effect: Recoil Skill Levels (+2 OCV versus the Recoil modifier with All Firearms)
Target/Area Affected: Self
Duration: Constant
Range: Self
END Cost: 0
Skill Roll Penalty: N/A

Description: In campaigns using the Recoil rules (page 194), some characters are particularly skilled at not letting recoil throw off their aim. This may be due to their great strength, their experience firing multiple-shot weapons, their general accuracy, or some other reason, but the net effect is that their aim doesn't suffer as much from recoil as other characters' does.

Game Information: Recoil Skill Levels (+2 OCV versus the Recoil modifier with All Firearms). Total cost: 4 points.

Options:

1) **Strong Steadiness:** Increase to +3 OCV versus the Recoil modifier. Total cost: 6 points.

2) **Weak Steadiness:** Decrease to +1 OCV versus the Recoil modifier. Total cost: 2 points.

3) **Tougher Steadiness:** Add Requires A Shooting Tricks Roll (-½). 6 Active Points; total cost 4 points.

HYPNOSIS

Effect:	Mind Control 7d6, OIF, Hypnosis Only
Target/Area Affected:	One character
Duration:	Instant
Range:	No Range (eye contact)
END Cost:	3
Skill Roll Penalty:	-3

Description: The character has mastered the art of mesmerism. In proper conditions — calm, relaxing ones — he can use any small, shiny object to focus the subject's thoughts and hypnotize him. Although built with Mind Control, this ability does not allow the full range of Mind Control effects — generally the best result he can obtain is EGO +20, and the GM may impose other restrictions in the interest of “realism.”

Game Information: *Mind Control 7d6 (35 Active Points); OIF (any watch, pen, or other object for the subject to focus on; -½), Hypnosis Only (cannot achieve full range of Mind Control effects, see text; -½), Concentration (0 DCV throughout activation; -1), Extra Time (1 Minute; -1½), Eye Contact Required (-½), Gestures (must wave focusing object in front of subject's eyes throughout activation; -½), Incantations (“You are getting sleepy...”, throughout activation; -½), No Range (-½), Requires A PS: Hypnotist Roll (-¼). Total cost: 5 points.*

Options:

- 1) **Strong Hypnosis:** Increase to Mind Control 10d6. 50 Active Points; total cost 7 points.
- 2) **Weak Hypnosis:** Decrease to Mind Control 5d6. 25 Active Points; total cost 4 points.
- 3) **Easier Hypnosis:** Change to Requires A PS: Hypnotist Roll (-1 per 20 Active Points; -0). Total cost: 5 points.
- 4) **Tougher Hypnosis:** Change to Requires A PS: Hypnotist Roll (-1 per 5 Active Points; -¾). Total cost: 5 points.
- 5) **Master's Hypnosis:** Remove Requires A PS: Hypnotist Roll (-¼). Total cost: 5 points.
- 6) **Cinematic Hypnosis:** This form of Hypnosis is much easier and quicker to use. Mind Control 8d6 (40 Active Points); Hypnosis Only (cannot achieve full range of Mind Control effects; -½), Concentrate (0 DCV throughout activation; -1), Extra Time (1 Turn; -1¼), No Range (-½). Total cost: 9 points.

I KNOW HOW HE FIGHTS

Effect:	+4 with All Combat, Requires An Analyze Combat Technique Roll
Target/Area Affected:	Self
Duration:	Constant
Range:	Self
END Cost:	0
Skill Roll Penalty:	-3

Description: The character's skilled at predicting how other people fight and react in combat, and thus knows the best way to counter an enemy's actions. At the GM's option, the character may receive a bonus to his roll if he's fought that particular person before.

Game Information: *+4 with All Combat (32 Active Points); Requires An Analyze Combat Technique Roll (-½), Only Applies Versus Targets Against Whom Character Has Made An Analyze Combat Technique Roll (-½). Total cost: 16 points.*

Options:

- 1) **Strong Knowledge:** Increase to +6 with All Combat. 48 Active Points; total cost 24 points.
- 2) **Weak Knowledge:** Decrease to +2 with All Combat. 16 Active Points; total cost 8 points.
- 3) **Easier Knowledge:** Change to Requires An Analyze Combat Technique Roll (-1 per 20 Active Points; -¼). Total cost: 18 points.
- 4) **Tougher Knowledge:** Change to Requires An Analyze Combat Technique Roll (-1 per 5 Active Points; -1). Total cost: 13 points.
- 5) **Master's Knowledge:** Remove Requires An Analyze Combat Technique Roll (-½). Total cost: 21 points.

I NEVER MISS (TYPE I)

Effect:	Area Of Effect (One Hex Accurate; +½) for firearms
Target/Area Affected:	One character
Duration:	Instant
Range:	Self
END Cost:	3
Skill Roll Penalty:	-3

Description: The character's an incredibly accurate shot. In game terms, he can apply the One Hex Accurate Advantage to any firearm built on up to 60 Active Points. Standard rules for that Advantage apply (e.g., the target can Dodge the attack, as described on page 97).

Even though the cost of this Super-Skill depends on the Active Points in the attack, the GM should consider letting the character apply it even to firearms that exceed the Active Point total. Some types of bullets significantly increase the Active Point cost of a gun, though they don't alter it in any way, so it may make common sense and dramatic sense to let the character use this ability with them.

Game Information: *Area Of Effect (One Hex Accurate; +½) for any firearm built on up to 60 Active Points (30 Active Points); OIF (firearms of opportunity; -½), Requires A Shooting Tricks Roll (-½). Total cost: 15 points.*

Options:

- 1) **More Accurate I:** Increase to for any firearm built on up to 90 Active Points. 45 Active Points; total cost 22 points.
- 2) **More Accurate II:** The character is so accurate that targets cannot even Dodge his shots (though they can try to Dive For Cover). In game terms, this is bought as a normal Area Of Effect that can apply to any firearm, but the character can only affect one person in the Area Of Effect at a time. The cost of the Radius is determined as if the base attack had 10 Active Points. Change to Area Of Effect (8" Radius; +1¾) for any firearm built on up to 60 Active Points (105 Active Points); OIF (firearms of opportunity; -½), Can Only Affect One Target In The Radius (-½), Requires A Shooting Tricks Roll (-½). Total cost: 42 points.
- 3) **Less Accurate:** Decrease to for any firearm built on up to 45 Active Points. 22 Active Points; total cost 11 points.
- 4) **Easier Accuracy:** Change to Requires A Shooting Tricks Roll (-1 per 20 Active Points; -¼). Total cost: 17 points.
- 5) **Tougher Accuracy:** Change to Requires A Shooting Tricks Roll (-1 per 5 Active Points; -1). Total cost: 12 points.
- 6) **Master's Accuracy:** Remove Requires A Shooting Tricks Roll (-½). Total cost: 20 points.

I NEVER MISS (TYPE II)

Effect:	Line Of Sight (+½) for firearms
Target/Area Affected:	One character
Duration:	Instant
Range:	Self
END Cost:	3
Skill Roll Penalty:	-3

Description: The character can shoot extremely accurately at range — so much so that he doesn't suffer the standard Range Modifier. On the other hand, if he can't see the target, he can't shoot it.

Even though the cost of this Super-Skill depends on the Active Points in the attack, the GM should consider letting the character apply it even to firearms that exceed the Active Point total. Some types of bullets significantly increase the Active Point cost of a gun, though they don't alter it in any way, so it may make common sense and dramatic sense to let the character use this ability with them.

Game Information: *Line Of Sight (+½) for any firearm built on up to 60 Active Points (30 Active Points); OIF (firearms of opportunity; -½), Requires A Shooting Tricks Roll (-½). Total cost: 15 points.*

Options:

- 1) **More Accurate:** Increase to for any firearm built on up to 90 Active Points. 45 Active Points; total cost 22 points.
- 2) **Less Accurate:** Decrease to for any firearm built on up to 45 Active Points. 22 Active Points; total cost 11 points.
- 3) **Easier Accuracy:** Change to Requires A Shooting Tricks Roll (-1 per 20 Active Points; -¼). Total cost: 17 points.
- 4) **Tougher Accuracy:** Change to Requires A Shooting Tricks Roll (-1 per 5 Active Points; -1). Total cost: 12 points.
- 5) **Master's Accuracy:** Remove Requires A Shooting Tricks Roll (-½). Total cost: 20 points.

I'VE GOT YOU COVERED

Effect:	Invisible Power Effects (+1), Only For Covering
Target/Area Affected:	Self
Duration:	Persistent
Range:	Self
END Cost:	6
Skill Roll Penalty:	N/A

Description: The Cover Combat Maneuver has one big drawback: the Covered character can automatically tell that the person Covering him has hostile intentions towards him. A character with this ability doesn't have to worry about that. He has a sort of "quick-draw" ability — he can "Cover" an enemy without actually seeming to do anything, but when the fight begins, he immediately whips out his weapon and attacks as an Action that takes no time (this occurs before the Covered character's action, as usual with the Maneuver).

In game terms, this ability is bought as Invisible Power Effects for the character's DEX. If necessary, recalculate the cost to reflect the character's exact DEX.

Game Information: *Invisible Power Effects (fully invisible; +1) for up to DEX 20 (60 Active Points); Only For Covering (-1). Total cost: 30 points.*

Options:

- 1) **Strong Super-Skill:** Increase to DEX 25. 75 Active Points; total cost 37 points.
- 2) **Weak Super-Skill:** Decrease to DEX 15. 45 Active Points; total cost 22 points.
- 3) **Tough Super-Skill:** Change to Requires A Fast Draw Roll (-1 per 20 Active Points; -¼). Total cost: 27 points.
- 4) **Tougher Super-Skill:** Change to Requires A Fast Draw Roll (-1 per 10 Active Points; -½). Total cost: 24 points.
- 5) **Toughest Super-Skill:** Change to Requires A Fast Draw Roll (-1 per 5 Active Points; -1). Total cost: 20 points.

KICK

Effect:	HA +4d6, Extra Time (Full Phase)
Target/Area Affected:	One character
Duration:	Instant
Range:	Touch
END Cost:	2
Skill Roll Penalty:	N/A

Description: The character can launch a devastating kick in HTH Combat.

Game Information: *HA +4d6 (20 Active Points); Extra Time (Full Phase; -½), Hand-To-Hand Attack (-½). Total cost: 10 points.*

Options:

- 1) **Strong Kick:** Increase to HA +6d6. 30 Active Points; total cost: 15 points.
- 2) **Weak Kick:** Decrease to HA +2d6. 10 Active Points; total cost: 5 points.
- 3) **Skilled Kicker I:** The character's also a more skilled kicker than the average skilled fighter. Character also buys +2 OCV with HA. Total cost 4 points; total cost of ability 14 points.
- 4) **Skilled Kicker II:** The character's so good at fighting that he's also tougher to hit. Character also buys +2 with HA (can be applied to OCV or DCV). Total cost 6 points; total cost 16 points.

LAST MAN STANDING

Effect:	+2 Overall, Only When Character Is The Last Man Standing
Target/Area Affected:	Self
Duration:	Constant
Range:	Self
END Cost:	2
Skill Roll Penalty:	N/A

Description: This ability represents the burst of adrenaline and desperate skill that come when the character realizes he's the last man on his side standing against the foe. It only works if the character is on a "side" of some sort (an army, a group of adventurers, or the like) that's opposing another "side"; if he's by himself to begin with, this power doesn't work.

Game Information: *+2 Overall (20 Active Points); Only When Character Is The Last Man Standing (-2). Total cost: 7 points.*

Options:

- 1) **Strong Last Stand:** Increase to +3 Overall. 30 Active Points; total cost 10 points.
- 2) **Weak Last Stand:** Decrease to +1 Overall. 10 Active Points; total cost 3 points.



LETHAL ACCURACY I

Effect:	Find Weakness 11- with all Firearms
Target/Area Affected:	Self
Duration:	Persistent
Range:	Self
END Cost:	0
Skill Roll Penalty:	N/A

Description: The character has an uncanny knack for finding the weakest or most vulnerable spot on his target when he shoots.

Game Information: *Find Weakness 11- with all Firearms. Total cost: 20 points.*

Options:

- 1) **Strong Super-Skill:** Increase to Find Weakness 14-. Total cost: 35 points.
- 2) **Weak Super-Skill:** Decrease to with a single firearm (e.g., with the Colt M1911A). Total cost: 10 points.

LETHAL ACCURACY II

Effect:	Penetrating (+½) for firearms
Target/Area Affected:	Self
Duration:	Instant
Range:	Self
END Cost:	3
Skill Roll Penalty:	-3

Description: The character's shots may not always hit... but when they do hit, they're almost certain to hit a vulnerable spot and draw blood.

Even though the cost of this Super-Skill depends on the Active Points in the attack, the GM should consider letting the character apply it even to firearms that exceed the Active Point total. Some types of bullets significantly increase the Active Point cost of a gun, though they don't alter it in any way, so it may make common sense and dramatic sense to let the character use this ability with them.

Game Information: *Penetrating (+½) for any firearm built on up to 60 Active Points (30 Active Points); OIF (firearms of opportunity; -½), Requires A Shooting Tricks Roll (-½). Total cost: 15 points.*

Options:

- 1) **More Accurate:** Increase to for any firearm built on up to 90 Active Points. 45 Active Points; total cost 22 points.
- 2) **Less Accurate:** Decrease to for any firearm built on up to 45 Active Points. 22 Active Points; total cost 11 points.
- 3) **Easier Accuracy:** Change to Requires A Shooting Tricks Roll (-1 per 20 Active Points; -¼). Total cost: 17 points.

4) **Tougher Accuracy:** Change to Requires A Shooting Tricks Roll (-1 per 5 Active Points; -1). Total cost: 12 points.

5) **Master's Accuracy:** Remove Requires A Shooting Tricks Roll (-½). Total cost: 20 points.

LIGHTNING-SWIFT WARRIOR

Effect: +2 SPD
Target/Area Affected: Self
Duration: Constant
Range: Self
END Cost: 2
Skill Roll Penalty: N/A

Description: The character is such a well-trained combatant that he moves with blistering speed compared to even other skilled fighting men. When he lets loose, almost no one can hope to keep up with him.

In game terms, this ability is bought as +2 SPD, but the character can only use the extra Phases to attack. He cannot take defensive actions, move, take Recoveries, use a non-combat Skill, or do anything other than assault his foes. Since this may cause game balance or game play problems, characters should get the GM's permission before buying it.

Game Information: +2 SPD (20 Active Points); Costs Endurance (-½), Only To Attack (-0). Total cost: 13 points.

Options:

- 1) **Strong Swiftness:** Increase to +3 SPD. 30 Active Points; total cost 20 points.
- 2) **Weak Swiftness:** Decrease to +1 SPD. 10 Active Points; total cost 7 points.
- 3) **Tough Swiftness:** Add to Requires A DEX Roll (assumes a DEX Roll of 12- or 13-; -¾). Total cost: 9 points.
- 4) **Untiring Swiftness:** Remove Costs Endurance (-½). Total cost: 20 points.

MACHINE GUNNER FROM HELL

Effect: +4 OCV with Autofire Firearms against a single target
Target/Area Affected: Self
Duration: Constant
Range: Self
END Cost: 0
Skill Roll Penalty: N/A

Description: The character is extremely accurate when using Autofire attacks against a single foe.

Game Information: +4 OCV with Autofire Firearms (20 Active Points); Only Apply When Character Uses Autofire Against A Single Target (-¼), Must Use Maximum Number Of Autofire Shots (-¼), Not While Targeting (-½). Total cost: 10 points.

Options:

- 1) **Strong Machine Gunnery:** Increase to +6 OCV. 30 Active Points; total cost 15 points.
- 2) **Weak Machine Gunnery:** Decrease to +2 OCV. 10 Active Points; total cost 5 points.

MOWING 'EM DOWN

Effect: Area Of Effect (8" Radius; +1½) and Selective (+¼) for any Autofire firearm built on up to 90 Active Points
Target/Area Affected: 8" Radius
Duration: Instant
Range: Self
END Cost: 0
Skill Roll Penalty: N/A

Description: The character is skilled with Autofire attacks, able to cut down numerous foes without suffering CV penalties. In game terms, it's bought as a naked Area Of Effect Advantage (the cost for the Radius assumes a base power of 20 Active Points).

Game Information: Area Of Effect (8" Radius; +1½) and Selective (+¼) for any Autofire firearm built on up to 90 Active Points (157 Active Points); OIF (any Autofire firearm; -½), Must Use Maximum Number Of Autofire Shots And Can Only Hit One Target Per Shot (-¼), Not While Targeting (-½). Total cost: 70 points.

Options:

- 1) **Strong Machine Gunnery I:** Increase to Area Of Effect (16" Radius; +1¾). 180 Active Points; total cost 80 points.
- 2) **Strong Machine Gunnery II:** Increase to any Autofire firearm built on up to 120 Active Points. 210 Active Points; total cost 93 points.
- 3) **Weak Machine Gunnery I:** Decrease to Area Of Effect (4" Radius; +1¼). 135 Active Points; total cost 60 points.
- 4) **Weak Machine Gunnery II:** Decrease to any Autofire firearm built on up to 60 Active Points. 105 Active Points; total cost 47 points.

5) **Tough Machine Gunnery:** Add Requires A Shooting Tricks Roll (-1 per 20 Active Points; -¼). Total cost: 63 points.

NECKSNAPPER

Effect: HKA 2d6, NND, Does BODY, Must Follow Grab, Must Target The Head

Target/Area Affected: One character

Duration: Instant

Range: Touch

END Cost: 9

Skill Roll Penalty: -0

Description: The character has been trained in how to quickly and cleanly kill a person by breaking that person's neck. To do this, he must first Grab the victim, and in a later Phase target the Head with this attack, taking the usual -8 OCV penalty (but getting the standard damage bonuses if he succeeds). The attack won't work on anyone who has the proper neck protection, who's in a position that won't allow the character to twist his neck the right way, and so forth. At the GM's option, a victim who has 20 or more points of STR than the character, or who defeats the character in a STR Roll Versus STR Roll Contest by 4 or more, is likewise immune to the attack (at least for the time being... things may turn out differently in a later encounter).

Game Information: *HKA 2d6, NND (defense is rigid rPD on the neck, or anything else that prevents the neck/head from being turned and twisted the right way; +1), Does BODY (+1) (90 Active Points); Must Follow Grab (-½), Must Target The Head (-1), No STR Bonus (-½), Requires A STR Roll (assumes a STR Roll of 12- or 13-, no Active Point penalty; -¼). Total cost: 28 points.*

Options:

1) **Strong Necksnapper:** Increase to HKA 3d6. 135 Active Points; total cost 41 points.

2) **Weak Necksnapper:** Decrease to HKA 1d6. 45 Active Points; total cost 14 points.

3) **Tough Necksnapper:** Change to Requires A STR Roll (-1 per 20 Active Points; -½). Total cost: 26 points.

4) **Tougher Necksnapper:** Change to Requires A STR Roll (-1 per 10 Active Points; -¾). Total cost: 24 points.

5) **Toughest Necksnapper:** Change to Requires A STR Roll (-1 per 5 Active Points; -1¼). Total cost: 21 points.

6) **Master's Necksnapper:** Remove Requires A STR Roll (-¾). Total cost: 30 points.

PAINFUL SHOT

Effect: Increased STUN Multiplier (+½) for firearms

Target/Area Affected: Self

Duration: Instant

Range: Self

END Cost: 3

Skill Roll Penalty: -3

Description: The character has the ability to place his shots so that even if they don't kill the target, they cause as much pain as possible.

Even though the cost of this Super-Skill depends on the Active Points in the attack, the GM should consider letting the character apply it even to firearms that exceed the Active Point total. Some types of bullets significantly increase the Active Point cost of a gun, though they don't alter it in any way, so it may make common sense and dramatic sense to let the character use this ability with them.

Game Information: *+2 Increased STUN Multiplier (+½) for any firearm built on up to 60 Active Points (30 Active Points); OIF (firearms of opportunity; -½), Requires A Shooting Tricks Roll (-½). Total cost: 15 points.*

Options:

1) **More Painful:** Increase to for any firearm built on up to 90 Active Points. 45 Active Points; total cost 22 points.

2) **Less Painful:** Decrease to for any firearm built on up to 45 Active Points. 22 Active Points; total cost 11 points.

3) **Easier Painful Shot:** Change to Requires A Shooting Tricks Roll (-1 per 20 Active Points; -¼). Total cost: 17 points.

4) **Tougher Painful Shot:** Change to Requires A Shooting Tricks Roll (-1 per 5 Active Points; -1). Total cost: 12 points.

5) **Master's Painful Shot:** Remove Requires A Shooting Tricks Roll (-½). Total cost: 20 points.

PERFECT TIMING

Effect:	Precognition, Only To Perfectly Time Attacks
Target/Area Affected:	Self
Duration:	Instant
Range:	No Range
END Cost:	0
Skill Roll Penalty:	-6

Description: Some action heroes have a knack for timing things perfectly. If they set a bomb on a timer, inevitably the timing works out so that the bomb detonates just when an enemy is nearby, or at the moment that causes the best effect for the character's purposes. If they lead an ambush, somehow they always time things so that the attack creates the maximum possible havoc among the enemy, or hits just when an important officer arrives. Perfect Timing simulates this sort of gift. Since the ability represents a skilled or luck-based ability to time attacks, it provides the character with no actual information — he doesn't literally "see" what time his target walks past the bomb or when the enemy officer arrives at camp. It just lets him prepare his attacks with precision.

The GM determines what constitutes an "attack" for the purposes of this power.

Game Information: *Clairsentience (Sight Group), Precognition, Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½) (60 Active Points); Instant (-½), Only To Perfectly Time Attacks (-1), No Range (-½), Precognition Only (-1), Requires An INT Roll (assumes an INT Roll of 12- or 13-; -¾), Time Modifiers (-½). Total cost: 11 points.*

Options:

- 1) **Easier Super-Skill:** Change to Requires An INT Roll (-1 per 20 Active Points; -½). Total cost: 12 points.
- 2) **Tougher Super-Skill:** Change to Requires An INT Roll (-1 per 5 Active Points; -1¼). Total cost: 10 points.
- 3) **Master's Super-Skill:** Remove Requires An INT Roll (-½). Total cost: 13 points.

PISTOLERO

Effect:	Range Skill Levels: +4 versus the Range Modifier with Handguns
Target/Area Affected:	Self
Duration:	Constant
Range:	Self
END Cost:	0
Skill Roll Penalty:	N/A

Description: The character is so skilled a pistol shot that he can hit distant targets as easily as he can close ones. When shooting at targets up to 35 yards (16") away, he suffers no Range Modifier penalty.

Game Information: *Range Skill Levels: +4 versus the Range Modifier with Handguns. Total cost: 8 points.*

Options:

- 1) **Strong Pistolero:** The character can make shots out to nearly 70 yards (32") without difficulty. Increase to +6 versus the Range Modifier. Total cost: 12 points.
- 2) **Weak Pistolero:** Decrease to +2 versus the Range Modifier. Total cost: 4 points.

QUICK DRAW ARTIST

Effect:	Lightning Reflexes: +4 DEX to act first with Firearms
Target/Area Affected:	Self
Duration:	Persistent
Range:	Self
END Cost:	0
Skill Roll Penalty:	N/A

Description: A character with this ability is one of the fastest draws (and shots) in the West... or anywhere else.

Game Information: *Lightning Reflexes: +4 DEX to act first with Firearms. Total cost: 4 points.*

Options:

- 1) **Really Quick Draw:** Increase to +6 DEX. Total cost: 6 points.
- 2) **Slower Quick Draw:** Decrease to +2 DEX. Total cost: 2 points.
- 3) **Slap Leather:** Just to make sure no one else will outdraw him, the character also buys Fast Draw (Small Arms). Total cost 3 points; total cost of ability 7 points.

QUICK FIRE I

Effect:	Autofire (up to 5 shots; +½) for any non-Autofire firearm built on up to 60 Active Points
Target/Area Affected:	Self
Duration:	Instant
Range:	Self
END Cost:	0
Skill Roll Penalty:	-3

Description: The character can attack in a manner like the *Rapid Fire* Optional Combat Maneuver, but he's so nimble he suffers no DCV penalties when doing so. On the other hand, he suffers the usual penalties associated with Autofire if he does not buy Skills such as Accurate Sprayfire and Concentrated Sprayfire.

Even though the cost of this Super-Skill depends on the Active Points in the attack, the GM should consider letting the character apply it even to firearms that exceed the Active Point total. Some types of bullets significantly increase the Active Point cost of a gun, though they don't alter it in any way, so it may make common sense and dramatic sense to let the character use this ability with them.

Game Information: *Autofire (up to 5 shots; +½) for any non-Autofire firearm built on up to 60 Active Points (30 Active Points); OIF (any non-Autofire firearm of opportunity; -½), Requires A Shooting Tricks Roll (-½), Not While Targeting (-½). Total cost: 12 points.*

Options:

- 1) **Improved Quick Firing:** Increase to any non-Autofire firearm built on up to 90 Active Points. 45 Active Points; total cost 18 points.
- 2) **Weak Quick Firing:** Decrease to any non-Autofire firearm built on up to 45 Active Points. 22 Active Points; total cost 9 points.
- 3) **Easier Quick Firing:** Change to Requires A Shooting Tricks Roll (-1 per 20 Active Points; -¼). Total cost: 13 points.
- 4) **Tougher Quick Firing:** Change to Requires A Shooting Tricks Roll (-1 per 5 Active Points; -1). Total cost: 10 points.
- 5) **Master's Quick Firing:** Remove Requires A Shooting Tricks Roll (-½). Total cost: 15 points.
- 6) **Quicker Firing:** Increase to Autofire (up to 10 shots; +1). 60 Active Points; total cost 24 points.

QUICK FIRE II

Effect:	Area Of Effect (8" Radius; +1½) and Selective (+¼) for any Autofire firearm built on up to 60 Active Points
Target/Area Affected:	8" Radius
Duration:	Instant
Range:	No Range
END Cost:	0
Skill Roll Penalty:	-10

Description: This ability is similar to Quick Fire I, but uses Area Of Effect Selective instead of Autofire. The Radius has No Range, meaning it centers on the character, and thus only allows him to shoot nearby targets. The cost of the Radius assumes a base power of 20 Active Points.

Even though the cost of this Super-Skill depends on the Active Points in the attack, the GM should consider letting the character apply it even to firearms that exceed the Active Point total. Some types of bullets significantly increase the Active Point cost of a gun, though they don't alter it in any way, so it may make common sense and dramatic sense to let the character use this ability with them.

Game Information: *Area Of Effect (8" Radius; +1½) and Selective (+¼) for any non-Autofire firearm built on up to 60 Active Points (105 Active Points); OIF (any non-Autofire firearm of opportunity; -½), Not While Targeting (-½), No Range (-½), Requires A Shooting Tricks Roll (-½), Must Use 1 Charge Per Target Fired At (-¼). Total cost: 32 points.*

Options:

- 1) **Improved Quick Firing I:** Increase to any Autofire firearm built on up to 90 Active Points. 157 Active Points; total cost 48 points.
- 2) **Improved Quick Firing II:** Increase to Area Of Effect (16" Radius; +1¾). 120 Active Points; total cost 37 points.
- 3) **Weak Quick Firing:** Decrease to any Autofire firearm built on up to 45 Active Points. 79 Active Points; total cost 24 points.
- 4) **Easier Quick Firing:** Change to Requires A Shooting Tricks Roll (-1 per 20 Active Points; -¼). Total cost: 35 points.
- 5) **Tougher Quick Firing:** Change to Requires A Shooting Tricks Roll (-1 per 5 Active Points; -1). Total cost: 28 points.
- 6) **Master's Quick Firing:** Remove Requires A Shooting Tricks Roll (-½). Total cost: 38 points.

QUICK FIRE III

Effect:	+4 OCV with Rapid Fire plus Rapid Attack (Ranged)
Target/Area Affected:	Self
Duration:	Constant/Persistent
Range:	Self
END Cost:	0
Skill Roll Penalty:	N/A

Description: This ability is similar to Quick Fire I, but uses Combat Skill Levels with Rapid Fire and the *Rapid Attack* Skill to simulate the character's ability to shoot quickly and accurately. He still suffers from the halving of his DCV, though.

Game Information: +4 OCV with Rapid Fire (total cost: 8 points) **plus** Rapid Attack (Ranged) (total cost: 5 points). Total cost: 13 points.

Options:

- 1) **Improved Quick Firing I:** Increase to +6 OCV with Rapid Fire. Total cost 12 + 5 = 17 points.
- 2) **Improved Quick Firing II:** This form of Quick Fire III also compensates for Rapid Fire's effect on the character's DCV. The character must buy a number of DCV Levels equal to his DCV, thus effectively giving himself his "normal full DCV" when Rapid Firing. This example assumes a character with DCV 7. Character also buys +7 DCV (35 Active Points); Only When Rapid Firing (-1). Total cost 17 points; total cost of ability 30 points.
- 3) **Weak Quick Firing:** Decrease to +2 OCV with Rapid Fire. Total cost 4 + 5 = 9 points.

SCENERY WEAPONS

Effect:	HA +4d6, OIF (objects of opportunity)
Target/Area Affected:	One character
Duration:	Instant
Range:	Touch
END Cost:	2
Skill Roll Penalty:	N/A

Description: The character is skilled at using everyday objects — chairs, fire extinguishers, vases, and so forth — as weapons. He knows how to strike with them for maximum effect, and which ones work best in which situations. Although he's limited to what's available in the local environment, it's usually not too difficult for him to find something he can work with.

Game Information: HA +4d6 (20 Active Points); OIF (appropriate objects of opportunity; -½), Hand-To-Hand Attack (-½). Total cost: 10 points.

Options:

- 1) **Strong Super-Skill:** Increase to HA +5d6. 25 Active Points; total cost 12 points.
- 2) **Weak Super-Skill:** Decrease to HA +3d6. 15 Active Points; total cost 7 points.

SHOOTING DOWN THE BARREL

Effect:	Dispel RKA 20d6, Firearms Only
Target/Area Affected:	One character
Duration:	Instant
Range:	15"
END Cost:	0 (uses a firearm's Charges; see text)
Skill Roll Penalty:	-6

Description: A common trick of expert shooters, whether with gun, bow, or crossbow, is to ruin an enemy's gun by shooting down its barrel.

Game Information: *Dispel RKA 20d6* (60 Active Points); OIF (firearm [or other weapon of choice] of opportunity; -½), Limited Range (15"; -¼), Limited Special Effect (Firearms RKAs only; -½), Requires A Shooting Tricks Roll (-½), Uses 1 Charge From The RKA Used To Shoot Down The Barrel (-¼). Total cost: 20 points.

Options:

- 1) **Strong Shooting:** Increase to Dispel RKA 25d6. 75 Active Points; total cost 25 points.
- 2) **Weak Shooting:** Decrease to Dispel RKA 15d6. 45 Active Points; total cost 15 points.
- 3) **Easier Shooting:** Change to Requires A Shooting Tricks Roll (-1 per 20 Active Points; -¼). Total cost: 22 points.
- 4) **Tougher Shooting:** Change to Requires A Shooting Tricks Roll (-1 per 5 Active Points; -1). Total cost: 17 points.
- 5) **Master's Shooting:** Remove Requires A Shooting Tricks Roll (-½). Total cost: 24 points.

SNIPER'S EYE

Effect:	Range Skill Levels: +8 versus the Range Modifier with Rifles
Target/Area Affected:	Self
Duration:	Constant
Range:	Self
END Cost:	0
Skill Roll Penalty:	N/A

Description: The character is an expert sniper, able to make shots out to about 140 yards (64") without difficulty.

Game Information: Range Skill Levels: +8 versus the Range Modifier with Rifles (16 Active Points); Only When Shooter Braces And/Or Sets (-1). Total cost: 8 points.

Options:

- 1) **Strong Sniper's Eye I:** The character can make shots out to nearly 300 yards (128") without difficulty. Increase to +10 versus the Range Modifier. 20 Active Points; total cost 10 points.
- 2) **Strong Sniper's Eye II:** The character can make shots out to about 1,000 yards (512") without difficulty. Increase to +14 versus Range Modifier. 28 Active Points; total cost 14 points.
- 3) **Weak Sniper's Eye:** Decrease to +6 versus the Range Modifier. 18 Active Points; total cost 9 points.

SON OF A BITCH MUST PAY

Effect:	+3 Overall, Only Versus Opponents Who Defeated Character In Their Last Encounter
Target/Area Affected:	Self
Duration:	Constant
Range:	Self
END Cost:	0
Skill Roll Penalty:	N/A

Description: This ability gives a vengeance-minded character the chance to score a decisive victory against an opponent who defeated him in their last encounter. The GM determines whether the character was “defeated”; usually this should be obvious, and it does not include fights that end in a draw or from which the character flees to avoid true defeat. The Levels only apply to the two characters’ very next encounter; if that encounter ends indecisively, the character has lost his opportunity and won’t have the Levels when next the two enemies meet.

Game Information: +3 Overall (30 Active Points); Only Versus Opponents Who Defeated Character In Their Last Encounter (-1). Total cost: 15 points.

Options:

- 1) **Strong Vengeance:** Increase to +4 Overall. 40 Active Points; total cost 20 points.
- 2) **Weak Vengeance:** Decrease to +2 Overall. 20 Active Points; total cost 10 points.

SUPREME SNIPER

Effect:	No Range Modifier (+½) for firearms
Target/Area Affected:	Self
Duration:	Instant
Range:	Self
END Cost:	3
Skill Roll Penalty:	-3

Description: The character can shoot with incredible skill at range. Whether his target’s right next to him or 600 yards away, he’s equally accurate.

Even though the cost of this Super-Skill depends on the Active Points in the attack, the GM should consider letting the character apply it even to firearms that exceed the Active Point total. Some types of bullets significantly increase the Active Point cost of a gun, though they don’t alter it in any way, so it may make common sense and dramatic sense to let the character use this ability with them.

Game Information: No Range Modifier (+½) for any firearm built on up to 60 Active Points (30 Active Points); OIF (firearms of opportunity; -½), Requires A Shooting Tricks Roll (-½). Total cost: 15 points.

Options:

- 1) **More Accurate:** Increase to for any firearm built on up to 90 Active Points. 45 Active Points; total cost 22 points.
- 2) **Less Accurate:** Decrease to for any firearm built on up to 45 Active Points. 22 Active Points; total cost 11 points.
- 3) **Easier Accuracy:** Change to Requires A Shooting Tricks Roll (-1 per 20 Active Points; -¼). Total cost: 17 points.
- 4) **Tougher Accuracy:** Change to Requires A Shooting Tricks Roll (-1 per 5 Active Points; -1). Total cost: 12 points.
- 5) **Master’s Accuracy:** Remove Requires A Shooting Tricks Roll (-½). Total cost: 20 points.

T-TARGET SHOOTING

Effect:	Targeting Skill Levels: +2 versus Hit Locations
Target/Area Affected:	Self
Duration:	Constant
Range:	Self
END Cost:	0
Skill Roll Penalty:	N/A

Description: Some soldiers and police officers are trained to fire at the “T” formed by a human’s shoulders and torso, thus improving their chances of getting an incapacitating hit in the body or head. This ability simulates that training, in that it allows characters to make High Shots without OCV penalty.

Game Information: Targeting Skill Levels: +2 versus Hit Locations with Firearms. Total cost: 4 points.

TERROR OF THE UNDERWORLD

Effect:	+20 PRE, Only To Make Fear-/Intimidation-Based Presence Attacks Against Criminals, Requires A Reputation Roll
Target/Area Affected:	Self
Duration:	Persistent
Range:	Self
END Cost:	0
Skill Roll Penalty:	-0

Description: The character has such a fearsome reputation among members of the underworld that they’re more susceptible than usual to his fearsome Presence Attacks... assuming, of course, they recognize him for who he is.

Game Information: +20 PRE (20 Active Points); Only To Make Fear-/Intimidation-Based Presence Attacks Against Criminals (-1½), Requires A Reputation Roll (no Skill Roll penalty; -0). Total cost: 8 points.

Options:

- 1) **Strong Terror:** Increase to +30 PRE. 30 Active Points; total cost 12 points.
- 2) **Weak Terror:** Decrease to +10 PRE. 10 Active Points; total cost 4 points.

- 3) **Tough Terror:** Change to Requires A Reputation Roll (-1 per 20 Active Points; -¼). Total cost: 7 points.
- 4) **Tougher Terror:** Change to Requires A Reputation Roll (-1 per 10 Active Points; -½). Total cost: 7 points.
- 5) **Toughest Terror:** Change to Requires A Reputation Roll (-1 per 5 Active Points; -1). Total cost: 6 points.

THROWING MASTER I

Effect:	Throwing Skill Levels: +4 versus unbalanced/non-aerodynamic penalties
Target/Area Affected:	Self
Duration:	Constant
Range:	Self
END Cost:	0
Skill Roll Penalty:	N/A

Description: The character's so skilled at throwing things that he experiences few or no problems hurling unbalanced or non-aerodynamic objects.

Game Information: *Throwing Skill Levels: +4 versus the OCV penalty for throwing unbalanced/non-aerodynamic objects. Total cost: 8 points.*

Options:

- 1) **Strong Throwing Master:** Increase to +6 versus unbalanced/non-aerodynamic penalties. Total cost: 12 points.
- 2) **Weak Throwing Master:** Decrease to +2 versus unbalanced/non-aerodynamic penalties. Total cost: 4 points.

THROWING MASTER II

Effect:	Energy Blast 5-6d6, RKA 1½-2d6
Target/Area Affected:	One character
Duration:	Instant
Range:	RBS
END Cost:	0
Skill Roll Penalty:	-3

Description: The character is a highly-skilled thrown weapon expert — he can turn any small object into a missile weapon! Blunt objects (vases, figurines, telephones...) do Normal Damage; sharp or pointed objects (nails, piece of broken glass, ballpoint pens...) do Killing Damage. He can throw multiple objects at a time if he has them to throw. To use this ability, he needs a form of the *Power Skill* called *Throwing Master*.

Game Information:

Cost Power

- 14 *Throwing Master:* Multipower, 31-point reserve; all OIF (appropriate objects of opportunity; -½), Range Based On STR (-¼), Requires A Throwing Master Roll (-½)
- 1u 1) *Blunt Objects:* Energy Blast 6d6; OIF (appropriate objects of opportunity; -½), Range Based On STR (-¼), Requires A Throwing Master Roll (-½)

- 1u 2) *Sharp Objects:* RKA 2d6; OIF (appropriate objects of opportunity; -½), Range Based On STR (-¼), Requires A Throwing Master Roll (-½)
- 1u 3) *Many Blunt Objects:* Energy Blast 5d6, Autofire (up to 3 shots; +¼); OIF (appropriate objects of opportunity; -½), Range Based On STR (-¼), Requires A Throwing Master Roll (-½)
- 1u 4) *Many Sharp Objects:* RKA 1½d6, Autofire (up to 3 shots; +¼); OIF (appropriate objects of opportunity; -½), Range Based On STR (-¼), Requires A Throwing Master Roll (-½)

Total cost: 18 points.

Options:

- 1) **Strong Throwing Master:** Increase Multipower reserve to 40 points, Slot 1 to Energy Blast 8d6, Slot 2 to RKA 2½d6, Slot 3 to Energy Blast 6d6, and Slot 4 to RKA 2d6. Total cost: 26 points.
- 2) **Weak Throwing Master:** Decrease Multipower reserve to 20 points, Slot 1 to Energy Blast 4d6, Slot 2 to RKA 1d6+1, Slot 3 to Energy Blast 3d6, and Slot 4 to RKA 1d6. Total cost: 13 points.
- 3) **Easier Throwing Master:** Change to Requires A Throwing Master Roll (-1 per 20 Active Points; -¼). Total cost: 19 points.
- 4) **Tougher Throwing Master:** Change to Requires A Throwing Master Roll (-1 per 5 Active Points; -1). Total cost: 15 points.
- 5) **Master's Throwing Master:** Remove Requires A Throwing Master Roll (-½). Total cost: 26 points.

TWO-GUN KID

Effect:	Two-Weapon Fighting (Ranged) + Rapid Attack (Ranged)
Target/Area Affected:	Self
Duration:	Persistent
Range:	Self
END Cost:	0
Skill Roll Penalty:	N/A

Description: The character can shoot accurately with a gun in each hand.

Game Information: *Two-Weapon Fighting (Ranged) plus Rapid Attack (Ranged). Total cost: 15 points.*

Options:

- 1) **Woo Dive:** If the character's willing to dive to the side while firing two pistols at his target, he becomes even more accurate. At the GM's option, the character receives an additional bonus if he does this in a church while some doves fly through the scene to add a touch of symbolism. Character also buys +4 OCV with Rapid Fire (20 Active Points); Only When Using Two-Weapon Fighting And Rapid Attack (-0), Must Make A Half Move (-½), Requires A Shooting Tricks Roll (-½), Side Effects (character ends up prone in the hex where he stops moving, always occurs; -½). Total cost 8 points; total cost of ability 23 points.

DEFENSIVE ABILITIES

ACTIVE DEFENSE

Effect: +4 DCV
 Target/Area Affected: Self
 Duration: Constant
 Range: Self
 END Cost: 2
 Skill Roll Penalty: N/A

Description: The character knows how to keep moving and keep alert in combat so others have a hard time drawing a bead on him.

Game Information: +4 DCV (20 Active Points); Costs Endurance (-½). Total cost: 13 points.

Options:

- 1) **Strong Defense:** Increase to +6 DCV. 30 Active Points; total cost 20 points.
- 2) **Weak Defense:** Decrease to +2 DCV. 10 Active Points; total cost 7 points.
- 3) **Tough Defense:** Add Requires A DEX Roll (assumes a DEX Roll of 12- or 13-, -1 per 20 Active Points; -½). Total cost: 10 points.
- 4) **Tougher Defense:** Add Requires A DEX Roll (assumes a DEX Roll of 12- or 13-, -1 per 10 Active Points; -¾). Total cost: 9 points.
- 5) **Toughest Defense:** Add Requires A DEX Roll (assumes a DEX Roll of 12- or 13-, -1 per 5 Active Points; -1¼). Total cost: 7 points.
- 6) **Enhanced Active Defense:** Character also buys Defense Maneuver (as many levels as desired). Total cost 3-10 points; total cost of ability 16-23 points.

BATTLEFIELD DODGING

Effect: Desolidification, Only To Avoid Suppression Fire, Requires A DEX Roll
 Target/Area Affected: Self
 Duration: Constant
 Range: Self
 END Cost: 4
 Skill Roll Penalty: -4

Description: The character's so good at broken-field running, dodging, and the like that he can run through areas covered by Suppression Fire without getting hit.

Game Information: *Desolidification (affected by any attack other than Suppression Fire)* (40 Active Points); *Cannot Pass Through Solid Objects* (-½), *Only To Avoid Damage From Suppression Fire* (-2), *Requires A DEX Roll (assumes a DEX Roll of 12- or 13-; -¾)*. Total cost: 9 points.

Options:

- 1) **Easier Super-Skill:** Change to Requires A DEX Roll (-1 per 20 Active Points; -½). Total cost: 10 points.
- 2) **Tougher Super-Skill:** Change to Requires A DEX Roll (-1 per 5 Active Points; -1¼). Total cost: 8 points.

- 3) **Master's Super-Skill:** Remove Requires A DEX Roll (-¾). Total cost: 11 points.

CAN TAKE A PUNCH

Effect: Physical Damage Reduction, Resistant, 50%, Requires A CON Roll, Character Must Be Aware Of Attack
 Target/Area Affected: Self
 Duration: Persistent
 Range: Self
 END Cost: 0
 Skill Roll Penalty: -3

Description: Also known by such names as *Tough*, *Shrug It Off*, or *Chin Block*, this power represents a character's general resilience and toughness. If he's aware of a punch (or any other physical attack) and can prepare himself for it, he usually takes much less damage from it. This ability explains how a hero can get bruised up in so many fights during a scenario but always keep struggling and stay on his feet until he wins.

Game Information: *Physical Damage Reduction, Resistant, 50%* (30 Active Points); *Requires A CON Roll (assumes CON Roll of 12- or 13-; -¾)*, *Character Must Be Aware Of Attack* (-¼). Total cost: 15 points.

Options:

- 1) **Strong Toughness:** Remove Requires A CON Roll (-¾). Total cost: 24 points.
- 2) **Weak Toughness:** Decrease to Physical Damage Reduction, Resistant, 25%. 15 Active Points; total cost 7 points.
- 3) **Restricted Toughness:** The character can't reduce the BODY damage he takes, only the STUN. Add STUN Damage Defined As Pain/Shock Only (-½). Total cost: 12 points.

CINEMATIC SAFETY

Effect: Physical and Energy Damage Reduction, Resistant, 50%, Only Applies To Damage From Taking Cinematic Risks
 Target/Area Affected: Self
 Duration: Persistent
 Range: Self
 END Cost: 0
 Skill Roll Penalty: N/A

Description: In campaigns where the GM wants a "cinematic" feeling to the games, characters can buy this ability. It allows a character to jump onto speeding cars, get in a fistfight with someone three times his size, or take any other dangerous and unusual risk without fear of being quickly Knocked Out or killed. "Normal" risks, like firefights with an evenly-matched enemy force, would not be "cinematic" enough for the Damage Reduction to apply. The GM decides whether the defense applies to any given attack.



Game Information: *Physical and Energy Damage Reduction, Resistant, 50% (60 Active Points), Only Applies To Damage From Taking Cinematic Risks (-½). Total cost: 40 points.*

Options:

- 1) **Strong Safety:** Increase to Physical and Energy Damage Reduction, Resistant, 75%. 120 Active Points; total cost 80 points.
- 2) **Weak Safety:** Decrease to Physical and Energy Damage Reduction, Resistant, 25%. 30 Active Points; total cost 20 points.
- 3) **Tough Safety:** Add Requires A Luck Roll (1 level of Luck required; -1). Total cost: 24 points.
- 4) **Tougher Safety:** Add Requires A Luck Roll (2 levels of Luck required; -1½). Total cost: 20 points.
- 5) **Toughest Safety:** Add Requires A Luck Roll (3 levels of Luck required; -2). Total cost: 18 points.

DRUG TOLERANCE

Effect:	Poison Damage Reduction, 50%
Target/Area Affected:	Self
Duration:	Persistent
Range:	Self
END Cost:	0
Skill Roll Penalty:	N/A

Description: Due to his heightened metabolism, immense willpower, and/or extensive exposure to such substances, the character is unusually resistant to the effects of poisons, drugs, and gases. He suffers only half effect against such attacks, whether they're physical or energy, Normal or Killing Damage.

Game Information: *Poison Damage Reduction, 50%. Total cost: 30 points.*

Options:

- 1) **Strong Tolerance:** Increase to Poison Damage Reduction, 75%. Total cost: 60 points.
- 2) **Weak Tolerance:** Decrease to Poison Damage Reduction, 25%. Total cost: 15 points.
- 3) **Tough Defense:** Add Requires A CON Roll (assumes a CON Roll of 12- or 13-, -1 per 20 Active Points; -½). 30 Active Points; total cost 20 points.
- 4) **Tougher Defense:** Add Requires A CON Roll (assumes a CON Roll of 12- or 13-, -1 per 10 Active Points; -¾). 30 Active Points; total cost 17 points.
- 5) **Toughest Defense:** Add Requires A CON Roll (assumes a CON Roll of 12- or 13-, -1 per 5 Active Points; -1¼). 30 Active Points; total cost 13 points.

GOT A LUNGFUL OF AIR

Effect:	Life Support: Self-Contained Breathing
Target/Area Affected:	Self
Duration:	Uncontrolled
Range:	Self
END Cost:	0
Skill Roll Penalty:	N/A

Description: The character has an uncanny knack for taking in a lungful of air right before he gets hit with a gas attack, someone attempts to strangle him, or the like.

This power requires the GM's permission, since it uses Uncontrolled in an unusual way. The value of the Advantage is reduced to -0 because it's applied to define a maximum duration for an ability built with a Power that's normally Persistent.

Game Information: *Life Support: Self-Contained Breathing, Uncontrolled (lasts for 1 Minute maximum; +0) (10 Active Points); Activation Roll 14- (-½). Total cost: 7 points.*

I'M NOT OUT OF THIS FIGHT YET

Effect:	Aid CON 3d6 to prevent being Stunned
Target/Area Affected:	Self
Duration:	Instant
Range:	Self
END Cost:	0
Skill Roll Penalty:	-4

Description: Many *Dark Champions* characters use their sheer willpower to keep themselves on their feet and fighting when lesser men would fall. If the character takes enough STUN damage to Stun him, he makes his EGO Roll to determine whether his extra CON kicks in and (hopefully) prevents him from becoming Stunned.

Game Information: *Aid CON 3d6, Trigger (when character suffers enough STUN damage to be Stunned; +¼) (37 Active Points); Only To Prevent Character From Being Stunned (-¼), Requires An EGO Roll (assumes an EGO Roll of 12- or 13-; -¾), Self Only (-½). Total cost: 15 points.*

Options:

- 1) **Strong Toughness:** Increase to Aid CON 4d6. 50 Active Points; total cost 20 points.
- 2) **Weak Toughness:** Decrease to Aid CON 2d6. 25 Active Points; total cost 10 points.
- 3) **Easier Toughness:** Change to Requires An EGO Roll (-1 per 20 Active Points; -½). Total cost: 16 points.
- 4) **Tougher Toughness:** Change to Requires An EGO Roll (-1 per 5 Active Points; -1¼). Total cost: 12 points.
- 5) **Master's Toughness:** Remove Requires An EGO Roll (-¾). Total cost: 21 points.

IT DOESN'T HURT THAT MUCH

Effect:	+4 to EGO Rolls, Only For Wounding Rolls
Target/Area Affected:	Self
Duration:	Constant
Range:	Self
END Cost:	0
Skill Roll Penalty:	N/A

Description: The character's got a real tolerance for pain. When he has to make EGO Rolls to resist the effects of Wounding (see page 186), he's much more likely to succeed than other characters.

Game Information: *+4 to EGO Rolls (12 Active Points), Only For Wounding Rolls (-2). Total cost: 4 points.*

Options:

- 1) **Strong Tolerance:** Increase to +6 to EGO Rolls. 18 Active Points; total cost 6 points.
- 2) **Weak Tolerance:** Decrease to +2 to EGO Rolls. 6 Active Points; total cost 2 points.

IT LOOKS WORSE THAN IT IS

Effect:	Armor (8 PD/8 ED)
Target/Area Affected:	Self
Duration:	Persistent
Range:	Self
END Cost:	0
Skill Roll Penalty:	N/A

Description: The character has an uncanny knack for emerging from combat, car crashes, and other potentially deadly situations virtually unscathed. Oh, sure, he might look like he's been badly injured, but once you examine him closely and wipe away the blood, you discover it's just a flesh wound... or maybe someone else's blood.

Game Information: *Armor (8 PD/8 ED). Total cost: 24 points.*

Options:

- 1) **Strong Toughness:** Increase to Armor (10 PD/10 ED). Total cost: 30 points.
- 2) **Weak Toughness:** Decrease to Armor (6 PD/6 ED). Total cost: 18 points.
- 3) **Tough Toughness:** Add Requires A CON Roll (assumes a CON Roll of 12- or 13-, -1 per 20 Active Points; -½). 24 Active Points; total cost 16 points.
- 4) **Tougher Toughness:** Add Requires A CON Roll (assumes a CON Roll of 12- or 13-, -1 per 10 Active Points; -¾). 24 Active Points; total cost 14 points.
- 5) **Toughest Toughness:** Add Requires A CON Roll (assumes a CON Roll of 12- or 13-, -1 per 5 Active Points; -1¼). 24 Active Points; total cost 11 points.
- 6) **Lucky Toughness I:** Add Requires A Luck Roll (1 level of Luck required; -1). 24 Active Points; total cost 12 points.
- 7) **Lucky Toughness II:** Add Requires A Luck Roll (2 levels of Luck required; -1½). 24 Active Points; total cost 10 points.

8) **Lucky Toughness III:** Add Requires A Luck Roll (3 levels of Luck required; -2). 24 Active Points; total cost 8 points.

MOVING DEFENSE

Effect: +4 DCV, Only If Character Makes A Half Move
Target/Area Affected: Self
Duration: Constant
Range: Self
END Cost: 2
Skill Roll Penalty: N/A

Description: The character moves around so much in combat that it's hard to draw a bead on him. If he makes at least a Half Move during his Phase, he gains a +4 DCV bonus (though of course the Combat Skill Levels don't come into effect until he actually moves, so he may be out of luck against characters whose Phases occur in the Segment before his does).

Game Information: +4 DCV (20 Active Points); Costs Endurance (-½), Only If Character Makes A Half Move Or Full Move (-1). Total cost: 8 points.

Options:

- 1) **Strong Defense:** Increase to +5 DCV. 25 Active Points; total cost 10 points.
- 2) **Weak Defense:** Decrease to +3 DCV. 15 Active Points; total cost 6 points.
- 3) **Tough Defense:** Add Requires A DEX Roll (assumes a DEX Roll of 12- or 13-; -¾). Total cost: 6 points.

PAIN TOLERANCE

Effect: Physical and Energy Damage Reduction, Resistant, 50%, Requires A CON Roll, STUN Only, Character Must Be Aware Of Attack
Target/Area Affected: Self
Duration: Persistent
Range: Self
END Cost: 0
Skill Roll Penalty: -6

Description: The character's so tough that he can shrug off the pain caused by attacks. The Damage Reduction only applies to STUN that represents pain or shock; it wouldn't affect, for example, a drug that makes the character sleepy (a special effect of Drain STUN).

Game Information: Physical and Energy Damage Reduction, Resistant, 50% (60 Active Points); Requires A CON Roll (assumes a CON Roll of 12- or 13-; -¾), Only Works Against STUN Damage Defined As Pain/Shock (-½), Character Must Be Aware Of Attack (-¼). Total cost: 24 points.

Options:

- 1) **Strong Tolerance:** Increase to Physical and Energy Damage Reduction, Resistant, 75%. 120 Active Points; total cost 48 points.
- 2) **Weak Tolerance:** Decrease to Physical and Energy Damage Reduction, Resistant, 25%. 30 Active Points; total cost 12 points.
- 3) **Enhanced Tolerance:** The character is so tough he doesn't have to be aware of an attack to resist the pain. Remove Character Must Be Aware Of Attack (-¼). Total cost: 26 points.
- 4) **Will To Toughness:** Change Requires A CON Roll to Requires An EGO Roll. Total cost: 24 points.

PANIC DEFENSE

Effect: +3 DCV, Only Versus Criminals, Requires A Reputation Roll
Target/Area Affected: Self
Duration: Constant
Range: Self
END Cost: 0
Skill Roll Penalty: -1

Description: The character so terrifies members of the underworld that they panic when they confront him, making it harder for them to attack him successfully. Of course, this only works if the criminals he confronts recognize him and know who he is.

With the GM's permission, a character could define this power as working against some group other than criminals, such as "enemy soldiers."

Game Information: +3 DCV (15 Active Points); Only Versus Criminals (-½), Requires A Reputation Roll (-½). Total cost: 7 points.

Options:

- 1) **Strong Panic:** Increase to +4 DCV. 20 Active Points; total cost 10 points.
- 2) **Weak Panic:** Decrease to +2 DCV. 10 Active Points; total cost 5 points.
- 3) **Tougher Panic:** Change to Requires A Reputation Roll (-1 per 5 Active Points; -1). Total cost: 6 points.

POISON EXPOSURE

Effect: Life Support: Immunity to one type of poison
Target/Area Affected: Self
Duration: Persistent
Range: Self
END Cost: 0
Skill Roll Penalty: N/A

Description: By repeatedly exposing himself to small doses of a particular poison or venom, the character has rendered himself immune to its effects.

Game Information: Life Support: Immunity to one type of poison (chosen by character when he buys the power). Total cost: 1-3 points (depending on commonality of poison).

RAPID SNAP SHOT

Effect:	+4 DCV, Only When Using Snap Shot
Target/Area Affected:	Self
Duration:	Constant
Range:	Self
END Cost:	0
Skill Roll Penalty:	N/A

Description: Ordinarily, a character using the *Snap Shot* Combat Maneuver has to expose himself to return fire for a second — he steps out from behind Concealment, makes his attack, then gets back behind Concealment in the next Segment. A character with this ability has extra DCV during that second when he's not behind Concealment. The special effect is that he ducked back behind the Concealment, or otherwise used it to shield himself, immediately after taking his Snap Shot. For each point of OCV penalty his attacker suffers due to Concealment (i.e., each -1 OCV penalty for targeting the Hit Location the attacker has to shoot at), he may use one DCV Level.

Game Information: +4 DCV (20 Active Points); Only When Using Snap Shot (-1), Proportional Use (see text; -0). Total cost: 10 points.

Options:

- 1) **Strong Snap Shot:** Increase to +6 DCV. 30 Active Points; total cost 15 points.
- 2) **Weak Snap Shot:** Decrease to +2 DCV. 10 Active Points; total cost 5 points.

SKILLED BAILOUT

Effect:	+15 PD, Only Versus Damage For Leaping Out Of Moving Vehicles
Target/Area Affected:	Self
Duration:	Persistent
Range:	Self
END Cost:	0
Skill Roll Penalty:	N/A

Description: The character knows just how to dive from, leap from, or otherwise exit a moving vehicle to minimize the chances of injury.

Game Information: +15 PD (15 Active Points); Only Works Against Limited Type Of Attack (damage for leaping from, diving from, or otherwise exiting moving vehicles; -2). Total cost: 5 points.

Options:

- 1) **Strong Bailout:** Increase to +20 PD. 20 Active Points; total cost 7 points.
- 2) **Weak Bailout:** Decrease to +10 PD. 10 Active Points; total cost 3 points.
- 3) **Tougher Bailout:** Add Requires A DEX Roll (assumes a DEX Roll of 12- or 13-; -¾). Total cost: 4 points.

TAKE COVER

Effect:	+4 DCV, Only When Using Concealment
Target/Area Affected:	Self
Duration:	Constant
Range:	Self
END Cost:	0
Skill Roll Penalty:	N/A

Description: The character really knows how to make the maximum use of cover. Whenever he takes cover behind something (i.e., uses the *Concealment* Combat Modifier on page 377 of the *HERO System 5th Edition, Revised*), he gains bonuses to his DCV (which are in addition to the OCV penalties his attacker suffers). For each point of OCV penalty his attacker suffers from Concealment (i.e., each -1 OCV penalty for targeting the Hit Location the attacker has to shoot at), he may use one DCV Level.

Game Information: +4 DCV (20 Active Points); Only When Using Concealment (-1), Proportional Use (see text; -0). Total cost: 10 points.

Options:

- 1) **Strong Cover:** Increase to +6 DCV. 30 Active Points; total cost 15 points.
- 2) **Weak Cover:** Decrease to +2 DCV. 10 Active Points; total cost 5 points.

UNBREAKABLE WILL

Effect:	Mental Defense (10 points + EGO/5), Only Versus Mind-Affecting Drugs
Target/Area Affected:	Self
Duration:	Persistent
Range:	Self
END Cost:	0
Skill Roll Penalty:	N/A

Description: The character has such a strong will that drugs designed to affect his mind — truth serums, mind control drugs, and so forth — are much less effective against him (if they're effective at all).

In game terms, this power provides Mental Defense that works against drugs defined as Mental Powers with the *Based On CON* Limitation. Even though such powers are normally resisted with the appropriate physical or energy defenses, in this case the GM should also apply the Mental Defense from this power.

Game Information: *Mental Defense (10 points + EGO/5) (10 Active Points); Only Versus Mind-Affecting Drugs (-1). Total cost: 5 points.*

Options:

- 1) **Strong Willpower:** Increase to Mental Defense (15 points + EGO/5). 15 Active Points; total cost 7 points.
- 2) **Weak Willpower:** Decrease to Mental Defense (5 points + EGO/5). 5 Active Points; total cost 2 points.
- 3) **Tough Willpower:** Add Requires An EGO Roll (assumes a EGO Roll of 12- or 13-, -1 per 10 Active Points; -¾). 10 Active Points; total cost 4 points.
- 4) **Tougher Willpower:** Add Requires An EGO Roll (assumes a EGO Roll of 12- or 13-, -1 per 5 Active Points; -1¼). 10 Active Points; total cost 3 points.

UNIMPRESSED

Effect:	+20 PRE, Only To Protect Against Presence Attacks
Target/Area Affected:	Self
Duration:	Persistent
Range:	Self
END Cost:	0
Skill Roll Penalty:	N/A

Description: The character's so strong-willed, jaded, or blasé that it's difficult to frighten, impress, or overawe him.

Game Information: *+20 PRE (20 Active Points); Only To Protect Against Presence Attacks (-1). Total cost: 10 points.*

Options:

- 1) **Strong Unimpressed:** Increase to +30 PRE. 30 Active Points; total cost 15 points.
- 2) **Weak Unimpressed:** Decrease to +10 PRE. 10 Active Points; total cost 5 points.

UNPREDICTABLE TACTICS

Effect:	Lack Of Weakness (-5) for Analyze Combat Technique
Target/Area Affected:	Self
Duration:	Persistent
Range:	Self
END Cost:	0
Skill Roll Penalty:	N/A

Description: The character is such a tactical genius, so skilled a fighter, and/or so generally unpredictable that it's hard for others to figure out what he's going to do in battle.

Game Information: *Lack Of Weakness (-5) for Analyze Combat Technique. Total cost: 5 points.*

Options:

- 1) **Really Unpredictable:** Increase to Lack Of Weakness (-8). Total cost: 8 points.
- 2) **Less Unpredictable:** Decrease to Lack Of Weakness (-3). Total cost: 3 points.

MOVEMENT ABILITIES

COMBAT RUNNING

Effect:	Running +9", Only To Make Half Moves In Combat
Target/Area Affected:	Self
Duration:	Constant
Range:	Self
END Cost:	2
Skill Roll Penalty:	N/A

Description: A character with this ability is particularly swift and skilled at moving in combat conditions — he stays on the move frequently, using his greater speed to tactical advantage.

In game terms, this ability doubles a character's Running, but only for purposes of making Half Moves in combat. The net effect is that the character's Half Move equals his Full Move in normal conditions, thus making it possible for him to "run and gun" at a pace others can't match. The example is built for a character with Running 9", and the options list other possibilities, but each character should adjust the power to match his own standard Running speed.

Characters may, with the GM's permission, buy this ability for other Movement Powers, such as Leaping, Swimming, or Swinging.

Game Information: *Running +9" (18 Active Points); Only To Make Half Moves In Combat (-1). Total cost: 9 points.*

Options:

- 1) **Fast Combat Running:** Increase to Running +10". 20 Active Points; total cost 10 points.
- 2) **Slow Combat Running I:** Decrease to Running +7". 14 Active Points; total cost 7 points.
- 3) **Slow Combat Running II:** Decrease to Running +6". 12 Active Points; total cost 6 points.
- 4) **Tough Combat Running:** Add Requires A DEX Roll (assumes a DEX Roll of 12- or 13-, -1 per 10 Active Points; -¾). Total cost: 6 points.
- 5) **Tougher Combat Running:** Add Requires A DEX Roll (assumes a DEX Roll of 12- or 13-, -1 per 5 Active Points; -1¼). Total cost: 5 points.

DISAPPEARING ACT

Effect:	Teleportation 9", Only To "Vanish" When No One Is Looking
Target/Area Affected:	Self
Duration:	Instant
Range:	Self
END Cost:	2
Skill Roll Penalty:	-2

Description: Some mysterious characters have the ability to "vanish" when no one is looking at them. As long as no one can see them — for example, when they're in the midst of a cloud of smoke or flee around a corner to escape pursuers — they can Teleport to any place they could normally reach with their standard Movement Powers (typically Running). (The example power assumes a character with Running 9", and the options list other possibilities, but each character should adjust the power to match his own standard Running speed, or the speed of another frequently-used Movement Power.) The special effect is that the character moves so swiftly, skillfully, and silently that he can reach places a normal person never could in that short a time.

Disappearing Act requires a Stealth roll, so it makes no noise. Depending on where the character wants to move to, the GM may require other Skill Rolls, possibly at a penalty to either or both rolls (as in the locked door example below).

A character cannot use Disappearing Act to Teleport further than his normal movement rate (the base rate, without Pushing or Noncombat multiples), nor can he Teleport into areas he could not normally reach. For example, a character with Lockpicking could "Teleport" through a locked door (if he made his Stealth and Lockpicking rolls at, say, -3), but a character who did not have Lockpicking could not. Characters using Disappearing Act cannot carry extra mass. Most importantly, they must pass through the intervening space physically — in other words, they don't literally "disappear" and "re-appear" the way superhuman characters with Teleportation do. The Teleportation simply simulates how swiftly they move.

The GM should carefully monitor the use of this power. Characters should not be allowed to use it any time they're alone and want to bypass a locked door; that's not what it's for. Disappearing Act is designed to give characters the ability to disappear mysteriously and then re-appear in a place that no "normal" human being could have reached so quickly. It should heighten the roleplaying in the campaign as much as aid the character. If the GM believes there's absolutely no way a character can move from Point A to Point B without being seen, he should not let that character use Disappearing Act.

Game Information: *Teleportation 9" (18 Active Points); Can Only Teleport To Places Character Could Normally Go (-½), Must Cross Intervening Space (-¼), No Noncombat Multiple (-¼), Only To "Vanish" When No One Is Looking (-½), Requires A Stealth Roll (-½). Total cost: 6 points.*

**Options:**

- 1) **Strong Disappearing:** Increase to Teleportation 11". 22 Active Points; total cost 7 points.
- 2) **Weak Disappearing I:** Decrease to Teleportation 7". 14 Active Points; total cost 5 points.
- 3) **Weak Disappearing II:** Decrease to Teleportation 6". 12 Active Points; total cost 4 points.
- 4) **Easier Disappearing:** Change to Requires A Stealth Roll (-1 per 20 Active Points; -¼). Total cost: 6 points.
- 5) **Tougher Disappearing:** Change to Requires A Stealth Roll (-1 per 5 Active Points; -1). Total cost: 5 points.
- 6) **Master's Disappearing:** Remove Requires A Stealth Roll (-½). Total cost: 7 points.

SKY-HIGH

Effect:	Leaping +3"
Target/Area Affected:	Self
Duration:	Constant
Range:	Self
END Cost:	1
Skill Roll Penalty:	N/A

Description: The character can leap great distances. (For reference purposes, as of 2004 the world records for leaping are 2.45 meters (1.2") for the high jump, and 8.95 meters (4.5") for the running long jump. Characters who can leap significantly greater distances than that may begin to strain the verisimilitude of the campaign.)

Game Information: *Leaping +3". Total cost: 3 points. (In campaigns using the Normal Character Maxima rules, this cost may change depending on how far the character can already Leap.)*

Options:

- 1) **Strong Leaping:** Increase to Leaping +4". Total cost: 4 points.
- 2) **Weak Leaping:** Decrease to Leaping +2". Total cost: 2 points.
- 3) **Acrobatic Leaping:** The character's acrobatic prowess enables him to leap much further than untrained people can. Change to Leaping +5" (5 Active Points); Requires An Acrobatics Roll (-½). Total cost: 3 points.

SPRINTER

Effect: Running +3"
 Target/Area Affected: Self
 Duration: Constant
 Range: Self
 END Cost: 1
 Skill Roll Penalty: N/A

Description: The character can run much faster than most people.

Game Information: *Running +3" (9" total). Total cost: 6 points. (In campaigns using the Normal Character Maxima rules, this cost may change depending on how far the character can already Run.)*

Options:

- 1) **Strong Running:** Increase to Running +4" (10" total). Total cost: 8 points.
- 2) **Weak Running:** Decrease to Running +1" (7" total). Total cost: 2 points.

STRONG SWIMMER

Effect: Swimming +1"
 Target/Area Affected: Self
 Duration: Constant
 Range: Self
 END Cost: 1
 Skill Roll Penalty: N/A

Description: The character can swim much faster than most people.

Game Information: *Swimming +1". Total cost: 1 point. (In campaigns using the Normal Character Maxima rules, this cost may change depending on how far the character can already Swim.)*

Options:

- 1) **Strong Swimming:** Increase to Swimming +2". Total cost: 2 points.

ULTIMATE CLIMBING

Effect: Clinging (normal STR),
 Requires A Climbing Roll
 Target/Area Affected: Self
 Duration: Constant
 Range: Self
 END Cost: 0
 Skill Roll Penalty: -1

Description: The character is a superbly skilled climber. Even if he has no equipment, he can scale the sheerest, slipperiest surfaces with ease.

Game Information: *Clinging (normal STR) (10 Active Points); Requires A Climbing Roll (-½), Cannot Cling To Ceilings Or Surfaces Of More Than 120° Angle (-¼), Cannot Resist Knockback (-¼). Total cost: 5 points.*

Options:

- 1) **Strong Super-Skill:** Increase to Clinging (normal STR +9 STR). 13 Active Points; total cost 6 points.
- 2) **Tougher Super-Skill:** Change to Requires A Climbing Roll (-1 per 5 Active Points; -1). Total cost: 4 points.
- 3) **Master's Super-Skill:** Remove Requires A Climbing Roll (-½). Total cost: 7 points.
- 4) **Perching:** The character can stand on tiny ledges, balance on doorframes, wedge himself into ceiling corners, and the like without fear of falling. While doing this, he cannot move; the Clinging only allows him to hold himself in place once he gets to his chosen position. Change to Clinging (normal STR) (10 Active Points); Requires A Climbing Roll (-½), Only To "Perch" (-½), Cannot Resist Knockback (-¼). Total cost: 4 points.

SENSORY ABILITIES

DEDUCTIVE OBSERVATION

Effect: Telepathy 8d6, Requires Observation Of Subject
 Target/Area Affected: One character
 Duration: Instant
 Range: 5"
 END Cost: 0
 Skill Roll Penalty: -10

Description: Some *Dark Champions* characters, particularly skilled investigators, display an uncanny knack for being able to tell what others are thinking. By observing someone for a little while and knowing a little basic psychology, they can make astounding deductions as to what that person is thinking. If the Skill Roll, Attack Roll, or Effect Roll fails, the character gets an incorrect idea of what the subject is thinking. The GM may rule that there are situations in which there's no possibility of "reading" someone's mind this way.

Game Information: *Telepathy 8d6, Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½) (60 Active Points); Concentration (0 DCV throughout; -1), Does Not Provide Mental Awareness (-¼), Extra Time (5 Minutes; -2), Character Must Closely Observe Subject, Including Facial Expressions, During Activation Period (-½), Can Only Read Surface Thoughts (-½), Instant (-½), Limited Normal Range (5"; -½), Requires A Deduction Roll (-½) (total cost: 9 points) plus Telepathy +6d6, Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½) (45 Active Points); same Limitations as above, plus Only To Achieve +20 "Target Cannot Detect Telepathy" Modifier (-½) (total cost: 6 points). Total cost: 15 points.*

Options:

- 1) **Strong Observation:** Increase to Telepathy 10d6. $75 + 45 = 120$ Active Points; total cost $11 + 6 = 17$ points.
- 2) **Weak Observation:** Decrease to Telepathy 6d6. $45 + 45 = 90$ Active Points; total cost $7 + 6 = 13$ points.
- 3) **Easier Observation:** Change to Requires A Deduction Roll (-1 per 20 Active Points; -¼). Total cost: $9 + 6 = 15$ points.
- 4) **Tougher Observation:** Change to Requires A Deduction Roll (-1 per 5 Active Points; -1). Total cost: $8 + 6 = 14$ points.
- 5) **Master's Observation:** Remove Requires A Deduction Roll (-½). Total cost: $10 + 7 = 17$ points.

DON'T TOUCH THAT

Effect: Detect Security Devices
 Target/Area Affected: Self
 Duration: Persistent
 Range: Self
 END Cost: 0
 Skill Roll Penalty: N/A

Description: The character's experience with and knowledge of security devices (such as the ones on page 285) allows him to detect such devices even when they're hidden or disguised.

Game Information: *Detect Security Devices (INT +5) (Sight Group), Discriminatory (15 Active Points); Limited Range (must be within 4" of a device to perceive it; -¼). Total cost: 12 points.*

Options:

- 1) **Strong Perception I:** Increase to INT +8. 18 Active Points; total cost 14 points.
- 2) **Strong Perception II:** Add Analyze. 20 Active Points; total cost 16 points.
- 3) **Weak Perception:** Decrease to INT +2. 12 Active Points; total cost 10 points.

EYES IN THE BACK OF HIS HEAD

Effect: Increased Arc of Perception (360 Degrees) for Normal Sight
 Target/Area Affected: Self
 Duration: Persistent
 Range: Self
 END Cost: 0
 Skill Roll Penalty: -1

Description: The character has an uncanny knack for observing his surroundings and knowing what's going on around him. Somehow he can just "sense it" when an enemy's sneaking up on him, or knows who just walked into his office and what they've brought with them even though he's staring out the window.

Game Information: *Increased Arc of Perception (360 Degrees) for Normal Sight (5 Active Points); Requires An INT Roll (assumes an INT Roll of 12- or 13-; -¾). Total cost: 3 points.*

Options:

- 1) **Master's Super-Skill:** Remove Requires An INT Roll (-¾). Total cost: 5 points.

FOUND IT!

Effect:	+4 with Skills related to finding things
Target/Area Affected:	Self
Duration:	Constant
Range:	Self
END Cost:	0
Skill Roll Penalty:	N/A

Description: The character has an uncanny knack for finding hidden or concealed things. In game terms, he has a +4 bonus for all Skill Rolls that pertain to finding things. This includes most uses of Concealment, Criminology as it pertains to finding trace evidence, and so forth.

Game Information: +4 with Skills related to finding things (see text). Total cost: 20 points.

Options:

- 1) **Strong Finding:** Increase to +5 with Skills related to finding things. Total cost: 25 points.
- 2) **Weak Finding:** Decrease to +3 with Skills related to finding things. Total cost: 15 points.

HE'S PACKING

Effect:	Detect Concealed Weapons
Target/Area Affected:	Self
Duration:	Persistent
Range:	Self
END Cost:	0
Skill Roll Penalty:	N/A

Description: The character's experience with and knowledge of carrying and using concealed weapons allows him to easily determine when someone else has a concealed weapon on his person. He can tell where the weapon is hidden, but not necessarily what type of weapon it is (though the location may make that reasonably obvious).

Game Information: *Detect Concealed Weapons* (INT +5) (Sight Group), *Discriminatory* (15 Active Points); *Limited Range* (must be within 5' of a person carrying a concealed weapon to perceive it; -¼). Total cost: 12 points.

Options:

- 1) **Strong Perception I:** Increase to INT +8. 18 Active Points; total cost 14 points.
- 2) **Strong Perception II:** The character not only knows where the weapon's hidden, he knows what type of weapon it is. Add Analyze. 20 Active Points; total cost 16 points.
- 3) **Weak Perception:** Decrease to INT +2. 12 Active Points; total cost 10 points.

HE'S PROBABLY AT...

Effect:	Mind Scan 8d6, Only To Locate Criminals, Requires A Streetwise Roll plus +5 OECV with Mind Scan
Target/Area Affected:	One character
Duration:	Instant
Range:	Special
END Cost:	0
Skill Roll Penalty:	-6

Description: The character's knowledge of the underworld, and its members' habits, is so comprehensive that he has a pretty good chance to guess where any given criminal is going to be at any given time. He has to think about it for a while, then go there to see if his insight was right.

In game terms, this ability uses Mind Scan with Extra Time and a Required Streetwise Roll. The Extra Time represents the time it takes the character to figure out where the target would be and then go there. If the character fails the Skill Roll, Attack Roll, or Effect Roll, the GM should give the character an incorrect location. Because the power is Instant, the character can't maintain a "lock-on" to the target's mind — it's entirely possible that even if he correctly deduces where the target is when he activates the power, the target will have left that location by the time the character gets there.

Game Information: *Mind Scan 8d6, Reduced Endurance* (0 END; +½) (60 Active Points); *Can Only Be Used To Locate Criminals* (-¼), *Does Not Allow Character To Use Any Other Mental Powers Or Maintain A Lock-On* (-¼), *Does Not Provide Mental Awareness* (-¼), *Extra Time* (minimum of 20 Minutes, and possibly longer; -2½), *Instant* (-½), *Requires A Streetwise Roll* (-½) (total cost: 11 points) **plus** *Mind Scan +6d6, Reduced Endurance* (0 END; +½) (45 Active Points); *same Limitations as above, plus Only To Achieve +20 "Target Cannot Detect Mind Scan" Modifier* (-½) (total cost: 8 points) **plus** +5 OECV with *Mind Scan* (total cost: 10 points). Total cost: 29 points.

Options:

- 1) **Strong Insight I:** Increase to Mind Scan 10d6. 75 + 45 + 10 = 95 Active Points; total cost 14 + 8 + 10 = 32 points.
- 2) **Strong Insight II:** Increase to +10 OECV with Mind Scan. 60 + 45 + 20 = 80 Active Points; total cost 11 + 8 + 20 = 39 points.
- 3) **Weak Insight I:** Decrease to Mind Scan 6d6. 45 + 45 + 10 = 100 Active Points; total cost 9 + 8 + 10 = 27 points.
- 4) **Weak Insight II:** Decrease to +3 OECV with Mind Scan. 60 + 45 + 6 = 111 Active Points; total cost 11 + 8 + 6 = 25 points.
- 5) **Easier Insight:** Change to *Requires A Streetwise Roll* (-1 per 20 Active Points; -¼). Total cost: 12 + 8 + 10 = 30 points.

6) **Tougher Insight:** Change to Requires A Streetwise Roll (-1 per 5 Active Points; -1). Total cost: 10 + 7 + 10 = 27 points.

7) **Master's Insight:** Remove Requires A Streetwise Roll (-½). Total cost: 13 + 9 + 10 = 32 points.

8) **No One Can Hide From Me For Long:** The character has to ask a lot of people and bust a few heads (in the process getting roughed up a little himself), but it's virtually impossible for anyone to hide from him. Increase to Mind Scan 14d6 and add to that power Side Effects (character takes 1d6 BODY damage, always occurs; -½). 105 + 45 + 10 = 160 Active Points; total cost 18 + 8 + 10 = 36 points.

HE'S STANDING RIGHT THERE...

Effect: N-Ray Perception, Only To Locate A Target On The Other Side Of An Obstruction

Target/Area Affected: Self
Duration: Persistent
Range: Self
END Cost: 0
Skill Roll Penalty: N/A

Description: The character has an uncanny knack for perceiving targets who are on the other side of obstructions from him (typically, on the other side of a wall). He knows just where to shoot to hit the target (assuming his bullets can penetrate the wall, of course!).

Game Information: *N-Ray Perception (stopped by any obstruction too thick or durable to shoot through) (Sight Group) (10 Active Points); Only To Locate A Target On The Other Side Of An Obstruction (-2). Total cost: 3 points.*

Options:

1) **Tougher Insight:** Add Requires An INT Roll (assumes an INT Roll of 12- or 13-; -¾). Total cost: 3 points.

I'D'VE PUT IT HERE...

Effect: Detect Bugs
Target/Area Affected: Self
Duration: Persistent
Range: Self
END Cost: 0
Skill Roll Penalty: N/A

Description: The character's experience with and knowledge of concealed sensing devices — “bugs,” whether they're listening or video devices — allows him to easily determine if there are any such devices hidden in a room, and what general type they are.

Game Information: *Detect Bugs (INT +5) (Sight Group), Discriminatory (15 Active Points); Limited Range (must be within 4" of a bug to perceive it; -¼). Total cost: 12 points.*

Options:

- 1) **Strong Perception I:** Increase to INT +8. 18 Active Points; total cost 14 points.
- 2) **Strong Perception II:** The character knows the exact type of bug being used (possibly even down to the model number). Add Analyze. 20 Active Points; total cost 16 points.
- 3) **Weak Perception:** Decrease to INT +2. 12 Active Points; total cost 10 points.

IT'S SOMEWHERE IN THESE FILES...

Effect: Speed Reading (x10,000), Only To Find The Right Piece Of Paper Among Many
Target/Area Affected: Self
Duration: Persistent
Range: Self
END Cost: 0
Skill Roll Penalty: N/A

Description: The character has an uncanny knack for finding just the right piece of paper or file he wants among thousands. While other investigators have to spend hundreds or thousands of man-hours poring through a master criminal's files to find the incriminating evidence, the character only needs a couple hours... or maybe just a few minutes.

Game Information: *Speed Reading (x10,000) (10 Active Points); Only To Find The Right Piece Of Paper Among Many (-½). Total cost: 7 points.*

Options:

- 1) **Strong Finding:** Increase to Speed Reading (x100,000). 12 Active Points; total cost 8 points.
- 2) **Weak Finding:** Decrease to Speed Reading (x1,000). 8 Active Points; total cost 5 points.
- 3) **Tough Finding:** Add Requires A Deduction Roll (-1 per 20 Active Points; -¼). Total cost: 6 points.
- 4) **Tougher Finding:** Add Requires A Deduction Roll (-1 per 10 Active Points; -½). Total cost: 5 points.
- 5) **Toughest Finding:** Add Requires A Deduction Roll (-1 per 5 Active Points; -1). Total cost: 4 points.

6) **Lucky Finding I:** Add Requires A Luck Roll (1 level of Luck required; -1). 10 Active Points; total cost 4 points.

7) **Lucky Finding II:** Add Requires A Luck Roll (2 levels of Luck required; -1½). 10 Active Points; total cost 3 points.

8) **Lucky Finding III:** Add Requires A Luck Roll (3 levels of Luck required; -2). 10 Active Points; total cost 3 points.

LET'S TALK

Effect: Telepathy 8d6, Requires A Conversation Roll

Target/Area Affected: One character

Duration: Instant

Range: No Range

END Cost: 0

Skill Roll Penalty: -10

Description: "Suave, sophisticated, and scintillating" is a perfect description of some *Dark Champions* characters who've learned how to use their personal magnetism to pry secrets out of others without their hapless victims even knowing about it. All the character has to do is talk to the victim for five minutes, and he can learn one fact he wants to know which would be in the target's surface thoughts. If the Skill Roll, Attack Roll, or Effect Roll fails, the character either learns nothing, or he gets an incorrect idea of what the subject is thinking.

Game Information: *Telepathy 8d6, Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½) (60 Active Points); Does Not Provide Mental Awareness (-¼), Extra Time (5 Minutes; -2), Can Only Read Surface Thoughts (-½), Instant (-½), No Range (-½), Requires A Conversation Roll (-½) (total cost: 11 points) plus Telepathy +6d6, Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½) (45 Active Points); same Limitations as above, plus Only To Achieve +20 "Target Cannot Detect Telepathy" Modifier (-½) (total cost: 8 points). Total cost: 19 points.*

Options:

1) **Strong Observation:** Increase to Telepathy 10d6. 75 + 45 = 120 Active Points; total cost 14 + 8 = 22 points.

2) **Weak Observation:** Decrease to Telepathy 6d6. 45 + 45 = 90 Active Points; total cost 9 + 8 = 17 points.

3) **Easier Observation:** Change to Requires A Conversation Roll (-1 per 20 Active Points; -¼). Total cost: 12 + 9 = 21 points.

4) **Tougher Observation:** Change to Requires A Conversation Roll (-1 per 5 Active Points; -1). Total cost: 10 + 7 = 17 points.

OBSERVANT

Effect: +2 PER with Sight Group

Target/Area Affected: Self

Duration: Persistent

Range: Self

END Cost: 0

Skill Roll Penalty: N/A

Description: The character has trained himself to be much more observant of his surroundings than most people are.

Game Information: +2 PER with Sight Group. Total cost: 4 points.

Options:

1) **Strong Super-Skill:** Increase to +3 PER with Sight Group. Total cost: 6 points.

2) **Weak Super-Skill:** Decrease to +1 PER with Sight Group. Total cost: 2 points.

PRETERNATURAL SMELL

Effect: +2 PER with Smell/Taste Group

Target/Area Affected: Self

Duration: Persistent

Range: Self

END Cost: 0

Skill Roll Penalty: N/A

Description: Whether he was raised by wolves, spends a lot of time analyzing odors, or has simply trained himself to use senses other than sight with greater perceptiveness, the character has an unusually acute sense of smell.

Game Information: +2 PER with Smell/Taste Group. Total cost: 4 points.

Options:

1) **Strong Super-Skill:** Increase to +3 PER with Smell/Taste Group. Total cost: 6 points.

2) **Weak Super-Skill:** Decrease to +1 PER with Smell/Taste Group. Total cost: 2 points.

SO THAT'S WHAT'S GOING ON

Effect:	Precognition, Requires A Deduction Roll, Time Modifiers
Target/Area Affected:	Self
Duration:	Constant
Range:	No Range
END Cost:	0
Skill Roll Penalty:	-6

Description: The character is so perceptive, and has such deductive faculties, that in some instances he's virtually precognitive. He has an uncanny knack for predicting what people are going to do, though the more long-term their plans the harder it is for him to make accurate predictions. The ability has No Range, so it only works when the character is in the presence of a person or significant object involved in, or other source of information about, the events he "predicts."

Game Information: *Clairsentience (Sight Group), Precognition, Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½) (60 Active Points); Precognition Only (-1), Extra Time (5 Minutes; -2), No Range (-½), Time Modifiers (-½), Requires A Deduction Roll (-½). Total cost: 11 points.*

Options:

- 1) Strong Prediction:** Remove Time Modifiers (-½). Total cost: 12 points.
- 2) Weak Prediction:** Add Vague And Unclear (-½). Total cost: 10 points.
- 3) Easier Prediction:** Change to Requires A Deduction Roll (-1 per 20 Active Points; -¼). Total cost: 11 points.
- 4) Tougher Prediction:** Change to Requires A Deduction Roll (-1 per 5 Active Points; -1). Total cost: 10 points.
- 5) Unpredictable Prediction:** The character can't control when his flashes of deductive insight come upon him. Remove Extra Time (-2) and add No Conscious Control (-2). Total cost: 11 points.

SOMETHING'S NOT RIGHT HERE...

Effect:	Danger Sense (immediate vicinity, out of combat, intuitional)
Target/Area Affected:	Immediate vicinity
Duration:	Persistent
Range:	Self
END Cost:	0
Skill Roll Penalty:	N/A

Description: The character has an uncanny knack for sensing when something's wrong and perceiving dangers that aren't apparent to others. The character usually has a better chance to perceive dangers he's familiar with or has encountered before.

Game Information: *Danger Sense (immediate vicinity, out of combat, intuitional) (INT Roll). Total cost: 20 points.*

Options:

- 1) Strong Intuition:** Increase to INT Roll +3. Total cost: 23 points.
- 2) Weak Intuition:** Change to self only. Total cost: 15 points.

TELL ME WHAT I WANT TO KNOW

Effect:	Telepathy 8d6, Requires An Interrogation Roll
Target/Area Affected:	One character
Duration:	Instant
Range:	No Range
END Cost:	0
Skill Roll Penalty:	-6

Description: The character is a master interrogator, able to force or trick an interrogee into telling him what he wants to know. All the character has to do is interrogate the victim for five minutes, and he can learn one fact he wants to know which would be in the target's surface thoughts. If the Skill Roll, Attack Roll, or Effect Roll fails, the character either learns nothing, or he gets an incorrect idea of what the subject is thinking.

Game Information: *Telepathy 8d6, Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½) (60 Active Points); Does Not Provide Mental Awareness (-¼), Extra Time (5 Minutes; -2), Can Only Read Surface Thoughts (-½), Instant (-½), No Range (-½), Requires An Interrogation Roll (-½). Total cost: 11 points.*

Options:

- 1) Strong Observation:** Increase to Telepathy 10d6. 75 Active Points; total cost 14 points.
- 2) Weak Observation:** Decrease to Telepathy 6d6. 45 Active Points; total cost 9 points.
- 3) Easier Observation:** Change to Requires An Interrogation Roll (-1 per 20 Active Points; -¼). Total cost: 12 points.
- 4) Tougher Observation:** Change to Requires An Interrogation Roll (-1 per 5 Active Points; -1). Total cost: 10 points.

THROUGH THE KILLER'S EYES

Effect:	Retrocognition, Requires A Criminology Roll, Time Modifiers
Target/Area Affected:	Self
Duration:	Constant
Range:	No Range
END Cost:	0
Skill Roll Penalty:	-6

Description: The character is so perceptive, and has such skill with criminalistics, criminal psychology, and deduction, that he has an uncanny knack for reconstructing crime scenes. In some cases he may even receive “visions” of the crime taking place. The ability has No Range, so it only works when the character is at the crime scene or in the presence of a person or significant object involved with the crime.

Game Information: *Clairsentience (Sight Group), Retrocognition, Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½) (60 Active Points); Retrocognition Only (-1), Extra Time (5 Minutes; -2), No Range (-½), Time Modifiers (-½), Requires A Criminology Roll (-½). Total cost: 11 points.*

Options:

- 1) Strong Prediction:** Remove Time Modifiers (-½). Total cost: 12 points.
- 2) Weak Prediction:** Add Vague And Unclear (-½). Total cost: 10 points.
- 3) Easier Prediction:** Change to Requires A Criminology Roll (-1 per 20 Active Points; -¼). Total cost: 11 points.
- 4) Tougher Prediction:** Change to Requires A Criminology Roll (-1 per 5 Active Points; -1). Total cost: 10 points.
- 5) I Can Still See Him Suffering:** The crimes the character re-imagines or envisions prey upon his mind, tiring him out, giving him nightmares, and generally distracting him. Add Side Effects (Drain EGO and END 1d6+1, points return at the rate of 5 per 6 Hours, always occurs; -1). Total cost: 9 points.
- 6) I Know What He Was Thinking:** The character's ability to envision the crime scene and the perpetrator is so strong that he can even deduce the attacker's motivation. Character also buys: Telepathy 8d6, Indirect (+½), Transdimensional (back in time to when the crime was committed; +½), Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½) (100 Active Points); Does Not Provide Mental Awareness (-¼), Extra Time (5 Minutes; -2), Can Only Read Surface Thoughts (-½), Instant (-½), No Range (-½), Requires A Criminology Roll (-½) (total cost: 19 points) **plus** Telepathy +6d6, Indirect (+½), Transdimensional (back in time to when the crime was committed; +½), Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½) (75 Active Points); same Limitations as above, plus Only To Achieve +20 “Target Cannot Detect Telepathy” Modifier (-½) (total cost: 13 points). Total cost: 32 points.

7) Unpredictable Prediction: The character can't control when his flashes of deductive insight come upon him. Remove Extra Time (-2) and add No Conscious Control (-2). Total cost: 11 points.

ULTIMATE LIPREADING

Effect:	Telepathy 8d6, Character Must Closely Observe Subject's Lips
Target/Area Affected:	One character
Duration:	Instant
Range:	10"
END Cost:	0
Skill Roll Penalty:	-10

Description: The character is an expert lipreader, able to determine what people are saying from the movement of their mouths despite intervening obstacles such as beards, unusual speech patterns, or the like. If the Skill Roll, Attack Roll, or Effect Roll fails, the character gets an incorrect idea of what the subject says.

Game Information: *Telepathy 8d6, Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½) (60 Active Points); Concentration (0 DCV throughout; -1), Does Not Provide Mental Awareness (-¼), Character Must Closely Observe Subject's Lips As He Speaks (-½), Can Only Read Surface Thoughts (-½), Limited Normal Range (10"; -½) (total cost: 16 points) **plus** Telepathy +6d6, Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½) (45 Active Points); same Limitations as above, plus Only To Achieve +20 “Target Cannot Detect Telepathy” Modifier (-½) (total cost: 11 points). Total cost: 27 points.*

Options:

- 1) Strong Observation:** Increase to Telepathy 10d6. $75 + 45 = 120$ Active Points; total cost $20 + 11 = 31$ points.
- 2) Weak Observation:** Decrease to Telepathy 6d6. $45 + 45 = 90$ Active Points; total cost $12 + 11 = 23$ points.

MISCELLANEOUS ABILITIES

ACTION HERO'S LUCK

Effect:	Luck 6d6
Target/Area Affected:	Self
Duration:	Persistent
Range:	Self
END Cost:	0
Skill Roll Penalty:	N/A

Description: Some action heroes are preternaturally lucky. No matter what sort of scrapes they get in, somehow things always seem to work out in their favor.

Game Information: *Luck 6d6. Total cost: 30 points.*

Options:

- 1) **Strong Super-Skill:** Increase to Luck 8d6. Total cost: 40 points.
- 2) **Weak Super-Skill:** Decrease to Luck 4d6. Total cost: 20 points.

BLEND WITH SHADOWS

Effect:	Invisibility to Sight Group, Only In Darkness/Shadows, Requires A Stealth Roll
Target/Area Affected:	Self
Duration:	Constant
Range:	Self
END Cost:	0
Skill Roll Penalty:	-3

Description: The character is so stealthy and good at hiding himself that he seems to practically merge with the shadows. As long as there's a patch of shadow or darkness large enough to cover his form, he can stand in it and effectively become invisible.

Game Information: *Invisibility to Sight Group, Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½) (30 Active Points); Chameleon (-½), Only When In Darkness/Shadows (-½), Requires A Stealth Roll (-½). Total cost: 12 points.*

Options:

- 1) **Strong Blending:** Add No Fringe. 45 Active Points; total cost 18 points.
- 2) **Weak Blending:** Add Bright Fringe (-¼). Total cost: 11 points.
- 3) **Easier Blending:** Change to Requires A Stealth Roll (-1 per 20 Active Points; -¼). Total cost: 13 points.
- 4) **Tougher Blending:** Change to Requires A Stealth Roll (-1 per 5 Active Points; -1). Total cost: 10 points.
- 5) **Master's Blending:** Remove Requires A Stealth Roll (-½). Total cost: 15 points.
- 6) **Challengeable Blending:** Add "is subject to Skill Versus Skill Contests" to Requires A Stealth Roll (-¼). Total cost: 11 points.

BORN WINNER

Effect:	Telepathy 8d6, Only To Read Surface Thoughts Pertaining To Gambling and Telekinesis (4 STR), Fully Invisible
Target/Area Affected:	One character
Duration:	Instant/Constant
Range:	3"
END Cost:	0
Skill Roll Penalty:	-10/-1

Description: The character is an extremely skilled gambler. No matter who he's playing against, he has an uncanny ability to "read" the opposition and determine the best play. And when he's playing games like craps or roulette, things just seem to fall his way.

Game Information:

Cost Power

- 19 **Reading The Opposition:** Telepathy 8d6, Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½) (60 Active Points); Does Not Provide Mental Awareness (-¼), Extra Time (5 Minutes; -2), Can Only Read Surface Thoughts (-½), Instant (-½), Limited Normal Range (3"; -½), Requires A Gambling Roll (-½) (total cost: 11 points) **plus** Telepathy +6d6, Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½) (45 Active Points); same Limitations as above, plus Only To Achieve +20 "Target Cannot Detect Telepathy" Modifier (-½) (total cost: 8 points)
- 9 **Manipulating The Works:** Telekinesis (4 STR), Fully Invisible (+1), Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½) (15 Active Points); Limited Range (3"; -¼), Requires A Gambling Roll (-½)

Total cost: 28 points.

Options:

- 1) **Strong Gambling:** Increase to Telepathy 10d6. 75 + 45 = 120 Active Points; total cost 14 + 8 = 22 points; total cost of ability 31 points.
- 2) **Weak Gambling:** Decrease to Telepathy 6d6. 45 + 45 = 90 Active Points; total cost 9 + 8 = 17 points; total cost of ability 26 points.
- 3) **Easier Gambling:** Change to Requires A Gambling Roll (-1 per 20 Active Points; -¼) in both powers. Total cost: 12 + 8 + 10 = 30 points.
- 4) **Tougher Gambling:** Change to Requires A Gambling Roll (-1 per 5 Active Points; -1) in both powers. Total cost: 10 + 7 + 7 = 24 points.
- 5) **Master's Gambling:** Remove Requires A Gambling Roll (-½) from both powers. Total cost: 13 + 9 + 12 = 34 points.
- 6) **Challengeable Gambling:** Add "is subject to Skill Versus Skill Contests" to Requires A Gambling Roll (-¼) in both powers. Total cost: 11 + 7 + 7 = 25 points.

CAN FIND FOOD ANYWHERE

Effect:	Life Support (Diminished Eating: need only eat once per week), Requires A Survival Roll
Target/Area Affected:	Special
Duration:	Special
Range:	Self
END Cost:	1 Continuing Fuel Charge lasting 1 Week
Skill Roll Penalty:	-1

Description: The character is a born survivalist with a real knack for finding food in the wild. Even in the most barren places he can usually turn up enough food to survive for a week at least. If necessary, he can apportion this seven man-days of food among multiple people (thus allowing him to feed seven people for a day, fourteen for half a day, and so on). The GM may rule that some areas are so barren that the character's roll suffers standard Survival penalties (see page 81), despite the fact that Required Skill Rolls normally don't.

Game Information: *Life Support (Diminished Eating: need only eat once per week) (1 Active Point); Requires A Survival Roll (-½), 1 Continuing Fuel Charge lasting 1 Week (-0). Total cost: 1 point.*

Options:

- 1) **Easier Super-Skill:** Change to Requires A Survival Roll (-1 per 20 Active Points; -¼). Total cost: 1 point.
- 2) **Tougher Super-Skill:** Change to Requires A Survival Roll (-1 per 5 Active Points; -1). Total cost: 1 point.
- 3) **Master's Super-Skill:** Remove Requires A Survival Roll (-½). Total cost: 1 point.

CAN HIDE ANYTHING

Effect:	Invisibility, Usable As Attack, Only To Hide Small Objects
Target/Area Affected:	One object
Duration:	Uncontrolled
Range:	No Range
END Cost:	0
Skill Roll Penalty:	-9

Description: A character with this ability has a skill that most smugglers would love to possess. He's got an uncanny knack for finding the best place to hide small objects... and once he hides something, it stays hidden. The best way to find it is to feel the distinctive bulge it makes in the clothes of the person carrying it, the space it occupies in its hiding spot, and so on (*i.e.*, it's not Invisible to the Touch Group).

Game Information: *Invisibility to Sight Group, No Fringe, Usable As Attack (does not work on objects which are larger than 10 kg in weight and/or 10 cubic centimeters in size; +1), Uncontrolled (lasts until found by someone; +½), Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½) (90 Active Points); Requires A Concealment Roll (-½), Extra Time (at least 1 Minute, possibly longer; -1½). Total cost: 30 points.*

Options:

- 1) **Strong Hiding:** When the character hides something, it doesn't even create an unsightly (and possibly revealing) bulge. Add Touch Group. 105 Active Points; total cost 35 points.
- 2) **Weak Hiding:** Someone who gets close enough to the hidden object has a chance to spot it. Remove No Fringe. 75 Active Points; total cost 25 points.
- 3) **Easier Hiding:** Change to Requires A Concealment Roll (-1 per 20 Active Points; -¼). Total cost: 33 points.
- 4) **Tougher Hiding:** Change to Requires A Concealment Roll (-1 per 5 Active Points; -1). Total cost: 26 points.
- 5) **Master's Hiding:** Remove Requires A Concealment Roll (-½). Total cost: 36 points.
- 6) **Challengeable Hiding:** Add "is subject to Skill Versus Skill Contests" to Requires A Concealment Roll (-¼). Total cost: 28 points.

CINEMATIC FLIRTING

Effect:	Mind Control 8d6, Requires A Seduction Roll
Target/Area Affected:	One character
Duration:	Instant
Range:	3"
END Cost:	0
Skill Roll Penalty:	-10

Description: The character has a nigh-mystical ability to sweep members of the opposite sex off their feet. One so smitten will do practically anything asked of him/her.

Game Information: *Mind Control 8d6, Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½) (60 Active Points); Cannot Pay END To Prevent Deterioration Of Breakout Roll (-¼), Does Not Provide Mental Awareness (-¼), Extra Time (5 Minutes; -2), Cannot Achieve EGO +30 Results (-¼), Limited Normal Range (3"; -½), Requires A Seduction Roll (-½) (total cost: 13 points) plus Mind Control +6d6, Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½) (45 Active Points); same Limitations as above, plus Only To Achieve +20 "Target Cannot Detect Mind Control" Modifier (-½) (total cost: 9 points). Total cost: 22 points.*

Options:

- 1) Strong Flirting:** Increase to Mind Control 10d6. $75 + 45 = 120$ Active Points; total cost $16 + 9 = 25$ points.
- 2) Weak Flirting:** Decrease to Mind Control 6d6. $45 + 45 = 90$ Active Points; total cost $9 + 9 = 18$ points.
- 3) Easier Flirting:** Change to Requires A Seduction Roll (-1 per 20 Active Points; -¼). Total cost: $12 + 9 = 21$ points.
- 4) Tougher Flirting:** Change to Requires A Seduction Roll (-1 per 5 Active Points; -1). Total cost: $11 + 8 = 19$ points.
- 5) Master's Flirting:** Remove Requires A Seduction Roll (-½). Total cost: $14 + 9 = 23$ points.
- 6) Challengeable Flirting:** Add "is subject to Skill Versus Skill Contests" to Requires A Seduction Roll (-¼). Total cost: $12 + 8 = 20$ points.

CONTORTIONIST'S FEET

Effect:	Extra Limbs (feet usable as hands)
Target/Area Affected:	Self
Duration:	Inherent
Range:	Self
END Cost:	0
Skill Roll Penalty:	N/A

Description: The character is so skilled a contortionist that he can use his feet just as well as if they were hands.

Game Information: *Extra Limbs (feet usable as hands), Inherent (+¼). Total cost: 6 points.*

DEDICATED STAMINA

Effect:	Endurance Reserve (50 END, 5 REC)
Target/Area Affected:	Self
Duration:	Persistent
Range:	Self
END Cost:	0
Skill Roll Penalty:	N/A

Description: Some characters have had special training in some particularly strenuous endeavor. For example, a character who runs marathons might have extra reserves of energy — END, in game terms — for his Running. To represent this, a character can buy an Endurance Reserve with the *Personal REC* (-½) Limitation on the Recovery (which typically should not exceed his personal REC). Most powers that would use Dedicated Stamina should have the Power Can Draw END From Character Or Endurance Reserve (+¼) Advantage.

Game Information: *Endurance Reserve (50 END) (total cost: 5 points) plus Endurance Reserve (5 REC) (5 Active Points); Personal REC (-½) (total cost: 3 points). Total cost: 8 points.*

Options:

- 1) More Stamina:** Increase to 60 END and 6 REC. $6 + 6 = 12$ Active Points; total cost $6 + 4 = 10$ points.
- 2) Less Stamina:** Decrease to 40 END and 4 REC. $4 + 4 = 8$ Active Points; total cost $4 + 3 = 7$ points.

DISLOCATABLE JOINTS

Effect:	+3 to Contortionist rolls involving a specific limb
Target/Area Affected:	Self
Duration:	Constant
Range:	Self
END Cost:	0
Skill Roll Penalty:	N/A

Description: Instead of having to use the standard rules for dislocating a joint (see page 69), the character can do it automatically as a Full-Phase Action. It's still painful, but sometimes the pain is worth it to escape from restraints. The character must define which joint he can dislocate (typically one shoulder or one thumb) when he buys this ability.

Game Information: +3 to Contortionist (6 Active Points); Extra Time (Full Phase to activate; -¼), Only For Rolls Involving A Specific Joint (-1), Side Effect (see page 69, always occurs; -1). Total cost: 2 points.

Options:

1) **Easier Dislocation:** The character's used to dislocating the joint, so he suffers no pain from doing so. Remove Side Effects (-1). Total cost: 3 points.

EXPERT LOCKPICKER

Effect:	Clairsentience (Touch Group), Only To Open Mechanical Locks, Requires A Lockpicking Roll
Target/Area Affected:	Self
Duration:	Constant
Range:	No Range
END Cost:	2
Skill Roll Penalty:	-2

Description: The character is a superbly skilled picker of locks — even the most advanced locking system poses little obstacle to him. He has to be next to the lock to open it, and doing so requires at least a Full Phase (possibly longer, for complex locks). In game terms, the character has Clairsentience for his Touch Group, allowing him to reach “into” or “through” a mechanical lock and open it as if he had a key; the special effect is “highly skilled lockpicking.”

Game Information: Clairsentience (Touch Group) (20 Active Points); Extra Time (a Full Phase, if not longer; -½), No Range (-½), Only To Open Mechanical Locks (-½), Requires A Lockpicking Roll (-½). Total cost: 7 points.

Options:

1) **Strong Lockpicking:** Character also buys Enhanced Perception (+3 PER with Touch Group). Total cost 6 points; total cost of ability 13 points.

2) **Easier Lockpicking:** Change to Requires A Lockpicking Roll (-1 per 20 Active Points; -¼). Total cost: 7 points.

3) **Tougher Lockpicking:** Change to Requires A Lockpicking Roll (-1 per 5 Active Points; -1). Total cost: 6 points.

4) **Master's Lockpicking:** Remove Requires A Lockpicking Roll (-½). Total cost: 8 points.

5) **Challengeable Lockpicking:** Add “is subject to Skill Versus Skill Contests” to Requires A Lockpicking Roll (-¼). Total cost: 6 points.

6) **Variant Expert Lockpicker:** This form of the ability uses Desolidification. The game effect is that the character “reaches through” the lock and opens it; the special effect is that he's a highly skilled lockpicker. Change to Desolidification (affected by any attack) (40 Active Points); Cannot Pass Through Solid Objects (-½), Does Not Protect Against Damage (-1), Extra Time (a Full Phase, if not longer; -½), Only To Open Mechanical Locks (-½), Requires A Lockpicking Roll (-½) (total cost: 10 points) **plus** Affects Physical World (+2) for 5 STR (10 Active Points); Only To Open Mechanical Locks (-½), Requires A Lockpicking Roll (-½) (total cost: 5 points). Total cost: 15 points.

7) **Ultimate Burglar:** This variant of Expert Lockpicker also uses Desolidification, but it assumes the character is a loner — he only needs to get through locked doors and windows himself, he doesn't have to open them for other people. This power is great for creating “locked room mysteries.” Change to Desolidification (affected by any attack) (40 Active Points); Can Only Pass Through Locked Doors/Windows (-¼), Does Not Protect Against Damage (-1), Extra Time (a Full Phase, if not longer; -½), Requires A Lockpicking Roll (-½). Total cost: 12 points.

FLEXIBILITY

Effect:	Stretching 1", Requires A Contortionist Roll
Target/Area Affected:	Self
Duration:	Constant
Range:	Self
END Cost:	0
Skill Roll Penalty:	-1

Description: Keeping a character with this ability tied up, handcuffed, or otherwise restrained is virtually impossible. He can contort his body so adroitly that he can escape from almost any form of confinement. In game terms, he has 1" of Stretching, but this only applies to releasing himself from restraints; his body doesn't literally stretch or change shape.

Game Information: Stretching 1" (5 Active Points); Cannot Do Damage (-½), No Non-combat Stretching (-¼), Only To Escape From Restraints/Confinement (-½), Requires A Contortionist Roll (-½). Total cost: 2 points.

Options:

1) **Master's Flexibility:** Remove Requires A Contortionist Roll (-½). Total cost: 2 points.

2) **Challengeable Flexibility:** Add “is subject to Skill Versus Skill Contests” to Requires A Contortionist Roll (-¼). Total cost: 2 points.

I KNOW SOMEONE WHO CAN HELP

Effect:	Summon Helpful Person, Requires A Persuasion Roll
Target/Area Affected:	One person
Duration:	Instant
Range:	No Range
END Cost:	0
Skill Roll Penalty:	-8

Description: The character just happens to know someone who might be able to help with whatever problem he's currently confronting... and he has the ability to make that character show up so he can help. (The GM decides exactly how the character does this — though the ability uses a Persuasion roll, perhaps the character has some form of influence over the person, or can blackmail him into showing up.) Once the person gets there, the character has to convince him to help; he's not obligated to, or necessarily even likely to.

Game Information: *Summon Person* built on up to 200 Character Points, Expanded Class (any human; +½), Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½) (80 Active Points); Arrives Under Own Power (-½), Requires A Persuasion Roll (-½). Total cost: 40 points.

Options:

- Better Helpers:** Increase to built on up to 250 Character Points. 100 Active Points; total cost 50 points.
- Weaker Helpers:** Decrease to built on up to 100 Character Points. 40 Active Points; total cost 20 points.
- Easier Helpers:** Change to Requires A Persuasion Roll (-1 per 20 Active Points; -¼). Total cost: 46 points.
- Tougher Helpers:** Change to Requires A Persuasion Roll (-1 per 5 Active Points; -1). Total cost: 32 points.
- Master's Helpers:** Remove Requires A Persuasion Roll (-½). Total cost: 53 points.
- Challengeable Helpers:** Add "is subject to Skill Versus Skill Contests" to Requires A Persuasion Roll (-¼). Total cost: 35 points.
- I've Got A Friend Who Can Help:** The helpful persons the character can call upon are friends of his, and thus much more likely to help him. Add Loyal (+½). 100 Active Points; total cost 50 points.

I'LL BE THERE IN FIVE MINUTES

Effect:	Teleportation 5", MegaScale (1" = 1 km), Extra Time (5 Minutes)
Target/Area Affected:	Self
Duration:	Instant
Range:	Self
END Cost:	5
Skill Roll Penalty:	-5

Description: The character is such a skilled driver that he can cross an entire traffic-choked city in a mere five minutes! All he needs is an appropriate vehicle, and a drive that would take anyone else at least 30 minutes (or more, at rush hour) he can complete in five... and with virtually no risk of being stopped for speeding. However, significant physical obstacles (like a collapsed bridge) may thwart him. When the character uses this power, he can move up to 6,400 kilograms — in other words, the vehicle he's driving in, plus possibly a few passengers and some cargo.

Game Information: *Teleportation 5"*, x64 Increased Mass, MegaScale (1" = 1 km; +¼) (50 Active Points); OIF (appropriate cars and similar vehicles of opportunity; -½), Extra Time (5 Minutes; -2), Must Cross Intervening Space (-¼), Requires A Combat Driving Roll (-½). Total cost: 12 points.

Options:

- Better Driving:** Increase to Teleportation 7". 55 Active Points; total cost 13 points.
- Worse Driving:** Decrease to Teleportation 3". 45 Active Points; total cost 11 points.
- Easier Driving:** Change to Requires A Combat Driving Roll (-1 per 20 Active Points; -¼). Total cost: 12 points.
- Tougher Driving:** Change to Requires A Combat Driving Roll (-1 per 5 Active Points; -1). Total cost: 10 points.
- Master's Driving:** Remove Requires A Combat Driving Roll (-½). Total cost: 13 points.
- Challengeable Driving:** Add "is subject to Skill Versus Skill Contests" to Requires A Combat Driving Roll (-¼). Total cost: 11 points.

I'VE GOT JUST THE THING

Effect: Gadget Pool
 Target/Area Affected: Varies
 Duration: Varies
 Range: Varies
 Charges: 2
 Skill Roll Penalty: N/A

Description: Somehow, the character often seems to have just the right gadget for the problem at hand.

In game terms, this ability is represented as a Variable Power Pool with 2 Charges (though using the gadget in question may cost the character END). The Charges prevent the character from unfairly (and unrealistically) affecting the campaign by *always* having an appropriate gadget; he can only use the ability a couple of times per day at the most. The GM may rule that the character can't use the ability due to the circumstances, or that the gadget the character wants to "create" via the Power Pool is too unbalancing, uncommon, or ridiculous to allow.

The standard rules for VPPs apply to this Gadget Pool — if the character wants to be able to change the Pool in combat, he needs an appropriate Skill. However, for the sake of dramatic sense, the GM can waive this requirement and assume the character prepared the gadget "in advance," since the Pool represents the character's luckiness at having chosen to carry "just the right gadget" instead of his ability to gadgeteer on the fly.

Game Information: *Variable Power Pool (Gadget Pool), 30 base + 15 control cost; Focus (all powers built with the VPP must have this Limitation at the -¼ level or better; -¼), 2 Charges (-1½). Total cost: 35 points.*

Options:

- 1) **Better Gadgeteering:** Increase to 40 base + 20 control cost. Total cost: 47 points.
- 2) **Worse Gadgeteering:** Decrease to 20 base + 10 control cost. Total cost: 24 points.

JUST WHAT I WAS LOOKING FOR

Effect: Luck 12d6, Only To Find Desired Noncombat Non-Valuable Object
 Target/Area Affected: Self
 Duration: Persistent
 Range: Self
 END Cost: 0
 Skill Roll Penalty: N/A

Description: When the character needs a particular object or thing — a fire extinguisher, a screwdriver, some margarita mix, a coil of rope — he's usually able to find it somewhere nearby. He can't use this ability to find weapons, ammunition, or any other object designed primarily for use in combat (though he could use it to find a sturdy object to hit someone with). Similarly, he can't find gems, rare works of art, or any other thing that's particularly valuable or expensive; he can only find ordinary objects.

Game Information: *Luck 12d6 (60 Active Points); Extra Time (at least a Full Phase, and possibly longer; -½), Only To Find Desired Noncombat Non-Valuable Object (-1). Total cost: 24 points.*

Options:

- 1) **Strong Luck:** Increase to Luck 15d6. 75 Active Points; total cost 30 points.
- 2) **Weak Luck:** Decrease to Luck 9d6. 45 Active Points; total cost 18 points.
- 3) **Combat Scrounging:** The character can use this ability to find weapons, ammunition, or like objects, not just mundane ones. The GM should monitor the use of this ability carefully so that it doesn't unbalance the game, and should impose some restrictions of "realism" on it. No matter how lucky a character is, many types of weapons and ammunition are rare (at best), and won't just "pop up" anywhere a character decides to look. Change to Only To Find Desired Object (-½). Total cost: 30 points.
- 4) **Restricted Use:** To keep this ability from making life too easy for the character, the GM may rule that it has to be bought with Charges. Add 4 Charges (-1). Total cost: 17 points.

MASTER OF DISGUISE

Effect:	Shape Shift (Sight Group, any human form, Imitation), Extra Time (1 Hour)
Target/Area Affected:	Self
Duration:	Persistent
Range:	Self
END Cost:	0
Skill Roll Penalty:	-6

Description: A character with this ability is a master of disguise. Give him an hour and the right supplies, and he can make himself look like anyone of roughly the same height and weight. The disguise remains in effect even if he's Knocked Out or goes to sleep (*i.e.*, it's Persistent), but can be damaged by punches to the face (or similar impacts), and will start to fall apart after a few days (at the latest) if the character can't "touch it up" periodically.

Game Information: *Shape Shift (Sight Group, any human form), Imitation, Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½), Persistent (+½) (60 Active Points); OIF (disguise supplies of opportunity; -½), Extra Time (1 Hour; -3), Requires A Disguise Roll (-½). Total cost: 12 points.*

Options:

- 1) Strong Disguise:** Change to Extra Time (20 Minutes; -2½). Total cost: 13 points.
- 2) Weak Disguise:** Change to Extra Time (6 Hours; -3½). Total cost: 11 points.
- 3) Easier Disguise:** Change to Requires A Disguise Roll (-1 per 20 Active Points; -¼). Total cost: 13 points.
- 4) Tougher Disguise:** Change to Requires A Disguise Roll (-1 per 5 Active Points; -1). Total cost: 11 points.
- 5) Master's Disguise:** Remove Requires A Disguise Roll (-½). Total cost: 13 points.
- 6) Challengeable Disguise:** Add "is subject to Skill Versus Skill Contests" to Requires A Disguise Roll (-¼). Total cost: 11 points.

MASTER OF MIMICRY

Effect:	Shape Shift (Hearing Group, any human voice, Imitation)
Target/Area Affected:	Self
Duration:	Constant
Range:	Self
END Cost:	0
Skill Roll Penalty:	-6

Description: A character with this ability has an amazingly — sometimes frighteningly — accurate ability to imitate the voices of others. While he probably can't fool a voiceprint analyzer or other technological device, to any other human ear his voice is an exact duplicate of the one he's imitating. The character must have heard a voice before (either in person or on tape) to imitate it, but he can change his voice so it's not recognizable as his any time.

Game Information: *Shape Shift (Hearing Group, any human voice), Imitation, Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½) (37 Active Points); Requires A Mimicry Roll (-½). Total cost: 25 points.*

Options:

- 1) Strong Mimicry:** The character can not only imitate human voices, he can mimic other sounds — bird calls, sirens, and so forth — as long as they're within the decibel and octave range of the human voice. Change to any sound. 52 Active Points; total cost 35 points.
- 2) Weak Mimicry:** The character can disguise his own voice, but lacks the skill to imitate other voices. Remove Imitation. 22 Active Points; total cost 15 points.
- 3) Easier Mimicry:** Change to Requires A Mimicry Roll (-1 per 20 Active Points; -¼). Total cost: 30 points.
- 4) Tougher Mimicry:** Change to Requires A Mimicry Roll (-1 per 5 Active Points; -1). Total cost: 18 points.
- 5) Master's Mimicry:** Remove Requires A Mimicry Roll (-½). Total cost: 37 points.
- 6) Challengeable Mimicry:** Add "is subject to Skill Versus Skill Contests" to Requires A Mimicry Roll (-¼). Total cost: 21 points.

OBLITERATE EVIDENCE

Effect:	Minor Transform 3d6 (trace evidence into ruined/obliterated/tainted trace evidence), Requires A Criminology Roll
Target/Area Affected:	5" Radius
Duration:	Instant
Range:	No Range
END Cost:	0
Skill Roll Penalty:	-7

Description: A knowledgeable character knows how to scan a room or area for possible trace evidence and similar clues (whether left by himself or someone else). By spending a few minutes wiping away fingerprints, cleaning up or tainting bloodstains, and otherwise removing or obliterating that evidence, he can effectively making a crime untraceable. Since trace evidence is fragile (having, at most, 1 DEF, 1 BODY, and usually not even that), it's easy to Transform.

Game Information: *Minor Transform 3d6 (trace evidence into ruined/obliterated/tainted trace evidence, heals back through another application of this power), Area Of Effect (5" Radius; +1), Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½) (75 Active Points); Concentration (0 DCV throughout; -1), Extra Time (at least 5 Minutes, if not longer; -2), Limited Target (trace evidence; -½), No Range (-½), Requires A Criminology Roll (-½). Total cost: 14 points.*

Options:

- 1) **Strong Obliteration:** Increase to Minor Transform 4d6. 100 Active Points; total cost 18 points.
- 2) **Weak Obliteration:** Decrease to Minor Transform 2d6. 50 Active Points; total cost 9 points.
- 3) **Easier Obliteration:** Change to Requires A Criminology Roll (-1 per 20 Active Points; -¼). Total cost: 14 points.
- 4) **Tougher Obliteration:** Change to Requires A Criminology Roll (-1 per 5 Active Points; -1). Total cost: 12 points.
- 5) **Master's Obliteration:** Remove Requires A Criminology Roll (-½). Total cost: 15 points.
- 6) **Challengeable Obliteration:** Add "is subject to Skill Versus Skill Contests" to Requires A Criminology Roll (-¼). Total cost: 13 points.

QUICK-CHANGE ARTIST

Effect:	Cosmetic Transform 2d6 (one set of clothing into another), Requires A Sleight Of Hand Roll
Target/Area Affected:	Self
Duration:	Instant
Range:	Self
END Cost:	0
Skill Roll Penalty:	-1

Description: The character has the ability to quickly change one set of clothing he's wearing for another — a highly useful skill for impersonating people, disguising his efforts to tail someone, and so forth. Typically he can only change from the set of clothing he's wearing into another set that he has prepared (this is defined with 1 Recoverable Charge — recovering the Charge requires him to prepare another set of clothing). In some situations, the GM might allow the character to change into any one of several sets of clothing that are available.

Game Information: *Cosmetic Transform 2d6 (one set of clothing into another) (10 Active Points); Extra Time (Full Phase; -½), No Range (-½), Requires A Sleight Of Hand Roll (-½), Self Only (-½), 1 Recoverable Charge (see text; -1¼). Total cost: 2 points.*

Options:

- 1) **Strong Change:** Increase to Cosmetic Transform 3d6. 15 Active Points; total cost 3 points.
- 2) **Weak Change:** Decrease to Cosmetic Transform 1d6. 5 Active Points; total cost 1 point.
- 3) **Tougher Change:** Change to Requires A Sleight Of Hand Roll (-1 per 5 Active Points; -1). Total cost: 2 points.
- 4) **Master's Change:** Remove Requires A Sleight Of Hand Roll (-½). Total cost: 3 points.
- 5) **Challengeable Change:** Add "is subject to Skill Versus Skill Contests" to Requires A Sleight Of Hand Roll (-¼). Total cost: 2 points.

SECURITY GHOST

Effect:	Invisibility and Desolidification, Only To Not Be Perceived By Security Devices, Requires A Security Systems Roll
Target/Area Affected:	Self
Duration:	Constant
Range:	Self
END Cost:	0
Skill Roll Penalty:	-3/-6

Description: The character has an uncanny knack for slipping past security systems without setting them off. Unfortunately, he can only do this himself; it doesn't help him get a group of people through.

Game Information:**Cost Power**

- 7 *Security Ghost:* Invisibility to Sight Group, Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½) (30 Active Points); Extra Time (at least 1 Minute, and often more; -1½), Only To Not Be Perceived By Security Devices (-1), Requires A Security Systems Roll (-½)
- 11 *Security Ghost:* Desolidification (affected by any attack), Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½) (60 Active Points); Cannot Pass Through Solid Objects (-½), Does Not Protect Against Damage (-1), Extra Time (at least 1 Minute, and often more; -1½), Only To Not Be Perceived By/Pass Through Security Devices (-1), Requires A Security Systems Roll (-½)

Total cost: 18 points.

Options:

- 1) Strong Security Ghost:** Add Hearing and Smell/Taste Groups to Invisibility. 45 Active Points; total cost 11 points; total cost of ability 22 points.
- 2) Weak Security Ghost:** Add Bright Fringe (-¼) to Invisibility. Total cost 7 points; total cost of ability 18 points.
- 3) Easier Security Ghost:** Change to Requires A Security Systems Roll (-1 per 20 Active Points; -¼) for both powers. Total cost: 8 + 11 = 19 points.
- 4) Tougher Security Ghost:** Change to Requires A Security Systems Roll (-1 per 5 Active Points; -1) for both powers. Total cost: 7 + 10 = 17 points.
- 5) Master's Security Ghost:** Remove Requires A Security Systems Roll (-½) for both powers. Total cost: 9 + 12 = 21 points.
- 6) Challengeable Security Ghost:** Add "is subject to Skill Versus Skill Contests" to Requires A Security Systems Roll (-¼) for both powers. Total cost: 7 + 10 = 17 points.
- 7) Group Security Ghost:** The character *can* get others through with him. Add Usable Simultaneously (up to eight people at once; +1) and Recipients Must Remain Within 3" Of Character (-½) to each power. 50 and 100 Active Points, respectively; total cost 11 + 17 = 28 points.
- 8) Variant Security Ghost:** This form of the power uses Change Environment to impose penalties on several Sense Groups (including the "Security

Devices Sense Group," defined as those special Senses used to build various security devices which aren't assigned to any particular Sense Group; see pages 285-86 for some examples). Change to: Change Environment 1" radius, -5 to Sight, Hearing, Smell/Taste, Touch, and Security Devices Sense Group PER Rolls, Multiple Combat Effects, Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½) (123 Active Points); Extra Time (at least 1 Minute, and often more; -1½), No Range (-½), Only To Not Be Perceived By Security Devices (-1), Requires A Security Systems Roll (-½), Self Only (-½). Total cost: 25 points.

TEAM EFFORT

Effect:	Mind Link (a specific group of up to eight persons at once), Only To Coordinate Assaults And Operations
Target/Area Affected:	Self
Duration:	Persistent
Range:	Special
END Cost:	0
Skill Roll Penalty:	-3

Description: A group of characters with this ability has an uncanny knack for executing their plans with precise timing and for maximum effectiveness. Whether it comes from a superb skill at planning and synchronizing their activities, or just a natural ability for doing things "in tandem," the team members always seem to do things at the right time when working together.

Game Information: *Mind Link (a specific group of up to eight persons at once), No LOS Needed (35 Active Points); Cannot Use Mental Powers Through Link (-¼), Does Not Provide Mental Awareness (-¼), Only To Coordinate Assaults And Operations (-1), Only With Others Who Have Mind Link (-1), Requires An INT Roll (assumes an INT Roll of 12- or 13-; -¾). Total cost: 8 points.*

Options:

- 1) Strong Super-Skill:** Increase to 16 persons at once. 40 Active Points; total cost 9 points.
- 2) Weak Super-Skill:** Decrease to 4 persons at once. 30 Active Points; total cost 7 points.
- 3) Easier Intuition:** Change to Requires An INT Roll (-1 per 20 Active Points; -½). Total cost: 9 points.
- 4) Tougher Intuition:** Change to Requires An INT Roll (-1 per 5 Active Points; -1¼). Total cost: 7 points.
- 5) Master's Intuition:** Remove Requires An INT Roll (-¾). Total cost: 10 points.
- 6) Variant Intuition:** Change to Requires A Teamwork Roll (-½). Total cost: 9 points.

ULTIMATE PICKPOCKETING

Effect:	Teleportation 1", Fully Invisible, Usable As Attack, Only Versus Small, Pickpocketable Objects, Requires A Sleight Of Hand Roll
Target/Area Affected:	One character
Duration:	Instant
Range:	No Range
END Cost:	0
Skill Roll Penalty:	-1

Description: The character is such a skilled sleight of hand artist that he can pick pockets and remove other small objects from someone's person with almost no chance of being detected. Similarly, the character can walk past a small object on a table and palm it without anyone noticing, and perform similar sleight of hand tricks effortlessly.

Game Information: *Teleportation 1", Fully Invisible (+1), Usable As Attack (won't work against characters who have this power or Sleight Of Hand at 14- or better; +1), Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½) (7 Active Points); Only Versus Small, Pickpocketable Objects (-1), Requires A Sleight Of Hand Roll (-½). Total cost: 3 points.*

Options:

- 1) Tougher Super-Skill:** Change to Requires A Sleight Of Hand Roll (-1 per 5 Active Points; -1). Total cost: 2 points.
- 2) Master's Super-Skill:** Remove Requires A Sleight Of Hand Roll (-½). Total cost: 3 points.
- 3) Challengeable Super-Skill:** Add "is subject to Skill Versus Skill Contests" to Requires A Sleight Of Hand Roll (-¼). Total cost: 2 points.

ULTIMATE STEALTH

Effect:	Invisibility to Sight Group, Only When Not Attacking, Requires A Stealth Roll
Target/Area Affected:	Self
Duration:	Constant
Range:	Self
END Cost:	0
Skill Roll Penalty:	-3

Description: The character is a master of the arts of stealth and hiding. When he doesn't want to be seen, almost no one can see him — only persons within 1" even have a chance.

Game Information: *Invisibility to Sight Group, Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½) (30 Active Points); Only When Not Attacking (-½), Requires A Stealth Roll (-½). Total cost: 15 points.*

Options:

- 1) Strong Stealth:** The character is also virtually impossible to hear. Add Hearing Group. 37 Active Points; total cost 18 points.
- 2) Weak Stealth I:** Add Bright Fringe (-¼). Total cost: 13 points.
- 3) Weak Stealth II:** The character's stealthiness doesn't affect augmented sight, such as nightsight scopes, thermalvision goggles, and the like. Add Limited Effect (Normal Sight only; -¼). Total cost: 13 points.
- 4) Easier Stealth:** Change to Requires A Stealth Roll (-1 per 20 Active Points; -¼). Total cost: 17 points.
- 5) Tougher Stealth:** Change to Requires A Stealth Roll (-1 per 5 Active Points; -1). Total cost: 12 points.
- 6) Master's Stealth:** Remove Requires A Stealth Roll (-½). Total cost: 20 points.
- 7) Challengeable Stealth:** Add "is subject to Skill Versus Skill Contests" to Requires A Stealth Roll (-¼). Total cost: 13 points.
- 8) Cat's Feet:** The character doesn't know how to hide himself from others' sight, but he moves just as silently as a cat. Change to Invisibility to Hearing Group. 15 Active Points; total cost 7 points.
- 9) Variant Ultimate Stealth:** This form of the power uses Change Environment to impose penalties on Sight Group Senses. It's not as effective as Invisibility, but may be more appropriate for more "realistic" campaigns. Change to: Change Environment 1" radius, -8 to Sight Sense Group PER Rolls, Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½) (39 Active Points); No Range (-½), Only When Not Attacking (-½), Requires A Stealth Roll (-½), Self Only (-½). Total cost: 13 points.
 - Add Hearing Group and Multiple Combat Effects as well: 82 Active Points; total cost 27 points.
 - Reduce to -5 to Sight Sense Group PER Rolls: 25 Active Points; total cost 8 points.
 - Change to Normal Sight PER Rolls: 28 Active Points; total cost 9 points.



WHO SAID THAT?

Effect: Images to Hearing Group, -6 to PER Rolls, Only To Create False Human Voices At Range, Requires A Ventriloquism Roll (-½)

Target/Area Affected: 1" Radius

Duration: Constant

Range: 6"

END Cost: 0

Skill Roll Penalty: -3

Description: The character is a master ventriloquist, able to throw his voice up to 40 feet away without moving his lips at all! He can change his voice slightly; if he wants to imitate other people, the GM may allow him to do so if he makes a Mimicry roll.

Game Information: *Images to Hearing Group, -6 to PER Rolls, Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½) (34 Active Points); Limited Range (6"; -¼), Only To Create False Human Voices At Range (-1), Requires A Ventriloquism Roll (-½). Total cost: 12 points.*

Options:

1) **Strong Ventriloquism:** Increase to -8 to PER Rolls. 43 Active Points; total cost 16 points.

2) **Weak Ventriloquism:** Decrease to -4 to PER Rolls. 25 Active Points; total cost 9 points.

3) **Easier Ventriloquism:** Change to Requires A Ventriloquism Roll (-1 per 20 Active Points; -¼). Total cost: 14 points.

4) **Tougher Ventriloquism:** Change to Requires A Ventriloquism Roll (-1 per 5 Active Points; -1). Total cost: 10 points.

5) **Master's Ventriloquism:** Remove Requires A Ventriloquism Roll (-½). Total cost: 15 points.

6) **Challengeable Ventriloquism:** Add "is subject to Skill Versus Skill Contests" to Requires A Ventriloquism Roll (-¼). Total cost: 11 points.

7) **Greater Repertoire:** The character can make just about any sound at range, not just human voices (provided the GM believes they're within the decibel and octave range of the human voice). Change to Only To Create False Sounds At Range (-½). Total cost: 15 points.

RESOURCE POINTS



Characters in the movies, novels, television shows, and comic books that influence and inspire *Dark Champions* campaigns often go through weapons, equipment, and other resources at a rapid pace. They acquire, use, and lose guns, cars, and other gear within the space of a single story. They come into large amounts of money, then spend or lose it just as quickly. During the course of a mission, they might call on many different Contacts and friends, only to have those characters die during that adventure... or, if they live, never come into the character's story again.

This sort of give-and-take is difficult to simulate in gaming, where characters are used to acquiring resources and getting to use them whenever they want thereafter. And in the *HERO System*, where characters typically pay Character Points for their resources, it can be even trickier, since characters rightly expect to receive full and constant value for what they buy.

The rules for equipment in Heroic genres like *Dark Champions* — that characters don't pay Character Points for equipment, they buy it or otherwise acquire it "for free" in the game — are designed in part to simulate this situation. However, they often come with their own difficulties. When characters can have more or less whatever they want "for free," it becomes problematic for many GMs to deny them anything — particularly when they buy the Skills, Perks, and Talents needed to build or acquire the gear on their own. (See page 264 for more information about equipment acquisition.) Furthermore, the equipment rules don't cover other resources that *Dark Champions* characters often use, such as Contacts; characters still have to pay Character Points for such things, which often becomes a frustrating exercise in trying to predict what sort of friends the character will need to call on throughout his adventuring career.

The *Resource Point* rules are intended to correct (or at least minimize) these problems by creating a distinct pool of "points" that characters can use to "buy" weapons, equipment, Vehicles, Bases, Contacts, and other more or less "fungible" resources that can easily change (*i.e.*, be lost, used up, or used temporarily) during the course of an adventure or campaign. That way they don't have to spend precious Character Points on a resource they may rarely (if ever) use. At the same time, since the GM has some control over the amount of Resource Points the PCs have and how they allocate them, he can prevent them from arming themselves to the teeth and driving around in tanks just because they don't have to pay Character Points for their gear.

The Resource Points rules are *strictly optional*.

If the GM doesn't want to use them, he doesn't have to; if he wants to change them or re-arrange them, he's welcome to. The purpose of Resource Points is to help the GM manage his campaign better while maintaining the players' freedom to create and play their characters in ways that simulate the *Dark Champions* genre better — so if they don't do that for you, rework them until they do, or don't use them.

RESOURCE POINTS BASICS

A character's Resource Points are divided into four categories:

- Equipment Points
- Vehicle/Base Points
- Follower/Contact Points
- Miscellaneous Points

The text below describes each category and what characters can buy with the Resource Points assigned to it. Characters may not substitute points in one category for points in another; for example, a character cannot choose to spend some (or all) of his Follower/Contact Points on equipment — he has to spend them on Contacts or Followers, or nothing at all. Characters may not sell back unused Resource Points in any category.

STARTING RESOURCE POINTS

The GM must decide how many Resource Points he wants characters to start the campaign with. The more points he assigns to each category, the more resources the character will have to choose from in that category, and the more he can have "active" at one time.

Typically characters have more Equipment Points than any other type of Resource Points — that's the category in which they're most likely to need to buy expensive things and to carry a lot of that resource at once. Miscellaneous Points tend to be the rarest, since they represent the least common things characters use (and in some ways the things most likely to unbalance the game).

The example characters in Chapter Nine are built with the following starting Resource Points:

- 60 Equipment Points
- 10 Vehicle/Base Points
- 5 Follower/Contact Points
- 0 Miscellaneous Points

PURCHASING MORE RESOURCE POINTS

The campaign default amount of Resource Points may not be enough for some characters, such as a heavily-armed vigilante, a technician who wants to have lots of gadgets, or an expert driver who needs lots of different cars. Characters may purchase more Equipment, Vehicle/Base, and Follower/Contact Points with Character Points, at the cost indicated in the accompanying table. Characters may not purchase Miscellaneous Points; they can only get these from the GM.

RESOURCE POINT COSTS

Type Of Resource Point	Cost
Equipment Points	1 Character Point for 5 Equipment Points
Vehicle/Base Points	1 Character Point for 2 Vehicle/Base Points
Follower/Contact Points	1 Character Point for 2 Follower/Contact Points
Miscellaneous Points	Not allowed

Characters may not “trade in” Resource Points for Character Points. They may choose not to use their Resource Points, or any particular category of Resource Points, but they get nothing in exchange. Similarly, they may choose to use only some of the points in a Resource Points category, but that just means the points go to waste (temporarily or permanently).

As the campaign progresses, characters can get more Resource Points in either or both of two ways. First, they can spend Experience Points to buy them, as described above. Second, the GM can give out Resource Points at the end of an adventure, in place of or in addition to Experience Points. For example, after a particularly successful adventure, the GM might grant each character 3 Experience Points, 2 Equipment Points, and 1 Vehicle/Base Point. The amount and type of points given out are up to the GM, and may vary from character to character depending upon each character’s performance during the scenario. The amount of Resource Points awarded does *not* depend on the amount of equipment, Contacts, and other resources the characters acquire during the scenario. Characters may walk away from a game with truckloads of guns but still get only 2 Equipment Points, or they may lose several guns but be awarded 4 Equipment Points for their clever actions.

Characters generally cannot lose Resource Points. The only exception to this rule is if a character spends Resource Points on unique items (see below).

PURCHASING THINGS WITH RESOURCE POINTS

Characters use Resource Points to “buy” equipment, Vehicles, Contacts, and the like for themselves during an adventure. The cost of something in Resource Points equals its cost in Real Points. For example, if a character wants a machine gun (90 Active Points, 36 Real Points), that requires 36 of his Equipment Points.

Where appropriate, characters may spend Resource Points using the “5 Character Points doubles the number of items of equipment (or Vehicles, Followers, or the like) that a character has.” For example, if the character described above wanted two machine guns, he’d allocate 36 Equipment Points for the first machine gun, then 5 more Equipment Points for the second using the “5 points doubling” rule, for a total of 41 Equipment Points. The GM may, of course, forbid this if he considers it unbalancing or troublesome.

Kit And Armory

When a character uses Resource Points (particularly Equipment Points), he must distinguish between his *Kit* (the equipment, Followers, Vehicles, and so on that he currently carries, uses, or “has active”) and his *Armory* (the total amount of equipment, Followers, Vehicles, and so on that he has to choose from). Characters usually have more resources than they can carry or use at one time, so they have to choose which ones they want to have available to them during a particular adventure (or part of an adventure). A character’s Armory is usually much larger than his Kit, since he acquires resources he can use during the course of the campaign.

A character’s Kit equals the total amount of Resource Points he has in any given category. For example, if a character has 60 Equipment Points, then his Kit equals 60 points — he can have up to 60 Real Points’ worth of weapons and equipment with him (or easily accessible) at any one time. A character keeps his Kit with him during an adventure (or has it nearby).

A character’s Armory is the overall amount of a resource the character has to choose from when determining what he takes in his Kit. It’s not necessarily defined by any set point total; depending on what he does during the campaign, a character could acquire an Armory with literally thousands of Resource Points’ worth of resources. A character usually stores his Armory in a Base or other safe location.

Example: *Crimesmasher’s Equipment Points Armory, which he keeps in his secret headquarters, consists of the following: 100 throwing blades (10 Real Points apiece), three grappling hooks (10 Real Points apiece), five billy clubs (5 Real Points apiece), ten throwing stars (10 Real Points apiece), a parabolic microphone (6 Real Points), a survival knife (13 Real Points), 16 assorted handguns (ranging from 8-28 Real Points apiece), two assault rifles (35 Real Points apiece), several suits of body armor (ranging from 3 to 15 Real Points each), and various other miscellaneous pieces of equipment. He only has 60 Equipment Points to spend, giving*

him a 60-point Kit. This of course means he can't take his entire Armory with him when he goes on patrol — he has to choose 60 Real Points' worth of equipment to carry. He chooses the parabolic mike (6 Real Points), 16 throwing blades (30 Real Points), the survival knife (13 Real Points), and a handgun (11 Real Points).

A character's Kit may vary from adventure to adventure. He might even change it during the course of an adventure, if he has the chance to visit his Armory and switch his Resource Points.

At the beginning of the campaign, each character has an Armory in each Resource Points category equal to 1.5 times the number of Resource Points in that category. Characters should determine the contents of their Armory (subject to GM permission) before the game begins. After the campaign begins, there's no limit on the size of a character's Armory, nor do characters have to maintain a Kit:Armory ratio of 1:1.5. After the game begins, a character can put any equipment, Vehicles, Bases, Followers, or Contacts he acquires into the Armory of the appropriate category of Resource Points, and loses things from his various Armories as they're destroyed, used up, killed, or stolen. Thus, a character's Armories change during the course of the campaign as he acquires new resources (weapons looted from his defeated enemies, Contacts among new people he meets, Vehicles he builds, and the like) or loses them (his enemies capture him and take away some of his guns, Triggerhappy blows up

his armored Cadillac, the KGB murders one of his Contacts, and so forth).

The distinction between Kit and Armory becomes crucial when characters lose items or use up expendable items. If a character puts an assault rifle in his Kit at the start of an adventure, and during the course of the adventure he loses the rifle, he does *not* lose any Equipment Points, nor are the points in his Kit reduced. However, his Armory *has* suffered a loss — he no longer has that assault rifle to choose from when allocating points for his Kit. (His Kit for the current adventure now has a number of "unspent" points that were formerly used to buy the assault rifle, and he can replace the assault rifle with something else obtained from his Armory.) If the character wants to have an assault rifle available, he has to acquire another one (by looting bodies, theft, purchase, building it himself, or however else the GM allows him to get one). A character's need or desire to replace the lost contents of his Armory can provide a lot of opportunities for roleplaying, and may suggest many adventures to the GM.

Example: *Crimesmasher* is a character in a "costumed vigilantes" campaign. Characters in this campaign start with 60 Equipment Points. Before the game begins, *Crimesmasher* may define 90 points' worth of equipment (his Armory) that he has to choose from when filling his Kit. He chooses a handgun (20 Real Points), an assault rifle (35 Real Points), a suit of body armor (12 Real Points), a survival knife (13 Real Points), a parabolic microphone (6 Real Points), Advanced Lockpicking Tools (2 Real Points), and an Advanced Criminalistics Kit (2 Real Points). His starting Armory is now filled.

During the course of *Crimesmasher's* early adventures, he loses his assault rifle and his lockpicking tools when one of his enemies takes them away from him. But he also acquires several pistols and shotguns (taken from street thugs he defeated), a couple sets of handcuffs, two more suits of body armor, an arsenal of throwing blades and knives confiscated from his enemy *Razor*, a small fire extinguisher, and a waffle iron. His Armory is now much larger than it was before, though he can still only choose 60 Real Points' worth of equipment for his Kit for any particular adventure. He can't choose the assault rifle or the lockpicking tools anymore (since he lost them), but he has a lot more options now than he did before.

RESTRICTIONS ON RESOURCE POINTS

The GM must decide what restrictions, if any, he wants to place on the use of Resource Points. For example, he might want to establish a campaign ground rule that a character cannot have a weapon with more Active Points than two times (2x) his number of Equipment Points, or a Vehicle built on more than 250 Character Points.



Kit Size Restrictions

Another possible restriction is to limit the size of a character's Kit based on the type of adventure being run. For instance, characters typically can't take as much equipment when they're attending a formal ball as they can when they're assaulting a guerrilla camp in the jungle. Depending on the circumstances, the GM can decrease (or increase) the size of the characters' Kit temporarily.

Example: *Steve decides to establish three categories of "Kit size" for his game. The basic size is Standard Gunwear, which is the amount of equipment the characters typically carry on an adventure, when patrolling the streets, and so forth. It equals 1 x Kit. For situations where they're undercover or can't carry a lot of gear, they have to use Casual Gunwear — 0.5 x Kit, and the Kit cannot include any item with a PER Mod greater than +2 unless he gives special permission. For missions where the PCs know they're heading into combat (or other dangerous situations), they can have Formal Gunwear: 1.25 x Kit.*

RESOURCE POINT POOLS

There are four categories of Resource Points: Equipment Points; Vehicle/Base Points; Follower/Contact Points; and Miscellaneous Points.

EQUIPMENT POINTS

The most common, and probably most important, category of Resource Points is Equipment Points, which characters use to purchase weapons, body armor, gadgets, and other devices. A character usually has more points in his Equipment Point pool than in any other category of Resource Points.

When building equipment for their Equipment Points pools, characters can apply appropriate Limitations (including *Focus*, obviously) to reduce the Real Point cost of the items. However, because characters who buy "unique" items through their Equipment Points pools are already subject to losing those points if the item is lost (see below), they may not use the *Independent* Limitation to build devices on which they spend Equipment Points.

Types Of Equipment Available

The types of equipment normally available to characters is limited, based on their experience and their adventures. At base level, characters may only allocate Equipment Points for *Standard* equipment, meaning any items an ordinary, law-abiding citizen could acquire without too much difficulty. This category is still fairly broad — ordinary citizens can obtain powerful hunting rifles, some types of body armor, high-caliber handguns, simple espionage devices, early-generation nightvision equipment, and a lot of other gear — but it prevents a character from purchasing law enforcement or military equipment such as submachine guns, grenades, and advanced body armors.

If a character wants to be able to allocate Equipment Points to better types of equipment, he

must buy the Perk *Improved Equipment Availability* (see page 88). Here's what's available for different Perk values:

Street-Level Equipment (3 points): This Perk gives the character access to various types of law enforcement equipment and military small arms, such as submachine guns and assault rifles, and to other low-level military equipment, but not to heavy equipment such as machine guns or anti-tank rockets.

Military Equipment (5 points): This Perk gives the character some access to heavy weapons, such as machine guns and some types of grenades, and all types of body armor.

Advanced Military Equipment (10 points): This Perk gives the character access to the full range of military equipment, including anti-tank rockets, flamethrowers, any type of grenade, and so forth.

The accompanying Improved Equipment Availability Chart offers some guidelines regarding what characters can purchase when they buy the Perk. But of course, just having the Perk doesn't guarantee a character access to such equipment — paying for Advanced Military Equipment doesn't mean the character can walk right into the local U.S. Army armory and take anything he wants. Characters still have to acquire the weapons and gear for their Equipment Point pools in the usual ways. The Perk is just a game rule that restricts access for game balance purposes. (See page 88 for more information.)

Regardless of what level of the Perk a character has (if any), he can always put in his Armory, and allocate Equipment Points to, an item he acquires during game play (such as a machine gun he obtains from a defeated enemy). The Equipment Point rules do not prevent a character from using equipment acquired in a game session during that game session only, even if he can't fit it into his Kit. However, in later game sessions, if he wants to use such "found equipment," he has to include it in his Kit.

Usually characters obtain equipment for their Armories in the usual ways: purchase it; steal it; take it from defeated enemies; make it using their own Skills; hire a skilled craftsman to make it; and so forth (see page 246). To prevent game balance problems, the GM may want to forbid characters to make their own weapons and gear unless they have not only the appropriate general Skills (such as Weaponsmith, and perhaps Inventor), but one or more appropriate PSs or other Skills related to the specific item in question.

Unique Items

Generally, a character should not include unique items, such as a one-of-a-kind gun he designed himself, in his Equipment Point Armory or Kit — he should spend Character Points on such items. Similarly, a character may not want buy his "signature" items (such as a distinctive type of throwing blade or other weapon) through his Resource Points; he should spend Character Points on those items, so he can't permanently lose them. If a character spends Resource Points on a unique item of some sort, and loses or uses up that item, he loses the Resource Points used to buy that item

IMPROVED EQUIPMENT AVAILABILITY CHART

Category of Perk	Weapons	Vehicles	Body Armor	Miscellaneous
Standard (free)	Those available to civilians — handguns, hunting rifles and shotguns	Those available to civilians — stock automobiles, motorcycles, helicopters, and the like	Up to DEF 6	Anything easily available to civilians without a license or permit
Street Level (3 points)	Military small arms — submachine guns, assault rifles, and the like	Minor military vehicles (such as Humvees); highly customized civilian vehicles (e.g., Indy cars, armored cars), armored cars. Typically limited to 7 DEF.	Up to DEF 11	Anything requiring a license or permit to purchase (e.g., some surveillance equipment and lockpicking equipment)
Military (5 points)	Military heavy weapons — machine guns, grenades, and the like	Any vehicle with built-in weapons or gadgetry — James Bond's cars, Humvees with guns, vigilante cycles. Typically limited to 12 DEF.	Any type of body armor	Generation 3 nightvision equipment
Advanced Military (10 points)	All military weapons — anti-tank rockets, missiles, and the like	Full military vehicles — tanks, Apache helicopters, nuclear submarines, space shuttles, and the like		

permanently. The GM defines exactly what qualifies as a “unique” item for purposes of this rule. For example, if a character wants to use a lot of big, fancy guns that he built himself and that look really impressive, but which are no more effective (in game terms) than ordinary firearms, the guns probably aren't “unique.” But if they do extra damage or have other features not commonly available on guns, the GM might consider them “unique.”

VEHICLE/BASE POINTS

Vehicle/Base Points are the second most common type of Resource Points. Because many Vehicles and Bases are more or less “unique,” the rules about losing Resource Points spent on unique equipment generally don't apply to Vehicle/Base Points. However, at the GM's option, a character who builds a *truly* unique Vehicle or Base still may lose all or some of the points used to buy it if it is destroyed.

Characters' ability to purchase military vehicles and/or armed and armored vehicles is restricted by the *Improved Equipment Availability* Perk.

FOLLOWER/CONTACT POINTS

Follower/Contact Points are relatively rare. Most characters will never have a large number of them.

Many *Dark Champions* characters seem to have dozens of Contacts who appear for one adventure here or there, functioning as a sort of “plot device” for that particular scenario. That Contact may never show up again, but for that one adventure, he's vital. Follower/Contact Points allow GMs and characters to create this sort of Contact without having to devote Character Points to him permanently. They also allow a character to claim to have a large number of Followers without devoting a substantial portion of his Character Points to purchasing them.

A character's Follower/Contact Armory consists of all the Followers and Contacts he knows and/or controls (in a general sense). His Follower/Contact Kit is the Followers or Contacts he wishes to have access to that adventure. A Follower or Contact in the Armory but not the Kit may not be used or encountered in the current scenario — he

is, for whatever reason, unavailable.

Contacts in a character's Kit are not automatically available to him — he must still make his Contact Roll to determine whether he can locate the Contact and/or whether the Contact can be of any help to him. If a particular Contact is integral to a particular scenario, the GM may require a character to take that Contact or Follower as part of his Kit for that scenario.

Because each Follower or Contact is, in essence, “unique,” the rule about losing Equipment Points devoted to unique items does not apply to Follower/Contact Points. If the character loses a Follower or Contact because of his own stupidity or incompetence, the GM may rule that he loses the Follower/Contact Points devoted to that person permanently. Otherwise, the GM should let the character replace a lost Follower or Contact, though this may take a long time and involve a lot of roleplaying.

Characters may not buy the *Well-Connected* Skill Enhancer through their Follower/Contact Points. However, if they buy it with their Character Points, it reduces the cost of all Contacts purchased with Resource Points in the usual fashion.

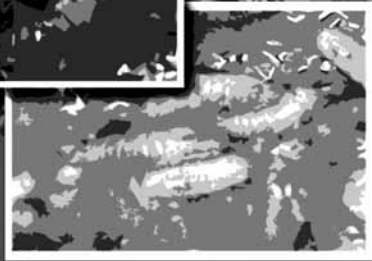
MISCELLANEOUS POINTS

Miscellaneous Points are the rarest form of Resource Points; some characters may never possess any. Characters allocate them to acquire access to Money, certain Fringe Benefits, and other unusual Perks and abilities. The GM determines whether a particular Perk or ability qualifies for Miscellaneous Points.

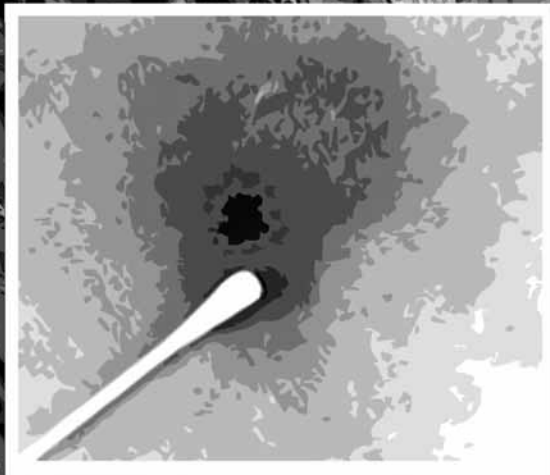
The GM should be especially careful about how characters define their Kit and Armory of Miscellaneous Points. It's not common for characters to suddenly acquire or lose Fringe Benefits, for example; instead, characters should generally define their Kit in one particular way, and leave it that way for long periods of time. In some cases (for example, characters who can disguise themselves and forge credential and licenses), quicker switches may be acceptable.

chapter three:

"Insect activity helps establish time of death"



"Shell casing with extractor and hammer marks"



"Residue helps establish distance from shooter to victim"

TRACES OF CRIME

FORENSICS

CRIMINALISTICS



THE LATEST DATA

The information in this chapter comes from various sources available to the general public as of mid-2004, and is current as of that time. However, the field of criminalistics often advances rapidly (as anyone who compares this chapter to the equivalent section in the original *Dark Champions* sourcebook can readily see!), so it's possible that some of this information will become outdated or invalidated as time goes on. Players and GMs who are interested in being as accurate as possible are encouraged to do their own research.

LOCARD'S EXCHANGE PRINCIPLE

Much of criminalistics is based on a scientific law called *Locard's Exchange Principle*, which states that "whenever two objects come into contact, a transfer of materials occurs." This transfer may be minute, but with proper equipment and training a criminalist can find the transferred materials, analyze them, and derive information from them.

One of the most popular aspects of the modern-day action-adventure genre is *criminalistics*, or forensic science — the use of science to find and analyze clues, and thus catch murderers and other criminals. Entire books, movies, and television shows have focused on the "magic" of seeing a trained scientist take the tiniest traces of evidence, study them, and uncover information that helps the police arrest a killer.

Criminalistics (and the related field of forensic pathology) can play just as important a role in your games. Sometimes the only clues a *Dark Champions* character has to go on are a few drops of blood or a fingerprint, so it's important for players and GMs alike to know, in layman's terms, what that clue can tell a skilled character. This chapter provides a *brief* introduction to criminalistics, with plenty of suggestions about how to use the appropriate Skills. Readers who want to learn more can consult the books listed in the Bibliography or numerous other sources.

In game terms, the information in this section pertains to the Skill *Criminology*. You can read about the use of the closely-related Skill *Forensic Medicine* in the next section of this chapter.

Archaeology

At old crime scenes, sometimes archaeological procedures and techniques are useful to recover and preserve evidence. Forensic archaeological investigations may involve forensic anthropology (see page 168) as well, since bones are often the only remains of the victim. SS: Archaeology is a Complementary Skill to Criminology for purposes of finding evidence at older crime scenes.

Arson And Explosions

Characters may often find themselves investigating suspicious fires or explosions.

ARSON

Criminalists and fire marshals must sometimes investigate a fire to determine its cause and origin — in other words, to discover if someone deliberately set it (usually as a form of insurance fraud, or as an attack on the property's owner). SS: Arson/Explosion Investigation covers this field and serves as a Complementary Skill to Criminalistics.

Characters should examine an arson scene as soon as possible after the fire is extinguished. First they must locate the fire's point of origin. Fire tends to move upwards, so the investigation usually starts

at the lowest point at which there's evidence of burning. Factors such as the wind and building collapse can alter the usual pattern of burning. A series of random fires throughout a building, or evidence of *accelerants* (substances such as kerosene used to spread a fire), also known as "streamers," often indicate arson.

Once the character locates the fire's point of origin, he protects it and photographs it. An electronic "sniffer" can detect the residue of any accelerants, since such chemicals usually do not burn up completely. The character can then use a gas chromatograph to identify the accelerant. Normally, not even intense firefighting efforts obliterate all useful forensic evidence, but at the GM's discretion, they could impose a -1 to -3 penalty on a character's Criminology roll. Similar penalties result if a character waits too long to investigate a fire.

Inexperienced arsonists often burn themselves badly. A quick call to the local emergency rooms may help locate such an arsonist.

EXPLOSIONS

Investigating explosions is similar to investigating arson. Demolitions and SS: Arson/Explosion Investigation are Complementary Skills for investigating explosions.

Explosives are classified as "low" or "high" explosives; the distinction depends on the speed at which the substance "decomposes" (*i.e.*, explodes). Black powder and smokeless powder are a low explosives; dynamite, TNT, and RDX (plastic explosive) are high explosives. Low explosives are usually set off by a flame; high explosives by a primer (a small, ultrasensitive explosive device) contained in a blasting cap and triggered by an electric charge. (See page 256 for more information on explosives in game terms.)

The investigator should examine the scene of an explosion as soon as possible, before the evidence is obliterated. Bombing investigations generally focus on four separate areas. The first is to examine the components of and residues left by the bomb and try to link them to the person(s) who built the bomb. Explosives almost always leave traceable residues in the crater and surrounding areas. Microscopic examination of materials from the scene lets characters find these unexploded particles, which they can then identify with a chemical color test. Explosions also leave distinctive marks, called pitting and cratering, in metals; the direction and type of soot on the walls is likewise important. Remnants of the materials used to construct the bomb (such

as the metal fragments created by a pipe bomb) are another type of explosion evidence. Also, the faster (stronger) an explosive is, the more damage it does, so the extent of the damage can tell investigators what type of explosive was used.

Second, investigators can compare the bomber's "signature" to known signatures. Each bomber tends to have his own particular method or style of making bombs. Even if they know other ways to make bombs, they usually keep using certain techniques that they favor. SS: Psychology/Criminal Psychology can act as a Complementary Skill to Criminology for purposes of determining a bomber's "signature" and what it might mean. (Of course, a highly-skilled bomber in an adventure story might vary the types of bombs he uses, just to confuse the characters.)

Third, investigators look for evidence of items associated with a bomb, such as the vehicle or package it was carried in, and try to link those with the bomber. They also interview witnesses, since the color and shape of an explosion can provide clues.

Fourth, investigators look into the motive for the bombing. They try to find out who had a reason to set off a bomb in this particular place, be it a disgruntled neighbor, a business enemy, a fanatical terrorist, or someone else.

Blood

Blood samples and stains can be extremely important clues. They can help identify murderers and show what happened at a murder scene. The study of blood (and other body fluids) is known as Serology. SS: Serology serves as a Complementary Skill to Criminalistics.

The basic steps in a blood investigation are these:

- is it blood?
- if so, is it human blood?
- if so, what are its characteristics (*i.e.*, whose blood is it)?

Special chemical tests provide the answers to these questions.

Characters should gather blood samples while the blood remains as fresh and pure as possible. As blood dries and ages, it gradually becomes more and more difficult to determine its characteristics, because the red blood cells rupture. Impurities can also occur when blood mixes with other substances, such as dirty water. However, in some situations the age or purity of blood is less important (for example, the precipitin test, described below).

Characters can detect "occult" blood stains — those which are hidden, too small to be seen by the naked eye, or have been cleaned up — with chemicals such as *luminol* and *fluorescein*. Luminol reacts to blood by creating a blue-white to yellowish-green light for about 30 seconds after exposure; this light is visible to the naked eye and should be photographed before it fades. Fluorescein works similarly, but is only visible under ultraviolet light. Even well-cleaned crime scenes usually retain

microscopic traces of blood which become very visible when treated with these substances — luminol, for example, can detect blood in dilutions as small as 1 in ten million.

IDENTIFYING BLOOD

Determining that a sample is in fact blood is usually a simple matter — the examiner uses a chemical test, such as a catalytic color test. In game terms, this requires a Criminology roll, usually with a +1 to +3 bonus. The GM may reduce the bonus to +0 if the sample is contaminated, aged/putrefying, or otherwise difficult to work with.

After identifying a sample as blood, the examiner has to confirm that it's human blood and not animal blood. Several different tests, including the precipitin test, can provide this information. Unlike the catalytic color test, the precipitin test generally isn't affected by the age or purity of the blood sample, so a Criminology roll at +1 to +3 is enough to perform it properly.

BLOOD CHARACTERISTICS

Scientists identify blood by its "type." The most common blood typing system is the A-B-O system, but more than 15 others, such as ADA, M-N, and Rh, are also used. Serologists can also identify certain enzymes and proteins, known collectively as "genetic markers," which exist in blood; these are much more reliable than simple blood types. Blood cannot as yet be "fingerprinted," *i.e.*, matched to a specific individual, except through DNA typing (see page 158). But by determining a blood sample's type in each of the classification systems, and identifying the genetic markers, a serologist can establish what percentage of the population has that specific blood type. If a suspect has that type, that fact is of some evidentiary value — the lower the percentage, the greater the likelihood that the suspect is the perpetrator. (Theoretically, if all genetic markers were present and could be positively identified, the odds of two people having the exact same "profile" of blood characteristics would be about one in 1.3 billion; however, many characteristics are obscured or destroyed as blood ages and dries out.) Another way to further individualize a blood sample is to analyze the blood enzymes in it; this method can identify the blood by racial type.

Sometimes a criminalist won't have a blood sample, but will have a sample of some other body fluid (for example, saliva left on the rim of a glass or in a bite mark on the victim). If a person is a "secretor," then an analyst can determine his blood type from his other bodily fluids, such as saliva and semen. Approximately 80% of the populace are secretors. (The GM should assume all characters are secretors unless he has reason to rule otherwise.)

As mentioned above, the fresher and purer a blood sample, the easier it is to work with. Red blood cells rupture as blood dries and ages, making analysis more difficult; impurities in a blood sample can also cause problems. In some situations, characters can use a technique known as electrophoresis on dried blood to separate it into its component

NON-SECRETOR

A character who wants to be a non-secretor regardless of the GM's general ruling can pay Character Points for the privilege:

Invisibility to Detect Blood Type, Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½), Persistent (+½), Inherent (+¼) (22 Active Points); Always On (-½), Only Applies When Someone Tries To Detect Blood Type From Other Bodily Fluids (-1). Total cost: 9 points.

parts (including DNA) for analysis. Additionally, a test called the absorption-elution technique can type blood samples up to eleven years old, but it's more complicated and difficult than standard tests. Depending upon the age and purity of a blood sample and the equipment available to a character, the GM should assign a -1 to -5 penalty to a character's Criminology roll to analyze it.

Transfusions sometimes obscure blood test results. If a suspect from whom a blood sample is taken has had a blood transfusion within the 60-day period prior to the taking of the sample, obtaining a valid sample is not possible. A clever *Dark Champions* criminal might use this fact to his benefit.

BLOOD SPLATTERS

Besides its capacity to help identify an offender, blood can also provide information based on the way it stains and splatters the crime scene. For example, a large pool of blood at the crime scene often indicates the victim was alive for some time after the wound was inflicted, since after death the heart stops pumping blood through the body (and out of the wound). On the other hand, some fatal wounds may cause little or no blood to leak out of the body.

The size and shape of a blood pattern can indicate which direction the blood came from, what angle it hit the surface at, where the attacker stood and what hand he wielded the weapon with, and other information that helps a criminalist reconstruct the events of a crime. Analysis of blood patterns is an extremely complex process; at his option, the GM should assess Criminology roll penalties of -3 to -6 unless a character has SS: Bloodstain Interpretation as a Skill (which also serves as a Complementary Skill).

BLOOD TESTS

In some cases, characters can test a person's blood to determine if he's taken drugs or was poisoned. Tests can detect amounts of foreign substances as small as one nanogram (one billionth of a gram) per milliliter of blood, depending on the substance and the test used.

Computer Forensics

Computer forensics involves obtaining lost, encrypted, or deleted data from intact computer storage media (such as hard drives and CD-ROMs), or retrieving any sort of data from broken or damaged storage media. It's a function of the *Computer Programming Skill*, not Criminology, and requires special computer equipment and software. Thus equipped, a trained technician can recover virtually any data. Obtaining data that's simply been "deleted" is ludicrously easy (+5 to the Computer Programming roll). Obtaining data from pieces of broken storage media isn't much harder (+0 to +2 bonus), though recovering data from badly damaged storage media (such as a CD-ROM that's been burned) may be much more difficult (+0 to -2). With effort, a technician can even recover data from storage media

processed with military-grade data erasure procedures, which involve filling the storage media with meaningless data and completely erasing it more than forty times (-3 to -5 penalty). In short, about the only way to guarantee that a computer forensics expert can't recover data from a storage media is to grind that media into powder.

DNA "Fingerprinting"

DNA, deoxyribonucleic acid, exists in the nuclei of living cells. Even a tiny sample of tissue (for example, a drop of blood, the root of a hair, sweat, saliva left on the back of a stamp or other object that's been licked, or even excrement) contains DNA. Each person's DNA is unique (unless he has an identical twin) — and unlike blood characteristics, DNA does not deteriorate with age unless it's exposed to radiation (such as sunlight). This provides forensic scientists with an important tool.

Modern science has not yet reached the point where it can quickly and easily identify each person's DNA with absolute accuracy, but it can determine the frequency with which a particular sample of DNA occurs in the population with such accuracy (such as one in one hundred million persons) that it suffices for the purposes of forensics. The FBI has a database, CODIS (Combined DNA Index System), that lets scientists compare DNA samples from crime scenes to samples from known sex offenders and other violent criminals. Analysis of DNA can also sometimes reveal its general ancestry (*e.g.*, European, Asian, or African-American). Researchers hope to develop systems that can determine hair color, and perhaps even facial characteristics, from DNA.

There are several major methods of DNA typing. The first is *restriction fragment length polymorphism* (RFLP), which requires a fairly large and fresh sample to analyze. In this process, a technician uses restriction enzymes to cut chromosomes into hundreds of DNA fragments, some of which contain "tandem repeats" (sections of DNA in which the bases that form DNA repeat many times). He then sorts the fragments through electrophoresis and transfers them onto membranes. Treating the membranes with radioactive "probes" allows him to identify the fragments. By using multiple probes, the technician can reduce the frequency of occurrence of the sample to the point where it occurs in frequencies estimated to range from one in one hundred million people to one in 30 billion people. But while highly accurate, the process can take as much as three to twelve weeks.

Another major technique is *polymerase chain reaction* (PCR). PCR works on very small samples (as small as one-billionth of a gram of DNA, such as might be obtained from the saliva on a cigarette butt or envelope), and on samples years (even decades) old. The technique makes the small pieces of DNA found as part of crime-scene evidence replicate until they create millions of copies of the original DNA molecule, which a technician can then compare to a sample taken from the suspect. However, this technique produces a frequency of occurrences far greater than that of RFLP; the best



results obtainable can only narrow the occurrence down to one person in one thousand. But although it's not as accurate, the PCR technique only requires a few hours to perform.

Mitochondrial DNA testing (mtDNA), or DNA sequencing, analyzes DNA located outside the nucleus of the cell. These procedures allow scientists to obtain DNA from samples that aren't necessarily susceptible to genomic DNA testing, such as hair shafts, bones, teeth, and extremely old tissue. Additionally, because mtDNA is maternally inherited, every person in the same maternal lineage should have an identical mtDNA sequence. Scientists thus can use it to evaluate the relatedness of two persons, and can gather comparison samples from any of a suspect's maternal relatives.

Scientists are working to develop other DNA typing methods and technology. Some anticipate the day when criminalists in the field can use suitcase-sized, or even computer chip-sized, DNA testing equipment to cheaply and easily analyze even the tiniest samples of DNA within minutes and with great accuracy.

Documents

Criminalists analyze documents to determine who wrote them, whether they're authentic or have been altered, and so forth. Characters who have the *Skill Forgery (Documents)* can use it as a Complementary Skill when working with documents, or they can buy SS: Document Analysis.

With handwritten documents, Criminology allows a character to determine if a particular individual wrote that document, provided he has two suf-

ficiently lengthy writing samples available for comparison. He can identify typewriting as coming from a particular typewriter by comparing the wear and tear on the typewriter's letters with that shown by the typed letter. Text printed out by a computer printer can often be identified by printer type, but not necessarily as coming from a specific printer. Examination of photocopies and comparison of them to a particular photocopier sometimes allows the examiner to determine if the copy was made on that machine, or on a specific model or class of machines.

Scientists can examine documents which have been altered or erased for microscopic traces of such activity. Two different pens will leave different striae (microscopic uninked lines) on the paper. If a forger uses another type of ink (to alter or blot out part of the document), an analyst can identify and read the different inks via infrared or ultraviolet photography or by determining the chemical composition of the different inks. Infrared photography can sometimes also be used to determine what's written on burned document fragments, and there are many other techniques criminalists can employ to restore/read crumpled or damaged paper or obliterated inks.

Depending on the state of examined documents, characters may receive modifiers to Criminology rolls. Reasonably intact documents may provide bonuses of +0 to +2, while trying to read burned document fragments or restore a badly-damaged piece of paper might entail a -2 to -5 penalty.

THE PAGE BENEATH

Forensic scientists have several techniques for determining what was written on a sheet of paper by examining the indentations left on the piece of

paper below the written-on sheet. Television detectives usually do this by shading the piece of paper with a pencil, but in the real world this method is more likely to destroy evidence than gather useful information. Proper methods include photographing the paper under oblique light or using an electrostatic detection apparatus (ESDA). ESDA can sometimes recover indentations from four or more pages below the page that was written on, but doesn't work with thick cardboard, paper that's been soaked with fluid, or papers examined for fingerprints in certain ways.

In game terms, have a character using ESDA make a Criminology roll at -1 per page below the page written on to recover usable indentations; for oblique-light photography, apply a -2 (or greater) penalty, but this only works for the first page below the page written on. The low-tech "shade the piece of paper with a pencil" method requires a Criminology roll at -3; it only works on the first page below the page written on, and if the roll fails it's not possible to recover the indentation evidence using other methods.

FORENSIC LINGUISTICS AND GRAPHOLOGY

Two disciplines related to document analysis are forensic linguistics and graphology.

Forensic linguistics is the science of determining information about someone based on the structure and word choice of a written document (such as a ransom note). A trained examiner can often determine the writer's age, gender, race, religion, level of education, and nationality this way, and sometimes his profession or other background details (such as whether he has been in the military). SS: Forensic Linguistics serves as a Complementary Skill (some GMs may require characters to have this SS before even attempting such a task).

Graphology, or handwriting analysis, is the science of determining information about someone by interpreting their handwriting. Based on the size, shape, slant, spacing, placement, and other characteristics of the letters in someone's handwriting, a graphologist can make determinations about the writer's personality and mental state. More concrete information, such as age, race, and gender, cannot be determined from handwriting, however. Characters must buy SS: Graphology if they want to be able to interpret handwriting; Criminology does not provide this ability.

Drug Identification

Criminalists can identify drugs by means of simple chemical color tests (SS: Chemistry or SS: Pharmacology are Complementary Skills). For example, certain chemicals turn purple when exposed to heroin or orange-brown when exposed to amphetamines, turn marijuana purple, or change colors three times when exposed to cocaine. Police officers can perform some of these tests in the field using kits. Scientists can use other techniques, such as microcrystalline tests and chromatography, in the laboratory to confirm these identifications.

Law enforcement agencies also have access to databases and computer programs that give them the capacity to match the chemical composition of cocaine shipments so they can identify their country of origin and determine that several other batches of cocaine came from the same shipment. For example, this technology could analyze the composition of a kilogram of cocaine seized in Hudson City and determine that it matched a kilo of cocaine seized in Chicago, thus alerting investigators to a common source for both batches of cocaine.

Fibers And Hairs

Fiber and hair evidence appears at many crime scenes. Characters who want to be experts at hair and fiber identification can take SS: Fiber/Hair Analysis for use as a Complementary Skill with Criminology.

FIBERS

Investigators often find animal, vegetable, mineral, and synthetic fibers at crime scenes. These include clothing fibers, carpet fibers, and the like. Criminalists usually distinguish between natural fibers (such as wool) and man-made fibers (such as polyester, dacron, and spandex), and can identify them the same way they identify hairs (see below).

A criminalist examines man-made fibers under a microscope to determine such characteristics as cross-sectional shape, striations, color and dye composition, chemical composition, environmental and handling effects (fading, wear and tear, and the like), and fiber type and subtype. Fibers are most useful when an examiner can definitely match them with fibers clearly connected to the criminal; otherwise, a particular batch of a certain fiber may be so large that connecting it with any one owner may prove impossible. Dye formulas may be particularly helpful in this case — since they're trade secrets, color and dye composition are often crucial to identifying the manufacturer of a fiber.

HAIR

Hair is most often found at crime scenes when the crime is a violent one like murder or rape. At present, hair is not "fingerprintable" — criminalists cannot definitely match a particular hair to an individual. Nor can they determine the age or gender of the person who left the hair. However, hair does contain small amounts of DNA, and if a hair is fresh enough, it can be used for DNA typing. If the root is attached to the hair (such as when it's been violently pulled out of the scalp), DNA analysis of the root tissue may be possible.

What criminalists can determine about a hair is the following:

- what part of the body it is from (for example, scalp hair versus beard hair)
- the race (caucasian, mongoloid, negroid) of the person whose hair it is (though it is difficult to be certain about any such identification)
- whether the hair fell out, was cut off, or was pulled out
- whether the hair is human or animal hair

The best criminalists can do to match a hair to a particular person is to compare a hair's color and structure to that of control samples taken from the suspect. As with blood typing, the more comparisons an analyst can find, the smaller the group of potential suspects becomes, and the more likely that hair came from the suspect.

Another useful trait of hair is that it chemically "reflects" the substances a person has ingested in the past several days. This can provide clues regarding a person's diet or lifestyle. For example, the fact that a person had taken drugs or ingested poison could be told from his hair — traces of most common illegal drugs linger in hair for up to 90 days, which for most drugs is months longer than such traces remain in urine.

Hair and fibers are usually recovered from a crime scene with special vacuums, or by scraping items or objects and collecting the fibers that are knocked off. At the GM's option, it may require a Criminology roll at +1 to -3 (depending upon the amount and size of the evidence present) to find hair and fiber evidence.

Fingernail Scrapings

Fingernail scrapings or cuttings are commonly referred to in comic books, detective fiction, and "cop movies" as a source of evidence, particularly in some rape and murder cases where a female victim is thought to have scratched her assailant. The theory is that samples of the criminal's skin and/or flesh will be found underneath the victim's fingernails. Unlike fiction, in real life fingernail scrapings rarely provide useful evidence. Depending upon how realistic the GM wants to be, he could impose penalties of -3 or more to the character's Criminology roll, or could require the character to make a Luck roll to determine if any evidence is present at all. If present, scrapings evidence can be used for DNA typing of the perpetrator; it may also contain hair or fibers.

Fingerprints

The best-known type of evidence analyzed by criminalists is fingerprints. The study of fingerprints, which are formed by the ridges of skin on the tips of the fingers, is formally known as *dactyloscopy*. SS: Fingerprint Analysis (or SS: Dactyloscopy) covers all aspects of the study and examination of fingerprints and acts as a Complementary Skill; PS: Crime Scene Technician is also a Complementary Skill for purposes of locating and preserving fingerprints at crime scenes.

Fingerprints are extremely useful for identifying criminals, for two reasons. First, fingerprints are completely individualized — every person's fingerprints are unique to him (even identical twins have unique prints). Each fingerprint has *ridge characteristics* (also referred to as *minutiae*) such as ridge endings, bifurcations, short ridges, ridge crossings, and enclosures. Ridge characteristics form whorls, arches, and loops that are easily identifiable from a

sufficiently clear print. A fingerprint's loops, arches, and whorls provide a basis for classifying the print by type and subtype for analysis and categorization using various systems (such as the Henry system in the United States). Fingerprint records are collected into electronic databases known as AFIS (automated fingerprint identification systems).

Second, a person's fingerprints never change during his lifetime. They always remain the same. Some criminals have tried to obliterate or alter their fingerprints, without success. It's possible to wound the fingertips so deeply that scars cover the fingerprints, but such scars are themselves easily identifiable. Fingerprints can also be obtained from the dermis (the second layer of skin) if the top layer has been burned or destroyed in some other way.

Fingerprints are only useful for identifying a specific individual, however. They do not tell investigators the age, gender, health, occupation, or race of the person who left them. Nor do they bear any correspondence to fingerprints of close relatives.

FINDING FINGERPRINTS

Complete fingerprints are not always available, but sometimes even a partial print is enough for a positive identification. Depending upon how much of a print is present, the GM may impose a -1 to -3 penalty to a character's Criminology roll; a failed roll means the character cannot recover an identifiable print. Similarly, with visible prints (see below), the substance that makes up the print may have adhered to the fingers in unusual ways, or collected in the furrows between the ridges of skin that comprise the fingerprint, making collection and identification of the print harder; a -1 to -2 penalty to the character's Criminology roll may be appropriate.

Fingerprints aren't always easy to see. *Visible prints* (left by someone whose fingers have been dipped in a visible substance, like blood or oil) and *plastic prints* (those left by pressing a fingertip into a malleable substance, such as clay) are visible to the naked eye. But *latent prints*, those made up only of the oils and perspiration of the fingertip itself, are usually "invisible." Criminalists can detect them in several ways; the method varies depending upon the type of surface the print is on. An investigator can dust hard and/or nonabsorbent materials (such as metal or glass) for prints: he applies a special type of dust, which adheres to the oily deposits left by the fingertip and reveals the print. The color of the surface dictates the color of powder used (for best contrast); evidence collection specialists can also use magnetic and fluorescent powders if necessary. A related method involves spraying the print with a chemical called ninhydrin. Prints on soft and/or porous materials (such a paper or cloth) are treated with chemicals, such as by iodine or cyanoacrylate fuming, but are often harder to discover (particularly on cloth, since the weave obscures print details and the fibers absorb the oils that make the print). Criminalists can also use lasers to detect latent fingerprints on many types of surfaces.

Some surfaces are harder to get prints from than others. Human skin, for example, absorbs the oils that create fingerprints, making it difficult (but

ULTRAVIOLET PERCEPTION AND FORENSIC SCIENCE

Besides helping characters see at night, Ultraviolet Perception can also help them in their investigative work. Many types of trace evidence are visible under UV light even when they are not visible to the naked eye. For example, Ultraviolet Perception can detect tiny metal filings, places where blood was spilled but then cleaned up, fingerprints, old injuries, footprints and other tracks, and many other types of evidence. In some cases additional chemicals are needed, but characters with Criminology or Forensic Medicine have access to such things.

Infrared Perception and Microscopic Perception can also be very helpful when examining crime scenes. Remember, however, that regardless of the Senses he has (or has access to through equipment), a character still needs Criminology to correctly interpret what he perceives.

not necessarily impossible) to obtain prints from (for example, it's possible to leave a fingerprint on a corpse; the skin stops absorbing fingerprint oils after death). It's also harder to get prints off of rough surfaces (such as the checkered grip of a gun or a cinderblock). Depending on the surface and the equipment available to the character, the GM might assign a Criminology roll modifier of +2 to -6 (or worse) to find a usable print.

Latent print recovery methods are limited by time — the older a print is, the less likely it is that investigators can find it. Prints on porous surfaces last longer, as do those in damp weather or conditions. Fingerprints on nonglossy paper may last until the paper itself is destroyed — investigators have lifted fingerprints off Egyptian papyri thousands of years old. In addition to older methods involving the use of fingerprint powders, new methods using chemicals, lasers, or “alternate light sources” (such as quartz arc or xenon lights) can sometimes detect fingerprints which are 15-40 years old on some surfaces. (However, prints cannot, by themselves, be dated; nothing in the print indicates how long it's been there.) Depending upon the age of a fingerprint and the equipment available to analyze it, the GM might assign a -1 to -4 penalty to a character's Criminology roll.

ANALYZING FINGERPRINTS

Once a character has a fingerprint, he can try to match it to a suspect's print. This is relatively simple if the character has a suspect from which he can get a print sample; typically this only requires a Criminology roll at +1 or better. It's more difficult if the character only has a print and tries to use it to come up with a suspect. Decades ago, this involved manually comparing the print to other prints on record, a time-consuming and tedious task. Today it's done with computers which often make the task quicker and simpler — but even then, a proper identification can take days. In either case, if the print is incomplete or vague, analyzing and comparing it may prove difficult; a Criminology roll penalty of -1 to -4 (or worse) may be appropriate.

Surprisingly, no uniform standards exist for the matching of fingerprints. Each police department, law enforcement agency, and/or nation tends to have its own guidelines for how many points of comparison are needed for a “match”; then it's up to the district attorney to justify the criminalist's methods and procedures in court when he tries to prove the validity of the fingerprint evidence.

OTHER IDENTIFIERS

Fingerprints are not the only parts of the body that display unique markings which criminalists can use to identify an individual. Other possibilities include ear prints and lip prints, though these haven't yet been accepted in court.

Firearms And Bullets

Characters can recover a lot of information from guns, bullet fragments, bulletholes, and powder residue with Criminology. SS: Firearm Ballistics and Weaponsmith (Firearms) are Complementary Skills.

BULLETS

When someone fires a gun, the grooves which line the barrel leave markings on the bullet. These markings are sort of the gun's “fingerprint.” If investigators recover enough of the bullet, a technician can test-fire the gun and compare the two bullets using a comparison microscope. This method can positively identify which gun fired the bullet. (Shotguns, which have no grooves in their barrels, do not leave marks on the projectiles that are fired through them.)

Matching bullets this way isn't always easy. Rifling marks do not transfer well to some bullets (Teflon-coated armor-piercing rounds, for example), and a new barrel that's been carefully lapped (polished) may not create useful marks on a bullet until it's become worn through use. The gun's owner may deliberately mar or destroy the inside of the barrel after the bullet was fired (by, for example, scratching it with metal files or pouring acid down it) in an effort to prevent this sort of identification. Similarly, if the bullet is badly damaged by contact with its target, it may not be possible to compare the markings on it to a test bullet. The GM may assign Criminology penalties of -1 to -3 to reflect these difficulties, if appropriate.

Since criminalists have databases of the size, spacing, and direction and angle of twist for the lands and grooves of each commercially-produced weapon, they can often determine the type and make of gun that fired a bullet from the groove marks before the gun is ever recovered. The bullet casing may also have markings from the firing pin, breechblock, and/or shell extractor which will identify the gun (shotgun shells also have these markings, but caseless rounds have no case to mark). Revolver shell casings have different markings than shell casings used in semi-automatics.

The chemical composition of bullets varies from manufacturer to manufacturer and batch to batch, so criminalists may be able to “match” a bullet found at a crime scene with unfired bullets still in the perpetrator's possession by analyzing their chemical content. Similarly, by analyzing the chemical composition of a gunpowder sample, a criminalist can usually identify the type of bullet, and sometimes even the specific lot of bullets it came from. (See below for more information on gunpowder residue.)

In most cases, a criminalist can easily determine the caliber of a bullet if the bullet remains in the body, though it may be more difficult if impact with the victim's body has significantly deformed the bullet (a -1 to -2 penalty to Criminology). Bullet caliber is less easily determined solely from the size of the bullet wound, due to the plasticity of flesh and the fact that bullet wound channels can



close after the bullet passes through them (the GM can apply a -2 to -5 penalty to Forensic Medicine rolls, if appropriate). However, bullet caliber does not always prove what type of gun was used to fire the bullet — it's sometimes possible to wrap paper around a smaller bullet to make it fit into the chamber of a larger gun, thus fooling the investigator.

To assist with the analysis and identification of bullet evidence, characters in law enforcement can use the IBIS (Integrated Ballistics Identification System) database.

GUNPOWDER RESIDUE

Gunpowder residue on a victim's body can also provide important clues. The amount of residue left on the victim's clothing or skin tells the criminalist how far apart the shooter and the victim were — a calculation known as *muzzle to first surface distance* (MFSD). Basically, the more powder residue, the closer together the shooter and target were:

- If the muzzle of the gun is placed directly on bare skin over bone, in addition to the gunpowder residue there will be a star-shaped rupture of the skin, caused when the gases emitted from the barrel of the gun expand beneath the skin and tear it. A contact gunshot may also leave an abrasion collar or muzzle stamp (the imprint of the barrel caused by pressing it against the skin), and if the shot is through cloth, the heat of the shot will melt bits of cloth and fiber around the edges of the bullethole. An investigator may find bits of blood, flesh, or cloth in the barrel of a gun fired at such close range; this is known as “blowback”

- At very close ranges (one inch or less) there will be a burn ring around the bullet's entrance hole caused by the flame emitted from the gun barrel.

- At close ranges (usually about one to twelve inches), in addition to the bullet hole there will be traces of smoke and soot. These can be wiped off. The more soot residue there is, the shorter the distance between gun and victim.

- At close to intermediate ranges (up to 36 inches for some rifles, or about 24 inches for most handguns), there may be “tattooing” of bare skin — projected particles of gunpowder that become permanently embedded in the skin. These particles cannot be washed or wiped off.

- If the shooter and victim are farther apart than three feet or so, the only traces will be a “bullet wipe” (lead, carbon, and lubricant residues) in the edges of the entrance wound.

Of course, many things can affect powder residue — the weather (wind or rain, for example), the temperature, the angle of the shot, barrel length, caliber, bullet type, and so on. The GM may assign a penalty of -1 to -3 to a roll to determine the distance between shooter and victim to indicate the difficulty of gaining useful data.

Shotgun pellets spread about one inch per yard. This gives the investigator some indication of the distance between shooter and target.

Determining the distance between shooter and victim is a function of the *Forensic Medicine* Skill, not *Criminology*.

LIE DETECTORS

While devices designed to detect whether someone's telling the truth aren't exactly criminalistic tools, characters might use them to investigate and solve crimes.

The *polygraph*, or lie detector, has been available since the 1920s. It works by measuring emotional responses such as breath rate, heart rate, sweatiness, and blood pressure that tend to indicate the subject is being deceptive. Unfortunately, that means a nervous person who's telling the truth may register false positives, while a cool-as-a-cucumber liar could appear honest. Thus, while polygraphs may prove helpful in some cases, their results are not reliable enough to be admitted as evidence in most courts in most situations.

Scientists have developed a technique they think will prove more accurate: "brain fingerprinting." This device "reads" the subject's mind, registering signals that the brain emits when it perceives things it's familiar with. If a subject's mind doesn't indicate familiarity with the circumstances, environment, and objects related to a crime, it's probable he didn't commit that crime. The results of the device have been admitted in some courts.

GUNSHOT RESIDUE

Based on the design and condition of a gun, the length of the barrel, and the type of ammunition used, residue of the gunpowder and primer may be blown back to land on the shooter's hands or face. This "gunshot residue" (GSR) shows that a suspect recently fired a gun, and based on the powder composition used by various bullet manufacturers, may even tell the examiner what type of bullet the suspect shot.

To detect these traces, a criminalist must use a relatively sensitive test. All the test proves is that the subject recently fired a gun (the test can't identify the specific gun). However, if the analyst has certain types of spectrometers or energy-dispersive x-ray diffraction equipment available, he can determine the chemical composition of the residue, allowing him to "type" it and thus perhaps to link it to a particular type of bullet.

Unfortunately, GSR does not remain on the hands very long, and can be easily washed off.

THE GUN ITSELF

Examination of a gun sometimes yields useful evidence. First, if a gun is fired close to the target, the "blowback" (the vacuum created by firing the gun) may suck hairs, blood, or bits of flesh and cloth into the gunbarrel. A criminalist can match this evidence to the victim.

Second, forensic science can restore obliterated serial numbers. Criminals often attempt to remove the serial numbers on guns (and on other items) to prevent them from being identified. If the criminal does a poor job of removing the number, a criminalist can apply an etching reagent to bring out the patterns below the surface of the metal where the number was stamped into the gun. If the criminal knows what he's doing and obliterates all traces of the number, it can't be restored.

Characters should not pick up guns by putting something in the barrel, as this could remove powder deposits or make marks that will hinder ballistics tests (if a gun has been picked up this way, the GM can impose a -1 to -2 penalty on the Criminology roll). The best way to pick up the gun is by the trigger guard or by the checkered portion of the grip, since these areas are the least likely to have usable fingerprints on them.

Glass

Glass fragments from the crime scene and the criminal may fit together like a jigsaw puzzle for a quick identification. In other cases, a piece of glass's chemical composition, density, and refractive index may help to match it to a particular piece. After the criminalist determines the appropriate characteristics of a sample, he can compare it to an FBI database to find out how common that type of glass is. This tells him how likely it is the sample came from the crime scene.

Fractures in broken glass can also provide useful information. For example, bullet holes in glass are always wider on the exit side, indicating

which direction a shot came from — but some types of damage, such as that caused by thrown stones, may be indistinguishable from bullet holes. Stress marks on glass also show the direction from which force was applied to the glass — but some types of glass, such as the tempered glass used in the side and rear windows of cars, do not form the proper fracture lines for some types of analysis. Analysis of fracture lines may show which fracture occurred first, since a fracture always terminates when it meets another fracture line.

Because of glass's elastic properties, fragments of it will be thrown back in the direction from which a projectile (such as a bullet) came. This "blowback" may reach as far as 18 feet (2.75"). The small fragments of glass may then become attached to the person who broke the window, where investigators can later recover them and match them to the window.

SS: Glass Analysis is a Complementary Skill for studying glass fragments. The GM can apply negative modifiers of -1 to -3 based on how the glass was broken, the size and amount of fragments available for study, and the type of glass involved.

Oil And Gasoline

After being added to an engine, oils become contaminated with various substances, additives may be mixed in with them, and they can otherwise change. This sometimes makes it possible to "type" an oil sample to an individual car, provided the car hasn't been driven too far between the time oil is left at the crime scene and a test sample is taken from the car itself.

Because gasoline includes so many additives, and each gasoline producer has a different mix of additives, scientists can type gasoline to the refinery that produced it. This can assist, among others, arson investigators — though some gasoline additives might burn off in the fire started with that gasoline, making identification of the gas more difficult (a -1 to -3 penalty to the Criminology roll may be appropriate). Furthermore, oil company practices of selling surplus gasoline to other oil companies may complicate the process of tracking the gasoline back to its source (though it may also create a unique "blend" that a criminalist can easily match to a specific gas station or dealer during a specific time period).

Paint

Paint residues are important evidence in hit and run automobile accidents, burglaries, and other cases. The criminalist compares paint chips under a microscope, looking at color, color layers, surface texture, and other characteristics to match the two samples. Examiners can also test paint chips with scanning electron microscopes or energy-dispersive x-ray analysis to determine their chemical composition. If the paint chips are large enough, it may be possible to fit them together and obtain a definite match.

Analyzing the chemicals in a paint can tell a

criminalist the timeframe in which it was used. This may be crucial evidence in, for example, art forgery cases — if the paint used contains materials that did not exist when the painter lived, he could not have painted it.

Photographs And Videos

Technicians can use digital imaging to enlarge, magnify, and “correct” photographs and videos, thus eliminating blurs, poorly focused images, and other problems with the film. Not only can this make seemingly unusable film usable, it can improve small or background images to the point where they, too, can be clearly seen. This often provides crucial evidence — license plate numbers, a clear photo of a suspect, readable print from books or documents in the background of the picture, and the like. Photo and video analysts are also experts at restoring and obtaining images from damaged films, photos, and videos.

With special equipment, an examiner can use a technique called *warping* (or “rubber sheeting”) to change the perspective of a photo and/or eliminate distortion. Thus, for example, a photo which shows a shoeprint in the corner of a room can be “warped” with computer imaging so that an orthographic (viewed from above) picture of the shoeprint is obtained.

Through a technique known as *photogrammetry*, an analyst can determine the height of a person or object in a photograph. This requires the examiner to know the exact size of at least one other object in the photograph. Once a character has that information in hand, a Criminology roll allows him to know the height of anything else in the image within about one inch.

By analyzing the shadows in some photographs, examiners may be able to determine the date and time when the photo was taken. This requires SS: Shadow Analysis (a Skill also used by the military to make determinations about objects seen in aerial reconnaissance photos).

Depending upon the quality of a photo being analyzed, or the amount of damage it has suffered, the GM may impose penalties of -1 to -5 to the examiner’s Criminology roll to determine useful details and/or obtain usable images. PS: Photography and SS: Photo/Video Analysis act as Complementary Skills to Criminology for purposes of analyzing photographs and videos.

SUPERPOWERS AND FORENSIC SCIENCE

In games involving superpowered characters, the use of superpowers can leave distinctive forensic traces. Sometimes these traces are obvious, such as the claw marks that would be left by villains like Scorpia, which would look bestial but probably would have been made in a pattern suggesting a bipedal attacker. But in some cases superpowers’ trace evidence is faint or difficult to discover. For example, many types of energy powers might leave identifiable “energy patterns,” but the average police department may not have the sophisticated equipment needed to detect them. Superpowered heroes, on the other hand, would likely be prepared for this sort of thing, giving the police and the heroes a good reason to work together.

Here are a few examples of possible forensic traces left by superpowers:

—The use of ice- or cold-based powers would probably generate a lot of excess water from condensation or melting. Whether the water causes a flooding effect or simply soaks into the grounds and disappears depends on the locale. Other types of energy attacks may have their own “side effects” (flame blasts char and melt things, radiation blasts irradiate the area, sonic or vibratory blasts may leave microfractures in solid objects in the vicinity, and so forth).

—Criminalists can detect the use of super-strength by running pressure and stress tests on the affected material. The amount of pressure generated by a “brick” character’s fingertips when he’s ripping the door off of a vault, picking up a car to smash someone with, or throwing a dumpster is enormous — so enormous that it’s usually a dead giveaway. Patterns of tearing or ripping may also indicate the use of super-strength. SS: Material Science or similar Skills would be Complementary to Criminology in this case.

—Some types of comic-book weapons might be so well-made or efficient that they would leave very few traces, which in itself might be a clue. For example, if a character with a Questionite blade used it to murder someone, the super-hard metal might even cut clean through the bones in a way that would make it obvious no normal cutting weapon was used.

—Magic in its various forms would probably leave an “energy signature” markedly different from scientific energies — one so different that maybe characters would need magical spells to detect it. Some types of attack spells would leave forensic traces resembling the spell’s nearest scientific equivalent (*i.e.*, a mystically-created lightning bolt would have the same effect on a person as a large blast of electricity generated by a high-voltage line).

Prints, Impressions, And Toolmarks

Fingers are not the only things that leave prints. Tools, shoes, tires, teeth, and other things can leave prints, marks, and impressions in or on various substances, and these marks can provide clues to the knowledgeable character.

Tools can usually be identified by comparing them to the impression and looking for distinctive nicks, marks, scoring, or other distinguishing features (though most often these features are microscopic; at the microscopic level, every tool is distinct). However, an investigator should never “fit” the tool into the impression in an attempt to match them, since this may alter the mark and ruin the evidence. Depending on the nature of the toolmark, an expert may also be able to determine what sort of tool made the mark.

Other impressions or tracks can be made by things like shoes, cloth, and tires. When they apprehend a suspect, investigators can compare the print in question with the object that might have made it (for example, they can compare a footprint to the suspect’s shoes). If a good enough print is obtained, it may also be possible to compare it to a database of known prints and identify it by type (for example, as a Brand X tire rather than a Brand Y tire). Footprints may also tell a trained investigator whether the subject was walking or running, how tall he is, and similar facts.

In appropriate instances, Tracking may serve as a Complementary Skill when a character attempts to determine who or what created a print or track on the ground. SS: Print And Impression Identification is also a Complementary Skill.

Soil (Forensic Geology)

Forensic scientists try to identify soil as coming from a particular location, thereby linking soil samples found at a crime scene to soil found in another location. The more unique a soil sample is, the easier it is to identify it as coming from a particular place. Criminalists examine soil characteristics such as color, mineral content, the size of the soil grains, soil density, and soil components (foreign matter). They can also examine objects manufactured from minerals or soil, such as bricks, plaster, concrete, and some types of insulation. The most common test for comparing soil samples is the density-gradient tube technique, but other tests are available and they are all best used in combination.

Unfortunately, relatively little data is available to indicate how likely it would be to find two basically indistinguishable soil samples from different areas. Some studies indicate that, at least in some areas, soil samples are unique (thus allowing the criminalist to easily identify the area where a sample comes from). Characters who need to make extensive use of soil evidence may want to invest some points in studying a particularly area to determine soil variability (bought as KS: [Area] Soil Variability, for use as a Complementary Skill).

SS: Geology is a Complementary Skill when analyzing soil. City Knowledge or Area Knowledge may also help identify the origin of soil samples.

Tape

Criminals frequently use tape, particularly duct tape, in crimes — to bind victims, to blind-fold them, to hold the parts of a bomb together. By comparing tape found at a crime scene to known samples, and by comparing torn or cut tape ends to see if they fit together, the criminalist can uncover valuable clues. Tape is also a good source of fingerprints and fiber evidence.

CONTENTS OF A CRIME LABORATORY

A lot of *Dark Champions* characters will have their own crime labs. Here’s a brief description of some of the equipment a character might have in his criminalistics laboratory. If a character cannot obtain some of the equipment described below, the GM can impose a negative modifier on Criminology rolls made when using the lab, or can simply rule that the character cannot perform some of the tests described above.

CHROMATOGRAPH

A *chromatograph* separates and identifies chemical compounds. The substance to be identified is placed in a stationary medium. A moving medium passes over or through the stationary medium, and separates the various substances in the sample. The chromatograph cannot by itself identify the tested sample, but when linked with a mass spectrometer it can provide unquestionable identifications of thousands of substances.

Criminalists use both gas and thin-layer chromatographs — the former to identify gases and vaporized materials, the latter to identify liquid mixtures or dissolved solids. A third type, high-performance liquid chromatography, can be performed at room temperature (the samples do not have to be vaporized or heated), and so is used when characters must analyze explosives and other heat-sensitive substances.

MICROSCOPES

No crime laboratory would be complete without several different types of microscopes. Besides the standard compound microscope, criminalists also use the comparison microscope (which allows a side-by-side comparison of two objects for identifying marks), the stereoscopic microscope (a low-powered microscope which provides a three-dimensional image of the viewed object, good for viewing bulky items), and the scanning electron microscope (which uses electrons to display images of very tiny objects). Microspectrophotometers combine a microscope and a spectrophotometer.



NEUTRON ACTIVATION ANALYSIS

Another technique for identifying substances is *neutron activation analysis*. This process involves bombarding a sample with neutrons so a scientist can measure the resultant gamma ray radioactivity and identify the sample. Unlike chromatography, this process doesn't destroy the sample.

Neutron activation analysis works on minute quantities of a substance. Modern equipment is so sensitive it can identify substances from even the tiniest traces. Some types can identify a substance from only a 100-nanogram sample.

SPECTROPHOTOMETER

A *spectrophotometer* measures the "absorption spectrum" of a substance — the quantity of light it absorbs. Each substance's absorption spectrum is distinctive and identifiable. Once a readout is obtained, it's compared to a vast library of known readouts to identify the tested substance. Similarly, characters can use emission spectrographs and atomic absorption spectrophotometers to analyze the light selectively absorbed and emitted by the various elements. Spectrophotometers can work with ultraviolet, visible, or infrared light. Miniaturized versions (weighing about 70 pounds) can even be used in the field.

FORENSIC PATHOLOGY



Sometimes characters have to examine bodies as well as physical evidence. *Forensic pathology* is the branch of medicine concerned with establishing the cause of death (many coroners are trained forensic pathologists). This section provides a brief look at some causes of death and how *Dark Champions* GMs might use them to create mysteries and clues.

In *HERO System* terms, the Skill *Forensic Medicine* covers the subject of forensic pathology; it also allows characters to perform autopsies. (Characters with PS: Surgeon can perform autopsies, but without more specialized knowledge their conclusions will be sketchy and subject to doubt.) If a character fails a Forensic Medicine roll by 1-3, it usually means he didn't find any useful information; if he fails it by 4 or more, it means he gathers incorrect information (usually because he overlooked something when performing the autopsy). Science Skills such as Human Biology, Anatomy, Pharmacology, and Histology (the science of using microscopes to determine cellular changes in tissue) can act as Complementary Skills to Forensic Medicine.

Characters generally use Forensic Medicine to do one or more of three things: identify a body; ascertain the time of death; and ascertain the cause of death.

IDENTIFYING A BODY

Usually the identity of a murder victim will already be known to a character performing an autopsy — the investigators can establish it through a variety of methods. However, sometimes the victim's identity is a mystery the forensic pathologist can help to resolve.

Dental Records (Forensic Odontology)

Besides leaving identifiable impressions (see page 16), teeth may prove useful in and of themselves. Dental records are a good way to identify an otherwise unidentifiable body, if records exist for the decedent. Teeth are extremely difficult to destroy, and thus often remain intact when other identifying features (such as fingerprints) are obliterated. Examination of a person's teeth can also provide clues about his diet and related habits. Analysis of the interior pulp of teeth can reveal a victim's age, and also provide cells for DNA typing.

SS: Forensic Odontology acts as a Complementary Skill to Forensic Medicine for purposes of analyzing teeth.

Forensic Anthropology

Forensic anthropology (also known as physical anthropology) is the branch of criminalistics concerned with the shape and structure of the human skeleton. Depending upon what bones are available and the condition they're in, a scientist can determine a victim's height, age, gender, and race from his skeleton. Bones may also provide evidence of some of the decedent's activities in life, and of the cause of death (for example, a knife may leave cuts in the bone). Anomalies in the skeleton may prove an unidentified murder victim's identity, if x-rays of the victim exist for comparison. Depending upon the condition of the skeleton, a Forensic Medicine roll at -2 to -4 is necessary to accurately make these determinations. SS: Forensic Anthropology acts as a Complementary Skill.

Facial Reconstruction

Forensic anthropologists can also reconstruct a person's facial features from his skull, providing a picture of the victim which the police can distribute in the hope someone can identify him. To do this, a character must know both Forensic Medicine and SS: Forensic Anthropology, and must also have PS: Sculptor. Depending upon the condition of the skull, the Forensic Medicine roll is at -1 to -4. For every point the character misses the roll by, PER or INT Rolls made by others to identify the victim are at -1.

TIME OF DEATH

Forensic pathologists often need to determine when someone died. There are three traditional signs or indicators that provide evidence of what time a person died: rigor mortis (stiffness); algor mortis (body temperature); and livor mortis (post-mortem coloration).

The first sign is *rigor mortis*, the "stiffness of death." It usually begins about two to four hours after death, starting in the eyelids and small muscles of the face, then spreading throughout the body to the larger muscles. (In some rare cases cadaveric spasm, a state similar to rigor mortis, occurs almost instantly after death, and normal rigor then sets in.) Rigor lasts for about twelve hours thereafter. The muscles then relax in the same order in which they stiffened; the body becomes fully relaxed approximately 30-36 hours after death. By judging what point a body is at in this process, a medical examiner can estimate the time of death. However, other conditions can affect rigor (such as starvation and freezing weather, which delay it, or physical activity right before death, which accelerates it).

ates it); if appropriate, the GM can impose a penalty of -1 to -3 to the Forensic Medicine roll to judge rigor mortis to represent these factors.

The second sign is *algor mortis*, or “temperature of death.” Body temperature falls at the rate of about one to two degrees per hour. Environmental factors, such as the temperature, can alter this, though. The GM may assign a penalty of -1 to -3 to a Forensic Medicine roll to judge *algor mortis* to reflect adverse environmental conditions.

The third sign is *livor mortis*, the “color of death” (also known as postmortem lividity, or PML). After the heart stops beating, red blood cells settle into the regions of the body which are nearest to the ground at that time — for example, the back if someone dies while lying face-up on a bed. This colors the skin in that area, similar to a bruise. The further along this process is, the longer the person has been dead. The coloring starts to become visible about 30 minutes to an hour after death in fair-skinned persons (it may never be visible in heavily-pigmented skin). The settling ends and becomes permanent about four to eight hours after death. *Livor mortis* can also provide evidence of whether someone has moved a corpse, based on the distribution of the coloring in relation to the position the body is found in.

Taken together, these three indicators usually provide an estimation of the time of death — but it’s only an estimation. Forensic pathologists cannot necessarily determine the time of death with the precision depicted in TV police dramas. Some circumstances can hasten or slow these processes. Besides the environmental factors mentioned above, the use of drugs, exercising shortly before

dying, the victim’s body type, and struggling with the murderer can all sometimes affect the rate at which these three processes progress. The GM can assign Forensic Medicine modifiers of from -1 to -5 to simulate these factors.

Other Indicators

Other indicators may help a forensic pathologist estimate the time of death. For example, if the victim is known to have eaten shortly before dying, the amount of food digested can show the time of death, since digestion is a steady, measurable process.

The presence of insects in and around the corpse provides a lot of information (see below).

The corneas of the eye tend to become cloudy six to eight hours after death.

The level of potassium in eye fluid, which increases slowly and measurably after death, and is not affected by temperature, can be measured to provide time of death information. Furthermore, eye fluid also does not decompose, making it useful for detecting the presence of drugs or poison in the body.

Players and GMs can probably think of other creative ways to ascertain the time of death based on the circumstances in a scenario.

Decomposition

Generally, a body begins to decompose about three to five days after death. A corpse completely rots, leaving nothing but a skeleton, in approximately five to nine weeks if exposed to the elements. The time required depends on many environmental factors, such as temperature and insect life. For example, in the tropics or other warm



regions a body can skeletonize in just a few weeks, or even as little as about ten days... but in arctic regions, a body may never decompose. Corpses take about twice as long to decompose underwater, and eight times as long when buried, as they do when they are exposed to the elements.

INSECTS (FORENSIC ENTOMOLOGY)

Forensic entomology is the science of determining the time of a murder victim's death based on the presence and activities of insects around a corpse. By knowing enough about the life cycles and behavior patterns of certain insects, pathologists can make more accurate determinations about the time of death. Characters who just know Forensic Medicine make rolls to determine facts from insect activity at -2 or more. Characters who also know SS: Forensic Entomology or SS: Entomology may make their rolls normally, and use those SSs as Complementary Skills to Forensic Medicine as well. The GM may impose additional penalties based on the state of the corpse, the obscurity of the information, and so forth.

Different species of insects are attracted to a corpse at different stages of decomposition. Scientists can use the rate of development of their young to determine the time of death. The most common insect found on corpses, the fly (such as blowflies and fleshflies), provides the best example. Flies arrive as soon as ten minutes after death and begin laying thousands of eggs (or depositing larvae) in the corpse's mouth, nose, eyes, other body orifices, and wounds. Eggs are typically laid during the day, not at night. The eggs take twelve hours to two days to hatch after being laid. The maggots then begin feeding on the corpse. They develop into a pupal stage six to ten days later, and the adults emerge from the pupa in twelve to 24 days. Beetles tend to arrive and begin eating dried skin about 24-36 hours after death. Spiders, millipedes, and similar life forms arrive approximately 48 hours after death to feed on the insects around the corpse. Cheese skippers and other insects which can live on extremely decayed bodies will usually be found three to six months after death (depending, of course, on when decomposition begins).

All of these figures vary depending upon the environmental conditions and the particular species of fly or insect. Insect activity may also be influenced by such factors as whether the corpse is outside or indoors, in the sunshine or the shade, or wet or dry. The season of the year also plays a part; there is much more insect activity in the spring and summer than the winter, for example. The GM may impose modifiers of -1 to -5 to the Forensic Medicine roll based on these factors.

Insect life can also provide clues as to whether a corpse has been moved. If the insect life in and on the corpse differs from that where the corpse is found, someone probably moved the body from the scene of the killing.

Insects can tell the examiner about the drugs used by (or poisons used on) a victim. After insects feed on a body, their tissue and fecal material shows traces of the drugs or poisons in the victim's system at the time of his death.

Lastly, the presence of insects may help track the movement of vehicles, people, and goods, such as cocaine shipments. The insects found in or with such objects may provide a biological "map" of the object's journey across the world.

Not all insect activity helps the forensic pathologist. Fly eggs laid on corpses may distort or destroy the appearance of a wound, making it harder to determine the weapon used to kill the victim. An inexperienced examiner could mistake postmortem insect bites for antemortem abrasions (a possible -1 to -2 penalty to the Forensic Medicine roll). Insects can confuse blood splatter evidence by walking through the splatters or by consuming the blood and later depositing some of it in their feces or for their young to feed on.

CAUSES OF DEATH

There are thousands of causes of death, but *Dark Champions* GMs and player are primarily concerned with those which involve murder. A clever GM can provide characters clues to the cause of death, then feed them a little more information when they make their Forensic Medicine rolls. Eventually, the players should be able to deduce what happened, perhaps earning an Experience Point or two if they've been especially quick-witted. The GM could just tell them the cause of death straight out if they make a Forensic Medicine roll — but if possible, he should give the players a chance to figure it out on their own, because that's more fun for everyone.

This section is by no means complete — that would require a medical textbook (such as some of the ones listed in the Bibliography). It primarily covers facts which would be useful in planning *Dark Champions* scenarios. If the GM feels the need to know more, he should do some pre-scenario research.

Asphyxiation

Asphyxiation is death due to the body's failure to receive oxygen. It can occur because of suffocation/smothering, the breathing of certain gases that block the utilization of oxygen by the body (chemical asphyxiation), or strangulation. It doesn't take much effort to strangle a human being: 11 pounds of pressure is enough to cut off the carotid arteries, causing unconsciousness in approximately ten seconds (1 Turn, in *HERO System* terms), and 66 pounds of pressure cuts off the vertebral arteries.

HANGING

Hanging is a form of strangulation frequently used to commit suicide. It's rarely seen as a form of murder, and despite still being "on the books" as a law in some states, is no longer used as a form of legal execution. Judicial hangings, which break the neck and cause instant unconsciousness and a rapid death after a period of convulsions (assuming they're performed properly), are not really a form of strangulation.

Hanging involves placing a ligature of some sort (such as a rope or electrical cord) in a noose around the neck so that the body's weight supplies the pressure needed to cut off blood flow to the brain. Because this requires so little pressure, it's possible for someone to hang himself while sitting, kneeling, or lying down (for example, from a doorknob or bedpost). The noose leaves a slanted ligature mark around the neck, and the shape and size of the mark usually indicate what type of material was used. If the ligature material is soft (such as a towel) or a pad is placed between the noose and the neck, the ligature mark may be less distinct or nonexistent. Generally, the face of a hanging victim is pale, and the tongue protruding and black (from drying). There may be scratch marks around the neck where the victim tried to undo the noose. Blood pools in the victim's lower extremities, such as arms, hands, and legs.

Hanging is rarely used as a form of homicide because it's difficult to hang someone who's resisting. Homicidal hanging victims usually display signs of having been beaten, subdued, or drugged.

It's possible to hang a corpse and create the same ligature marks that would have resulted if the victim were still alive, provided the hanging takes place within two hours of death.

LIGATURE AND MANUAL STRANGULATION

Ligature strangulation is a form of strangulation involving the tightening of some sort of band by a force other than body weight. The classic example is a garrote. Ligature strangulations are almost always murders, and the victims are usually female. Unconsciousness generally occurs within ten to fifteen seconds.

A victim of a ligature strangulation looks somewhat different from a hanging victim. First, his face is usually congested, not pale. Second, the appearance of the ligature differs — not only is it a horizontal mark, but the mark's appearance varies depending upon the type of instrument used (the thinner it is, the more prominent the mark), the amount of force used by the strangler, and how much the victim resists. Ligature strangulation marks are usually well-preserved, even during decomposition. There may also be scratch marks on the victim's neck where he tried to undo the band. Victims often have hair clutched in their hands as well, but this is almost always their own, not their killer's.

Manual strangulation is strangulation by the hands or arms of another. It's always a form of murder, not suicide or an accident. Manual strangulation often leaves abrasions, contusions, or scratches on the neck (which may indicate how the attacker placed his hands); fracturing of the windpipe (trachea) or hyoid bone (which anchors the tongue muscles) is also common. Manual strangulation also causes internal bleeding into the neck muscles, and pinpoint hemorrhages (petechiae) in the eyeballs when the capillaries in the eyes burst.

OTHER FORMS OF ASPHYXIATION

Smothering and suffocation are also forms of asphyxiation. They generally cause no bruising, and the pinpoint eye hemorrhages may not occur. A form of smothering known as *burking* may leave no traces — the killer covers the victim's mouth and nose with the hands while sitting on the victim's chest. It would be difficult for the PCs to catch a murderer who burked his victims and left no fingerprints.

Crucifixion is also a form of asphyxiation. It causes death due to shock, dehydration, and asphyxia when the body's weight cuts off the ability to breathe. Although this form of murder is extremely rare in real life, *Dark Champions* characters may encounter it when they're dealing with evil religious cults or particularly vicious organized crime groups.

Blunt Trauma

Blunt trauma means injuries caused by impact — beatings, collisions, and similar incidents. The nature of the injury usually depends on the amount of force used, the area(s) of the body struck, the amount of body surface covered, and the type of weapon used (if any). Beating victims sometimes display blunt trauma “defense wounds” on the arms and hands, indicating they were trying to fend off the blows.

There are four types of blunt trauma: abrasions, contusions, lacerations, and skeletal fractures.

ABRASIONS

An abrasion is a skin injury where the skin is scraped away by friction. It's caused by scraping (such as being dragged by a car) or by some kinds of impact or pressure. The shape or outline of the striking object may be reflected in the abrasion (for example, a person who's thrown off of a building and lands on a sewer grating may have the pattern of the grating impressed onto his body). Abrasions may also indicate the existence of an internal injury. In the case of non-fatal incidents, an examiner can estimate the age of an abrasion based on how much it's healed.

CONTUSIONS

A contusion, better known as a bruise, results from the rupturing of blood vessels under the skin in response to blunt trauma. Not all blunt trauma causes contusions; it's possible to hit a person without bruising him (for example, the abdomen rarely bruises). Contusions most often form in fatty areas or areas of thin skin; the victim's age, gender, or health may also influence whether a bruise results.

A bruise may reflect the pattern or shape of the object used to strike the victim, but can be differently shaped as well. Bruises often change color, but examiners cannot accurately date them by this or any other manner. In some instances they can roughly estimate the age of a bruise based on the healing process at the cellular level. Bruises typically intensify and spread after death.

Corpses can be bruised, if the beating is severe



and takes place within a few hours after death. Examiners cannot distinguish such contusions from those made while the victim was alive. Bruises blend indistinguishably with *livor mortis*.

LACERATIONS

Lacerations are tears in the tissue caused by the crushing force of a blow. A long, narrow object usually creates a linear laceration, while a flat object usually creates an irregular or Y-shaped one. They most often occur in bony areas of the body, where the skin splits relatively easily.

Lacerations frequently resemble incisions (a type of sharp trauma, see page 174). However, they display a phenomenon known as “bridging,” where tiny fibers of tissue “bridge” the wound at its bottom. Incisions do not have bridging.

Based on the way the force of the blow has moved or abraded the skin at the edges of a laceration, a forensic pathologist may be able to determine the direction and angle of the blow (this requires a Forensic Medicine roll, typically with a penalty of -1 to -3). Examiners cannot determine the age of lacerations (except possibly by the course of healing, in the case of non-fatal incidents).

SKELETAL FRACTURES

Skeletal fractures are injuries to the victim’s bones. The type and direction of impact, the amount of force, and the place hit all influence whether a fracture occurs and its appearance. The nature of an injury to bone may also provide the examiner with other information (for example, whether the damage to the bone took place while the person was alive, or is post-mortem damage to old, dry bones). Some instruments leave distinctive shapes in bone; however, some be misleading — for example, a bullet may shatter bone in such a way that the injury looks like a fracture caused by blunt trauma (a Forensic Medicine roll at -1 to -3 lets a character discern the proper source of damage to a bone; see also *Forensic Anthropology*, page 168).

Burns

Burns are generally caused by three phenomena: fire (the most common cause), chemicals, and electricity (discussed below).

Burns from fire or heat may be caused by direct contact with flame, contact with a hot object, heat radiating from a hot object, or scalding. They are ranked by degrees: first (superficial, no blisters); second (burns of part of the thickness of the skin, usually with a red, moist, and blistered outer appearance); third (burns of the full thickness of the skin, with a leathery white outer appearance and no blisters), and fourth (incinerating burns extending beneath the skin). For the most part, examiners cannot distinguish between pre-death and post-mortem burns. Blistering can occur after death.

It’s extremely difficult to burn an entire body — even if the outside is charred, the inner organs are usually undamaged. Severely burned bodies may have split skin (exposing the muscle beneath). Bones exposed to extreme heat display distinctive fractures which show by their pattern whether the skin had flesh on it when it was burned, and sometimes even what type of bone was burned (different bones fracture in different ways based on their thickness and shape). Furthermore, unless bones are pulverized after being burned (as they are in a crematorium), it’s often still possible to determine certain facts about the skeleton (such as its age and gender) from them, despite the damage caused by the flames. Teeth are highly resistant to heat, and are often used to identify burned bodies (accurate identification can be made with as little as one tooth).

Victims who die in fires often die not of burns, but of carbon monoxide inhalation. If the victim has no carbon monoxide in his blood (or carbon particles in his larynx and lungs), he was probably killed before the fire (which may have been set in a futile attempt to destroy the body). Carbon monoxide poisoning turns the skin bright red.

Burns caused by chemicals vary depending upon the type and strength of chemical (such as acid), the amount used, and the duration of contact between the chemicals and the skin. They tend to be second or third degree burns, and the color of the scab that forms over the burn indicates what kind of acid was used: yellow for nitric acid; black or brown for sulfuric acid; white or grey for hydrochloric acid; and light grey or light brown for phenol.

Drowning

Drowning is death caused by a submersion in liquid, which of course prevents breathing. It can occur in as little as six inches of water, and can occur if only a small amount of fluid enters the lungs. If the victim is alive when placed in the liquid, he inhales it and the examiner will find it in his lungs (and possibly stomach). If a corpse is placed in the water in an attempt to disguise the cause of death, there may be little or no fluid in the lungs. Drowned bodies float face down, and may suffer post-mortem scrape and scratch injuries from brushing against things as they float. Within three to four hours after immersion, the liquid also tends to wash blood out of other injuries, making them appear to be after-death injuries when in fact they occurred before death.

Corpses sink relatively soon after drowning. They remain submerged until decomposition-created gases make them float to the surface (a “floater,” in police parlance). The colder the water, the longer the decomposition process takes. During the body’s time in the water, it may be damaged by marine animals or other natural phenomena.

There are no special forensic tests that prove a victim was murdered by drowning, as opposed to dying in an accidental drowning. The determination results from the circumstances of the killing (*i.e.*, the fact that the body was found in or near water) and the exclusion of other potential causes of death.

Electrocution

Electrocution deaths are usually accidental. Humans are most sensitive to AC current (the most common type). Thirty-nine to 150 cycles per second is the range of greatest lethality. Important factors include amperage (how much electricity enters the body against the resistance of human skin) and the voltage (electromagnetic force). Low voltage (*i.e.*, household current) only kills or injures if it comes into direct contact with the body; it causes death in seconds or tenths of a second due to ventricular fibrillation. High voltage (such as that from high tension electric lines) can kill if it comes within centimeters of someone because an arc of electricity leaps from the source to the victim. It causes almost instantaneous death by burning and cardiac and respiratory arrest.

High voltage electricity always cause burns, and low voltage causes them about half the time. The burns are at the point where the current enters

and exits the body; the hand is the most common entry point and the foot is a frequent exit point. Electrical burns are distinctive from other types of burns. High voltage may also cause massive internal damage, destroying tissue and organs.

Homicide by electrocution is rare, but does occur. The most common method is to drop a plugged-in appliance into someone’s bath. This does not cause burns, and if the killer removes the appliance from the water, the death appears natural.

Falling Deaths

When someone dies after a fall, the question is whether it was suicide, an accident, or murder. The injuries resulting from a fall are the same regardless of the cause. However, if the fall is an accident, the body is usually near the wall; if the person jumped, was pushed, or was thrown, the corpse is further away from the wall. Lastly, a victim bleeds more if he’s alive on impact.

Poison

There are many different varieties of poison, with many different effects. Poisons are often difficult to detect and can be overlooked in an autopsy unless specifically tested for. The effects of some of the most common are listed below. In addition to the more overt effects (including death), the amount of poison in a person’s body can offer significant information to an investigator — how long the poison has been in the body, or the length of time the poison has been administered, for example. A character must have SS: Pharmacokinetics to obtain and analyze such data properly, however.

Arsenic: A colorless, odorless powder which acts slowly. Four to seven hours after being fed arsenic, the victim develops diarrhea and stomach pains — symptoms often mistaken for illness. Eventually, arsenic kills by dehydrating the body, causing fatal shock.

Curare: An injected poison. It kills by paralyzing the muscles needed to breath. The paralyzing effects disappear quickly, leaving no traces visible to the naked eye. Doctors use two similar drugs, Pavulon and succinylcholine, as anaesthetics.

Cyanide: This poison has become infamous in recent years because deranged individuals have killed people by putting it in Tylenol, Kool-Aid, and other products. Because it works very quickly, it’s also used in “suicide capsules” carried by spies. It even works as a gas (the Bhopal disaster involved a form of cyanide gas). Cyanide has two “distinctive features” which make it easy to find if looked for. First, to some people it smells like almonds: forty percent of the population has genes that allow them to smell cyanide. Second, cyanide turns the blood and skin a dark scarlet color and corrodes parts of the stomach, effects which are easily detected.

Insulin: Insulin, a drug given to diabetics, can kill in large doses. Special tests are required to find the traces.

Ricin: A poison derived from the castor oil plant which kills by interfering with the blood's ability to carry oxygen to the heart and brain. Its effects include abdominal pains, nausea, cramps, convulsions, and dehydration (similar to many illnesses). Even tiny amounts of it can cause a slow, painful death.

Strychnine: A fast-acting poison which kills by disrupting nerve impulses, causing intensely painful convulsions which prevent breathing. The victim is left with a *risus sardonicus*, or sardonic rictus grin. However, the muscles soon relax, leaving no trace of the cause of death unless special tests are run.

Sharp Trauma

Sharp trauma is injuries caused by sharp or pointed objects, such as knives or icepicks. Victims of stabbings (and other sharp trauma) may have “defense wounds” on their hands and arms if they were able to fight back or defend themselves. There are three basic categories of sharp trauma: stab wounds, incised wounds, and chop wounds.

STAB WOUNDS

Stab wounds are sharp trauma where the depth of the wound is greater than the length of the wound. The edges of the wound are usually distinct, without abrasions or contusions, although this may vary depending upon how sharp the stabbing object is (but not upon whether the blade's edge was serrated or jagged — usually this is not apparent from the wound).

The shape and size of a stab wound depend upon six factors: the shape of the weapon; the direction of thrust and withdrawal; movement of the blade; movement of the victim; the relaxation or tension of the skin; and Langer's lines (fibrous threads of tissue in the skin that can distort the shape of the wound if the cut goes against their “grain”). The shape of the cut may indicate what type of blade was used and how the knife was twisted during the attack, but this is not always reliable. For example, multiple icepick wounds may resemble wounds from small shotgun pellets (-1 to -2 to the Forensic Medicine roll to distinguish). Odd-shaped weapons, such as screwdrivers or scissors, often create wounds with identifiable shapes.

If there are several deep stab wounds, a forensic pathologist can usually determine the length of the blade used. The fewer wounds there are, the less likely it is that an accurate determination can be made. (In game terms, a character has to make a Forensic Medicine roll to determine the length of the blade; he suffers a -3 penalty if there's only one wound, a -2 penalty for two to four wounds, and a -1 for five or more wounds). An examiner can also vaguely determine the amount of force used to stab someone if he character makes a Forensic Medicine roll.

The amount of bleeding caused by stab wounds depends primarily on where the victim is stabbed and what's pierced. For example, an attack that punctures an artery causes a large amount of bleeding and a fairly quick death. It's possible for postmortem wounds to leak substantial quantities of blood, depending upon how the body lies and where it's stabbed.

INCISED AND CHOP WOUNDS

Incised wounds are cuts and slices from sharp objects. The majority of them are not fatal. The length and depth of the wound will not normally tell the pathologist anything about the blade used to inflict it, but a dull or nicked knife may not cut as cleanly. Examiners can distinguish incisions from lacerations (see above) by the absence of “bridging” in the depths of the wound.

Chop wounds are caused by heavy cutting tools, such as machetes and axes. They usually consist of an incision-like wound and a broken or grooved bone beneath. If the weapon is dull, the wound may also have laceration-like characteristics. If the weapon cuts bone, the cut may reveal information about the weapon, such as whether it was a thick blade or a thin one (thin blades “chatter,” or move from side to side, when cutting through bone; thick ones do not). The weapon may also leave chips of metal in the bone which can be compared to the metal of the weapon if it is recovered (and perhaps even fitted to the blade where they broke off), though this occurs far more frequently in fiction than in real life.

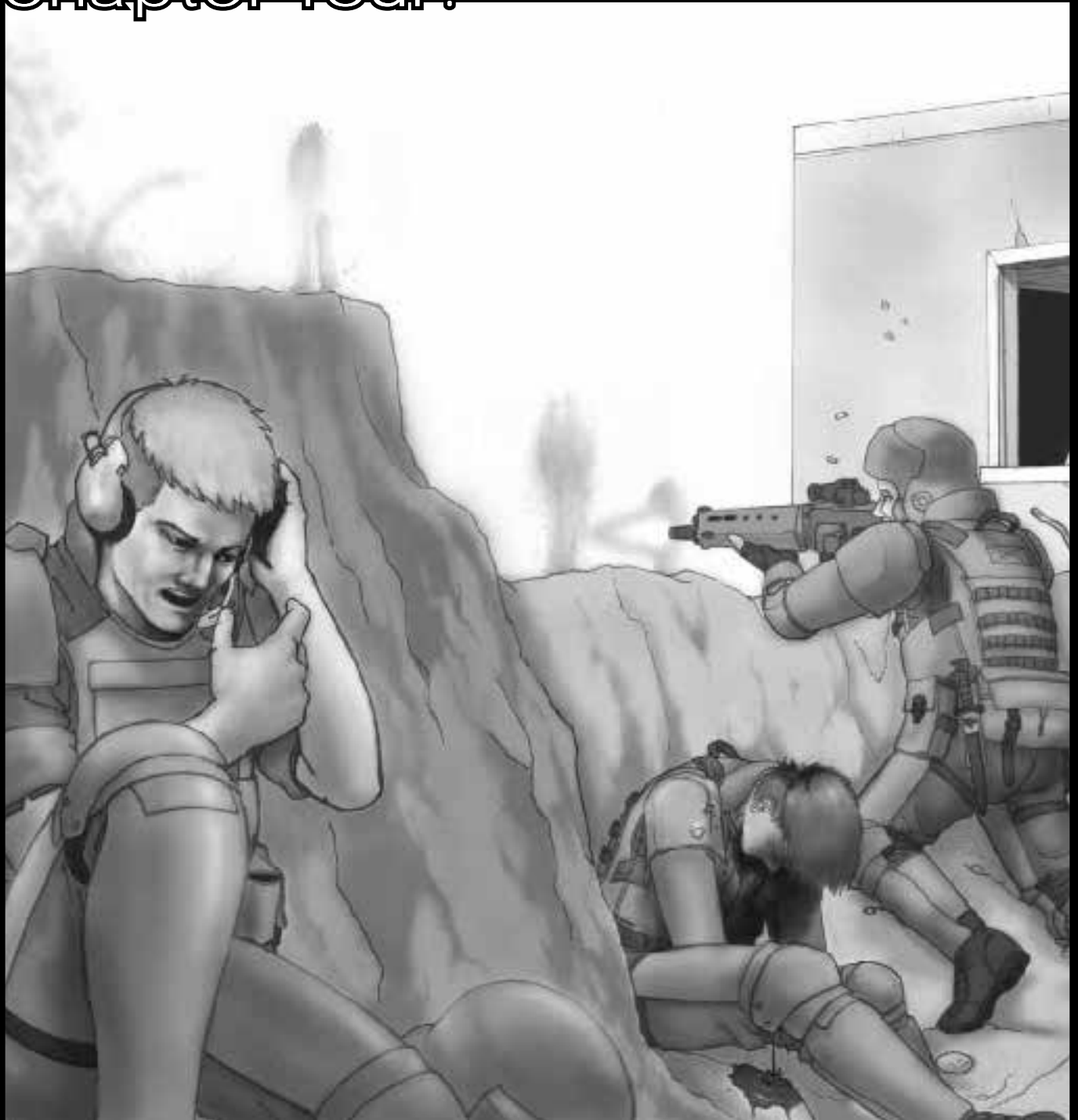
INJECTION SITES

Punctures from hypodermic needles, whether from intravenous drug use or poisoning by injection, tend to heal and fade away within about 48 hours, so they can provide clues only for a short time. However, injections with unsterile needles, such as those used by many drug addicts, produce permanent scar-like marks (“tracks”) that do not fade.

Torture

Unfortunately, some murderers, such as some serial killers, derive pleasure from torturing their victims before killing them. Wounds from torture may look just like wounds which were received during a struggle. However, if the victim is still alive for a while after the wounds are inflicted, certain blood traces and biochemicals, such as leucocytes or serotonin, will be found in the edges of the wound and/or in increased levels in the body. Between this and the location and type of wound, a forensic pathologist can determine that the victim was tortured, rather than mutilated after death. Ligation marks (marks left in the skin by rope when someone has been tied up) may also offer clues as to the victim's demise. This sort of information, while not pleasant, can be used to give PCs a warning about what sort of person they're dealing with.

chapter four:



COMBAT & ADVENTURING

DARK CHAMPIONS COMBAT



Combat is an important part of most role-playing campaigns, and *Dark Champions* games are no exception. This chapter covers ways to use the *HERO System* combat rules in *Dark Champions* campaigns, including expanded rules for firearms combat and related subjects. However, it does not describe the weapons themselves; see Chapter Five for that.

ENTERING COMBAT

Gamemasters and players may wish to consider the following rules and rules options for *Dark Champions* combat.

DRAMATIC VERSUS REALISTIC COMBAT

The GM, after seeking input from the players, should decide whether he wants the combat in his game to emphasize *realism* or *drama*. The two aren't mutually exclusive, of course, but they do tend to have some strong differences. Some sub-genres, such as *Dark Champions: The Animated Series* and "cinematic spies" games, favor drama; others, such as some *Military Action*, often hew more toward "realism."

"Realistic" combat pays attention to realistic details about combat and makes an effort to simulate them in the game, either to increase verisimilitude or make combat a less attractive option for PCs (sometimes both). Although there's considerable debate (even among learned scholars) as to what is or is not "realistic" when it comes to simulating gunfire, explosions, and the like, typically realistic game combat does at least some or all of the following: uses all the optional damage rules (such as Bleeding); discourages most fancy "stunts" and maneuvers by imposing harsh CV penalties for performing them; restricts the effectiveness of most body armor.

"Dramatic" combat, on the other hand, tends to take its cues from action movies. The emphasis is less on a "realistic" depiction of armed combat than on running an enjoyable battle that maximizes the scope of the characters' options and the usefulness of their many abilities. Of course, different levels of "dramatic" can exist; one campaign might allow just about any sort of hair-raising, swash-buckling stunt, while another simply ignores the more annoying or time-consuming "realistic" rules to speed game play. In contrast to "realistic" games, dramatic games tend to use fewer optional damage rules (sometimes none except for Hit Locations), encourage stunts and clever maneuvers by granting bonuses (or at least imposing no penalties), and

don't worry about making all the equipment function "realistically."

The degree to which the GM emphasizes "realism" or "drama" does a lot to provide flavor and feel for the campaign, and it influences character design as well. In a realistic game, players have to give some thought to how their characters cope with the nature and effects of combat, which may mean buying more CON or BODY to withstand injury, or more END so they can fight longer. In a dramatic game, players often design characters with special fighting styles and other unusual abilities to take advantage of the more "free-form" concept of battle.

The *HERO System* rules already handle the dramatic side of combat pretty well; that's part of the nature of the system. Many of the optional and additional rules in this chapter lean more toward "realism" than drama.

MULTIPLE-POWER ATTACKS

Multiple-power attacks aren't particularly common in *Dark Champions* games, but they do have their place. They work well when a character without Two-Weapon Fighting wants to shoot a gun in each hand, or a character wants to do something like throw a grenade and shoot his gun at the same time.

In weapons combat, Martial Arts maneuvers, and the like, maneuvers based on STR count as "separate Powers" for purposes of making multiple-Power attacks provided their effects are reasonably distinguishable. A Maneuver that causes damage (such as Legsweep) is reasonably distinguishable from one using the Exert basis (such as Martial Disarm) in most instances. Two Maneuvers that simply cause damage (Strike and Martial Strike, for example) generally are not, but the GM should make that call based on the character, the situation, and other such factors. If a character wants to hit a single target multiple times with the same, or two similar, damage-causing Maneuvers or attacks (like Martial Strike and Defensive Strike), usually he should choose one of the maneuvers and use a Sweep (or Rapid Fire, for Ranged attacks). Multiple-Power attacks work best when characters combine two different forms of attack to generate an interesting effect, not when they simply lump two attack abilities together to cause more damage.

However, at the GM's option, if a character wants to fight with a melee weapon in each hand, he may do so as a multiple-Power attack, even though that involves using two similar (perhaps identical) attacks that both do damage with STR.

Characters cannot use defensive maneuvers or actions (such as Block or Missile Deflection) as part

of a multiple-Power attack. Nor can they make a multiple-Power “attack” that consists of nothing but defensive actions.

To prevent characters from over-using multiple-Power attacks, GMs can impose restrictions similar to those on Rapid Fire and Sweep: for each power or maneuver added to the combination (including the first one) the character suffers a -2 OCV penalty; multiple-Power attacks take a Full Phase; using one halves the character’s DCV.

ACTING FIRST

It’s not uncommon for two *Dark Champions* characters to have the same DEX, or for situations to come up in combat where the exact timing of Actions in game terms becomes important. In these situations, the general rule on page 360 of the *HERO System 5th Edition, Revised* normally applies: the GM resolves the matter with competing DEX Rolls (unless, of course, the character’s Holding a defensive Action or Aborts to a defensive Action; those always go first). Alternately, the GM could dispense with the roll (perhaps as a way of speeding up combat) and allow one of the characters to go first based on their respective abilities. Two possibilities include:

- the character with the highest INT acts first (if their INTs are also tied, use PRE)
- the character with Fast Draw acts first (if both have Fast Draw, the one with the highest roll acts first)

If two characters have to use DEX Rolls to determine who acts first, the loser of the roll cannot then choose to Abort to a defensive Action — committing to the roll means the chance to Abort is lost. The character has staked his chances on getting to act first, and having failed to do so, has to live with the consequences. In some cases, the GM may even want the characters to specify what Actions they’re attempting, and what powers or attacks they’re using, before letting them roll. The losing character has already stated, in effect, (a) that he’s attacking, (b) what attack he’s using, and (c) where he’s aiming. He can’t change just because the winner got lucky, saw it coming, and moved away. However, the losing character can, if hit, declare that he’s Rolling With The Punch (if appropriate).

HOLDING AN ACTION

By the strict letter of the rules, when a character Holds his Action, he must specify a lower DEX or an event that “triggers” his Held Action — for example, “I’ll shoot him when he comes around the corner,” or “I’ll Dodge if anyone attacks me.” But if the GM wishes, he can let a character Hold his Action “generically,” without declaring any sort of precondition for acting.

If a character Blocks (or uses some other Combat Maneuver that affects his CV) in one Phase, and in the next Phase declares a Held Action, at that point he loses the CV modifiers from the Maneuver — just because he chooses to delay his Action doesn’t mean his Phase hasn’t occurred, and that ends the effect of a Combat Maneuver. However, his Combat Skill Levels, if any, remain allocated as they were until he actively changes them.

ABORTING AN ACTION

Typically a character must declare an Abort when an attacker announces he’s attacking that character, but before any rolls are made. A character can’t wait to see whether an Attack Roll misses, and if it hits, *then* declare an Abort (unless, of course, the GM permits this for the sake of drama).

Generally, a character cannot Abort to shield his eyes, or otherwise protect himself from, the effects of a Flash. The rules note that a character has to be “prepared” to do that, and Aborting typically implies a lack of preparation. However, the GM could allow a character to “Abort to cover my eyes” if he wanted to.

A character can Abort to a power that takes a Full Phase, Delayed Phase, or Extra Segment using the normal rules. He can Abort to a power that takes an Extra Phase, but if so he loses his next two Phases. He cannot Abort to powers that take more Extra Time unless the GM permits him to.

COMBAT MODIFIERS

The following guidelines, notes, and options apply to Combat Modifiers in a modern-day action-adventure context. A Modifier not discussed typically follows the standard rules and/or needs no further description for *Dark Champions* purposes.

AREA OF EFFECT; EXPLOSION

A character can use an Area Of Effect or Explosion attack to target a hex in the air, underwater, or the like (for example, to attack a parachutist or a submarine). He’s not limited to targeting hexes on the ground, though the rules refer to that for ease of reference.

AUTOFIRE

Autofire is one of the most common Combat Modifiers in *Dark Champions*, thanks to the prevalence of submachine guns, machine guns, and other automatic firearms. Here are some additional rules clarifying various aspects of Autofire as it’s used in the game; see page 97 for more information about buying the *Autofire* Advantage for attacks.

Autofire Damage

If a character uses a Combat Skill Level to increase the damage done by an Autofire attack, the increased damage applies to every shot that hits the target. As always, the GM may change this rule if he finds it unbalancing.

Each Autofire shot counts as a separate attack for purposes of determining Stunning — the individual Autofire shots do not add together to make a “single attack.” For example, if a character with CON 20 takes 18 STUN and 14 STUN (after defenses) from two Autofire hits from the same burst of fire, he’s not Stunned, since neither hit, by itself, did 21 or more STUN to him. (Of course, even though he’s not Stunned, he may be Knocked Out.)

If a character with an Autofire attack Coordinates with other characters, regardless of whether they do or do not have Autofire attacks themselves, and he hits the target with two or more shots, add

ROLEPLAYING COMBAT

As you read through this chapter, remember not only the strategic aspects of the rules, but the roleplaying aspects as well. All too often players and GMs look at combat solely as an exercise in tactics, strategy, and power-gaming, but in fact it has a lot of role-playing potential.

When running a fight, you can best realize this potential if you “talk out” your battles as much as possible. This simply means describing what your character does in real-world terms rather than just game terms. “I hit him with my Offensive Strike” is a lot less exciting than “I knock his arm out of position with my left arm, then smash him across the jaw with my roundhouse punch!” Roleplaying combat is fun, adds an important dimension to the battle, and can even result in some tactical bonuses — such as when the GM likes a maneuver’s description so much he awards a Surprise Move bonus to the character.

When describing attacks this way, you don’t have to use Hit Location penalties. A player can say, “Okay, I shoot him in the head!” without taking a -8 OCV penalty. So long as the character doesn’t receive the game benefits of hitting someone in the Head (x2 BODY, x2 NSTUN, and so forth), he doesn’t suffer the penalties either. A “described shot” to the Head does the ordinary amount of damage, it’s just portrayed that way to make the combat more enjoyable. Of course, if the character wants the extra damage for hitting his opponent in the Head, he can take the -8 OCV penalty for his attack in the usual way.



only the largest STUN total from any of the shots to his comrades' attack for purposes of determining the effects of Coordinating. The other shots still hit and cause damage to the target, they're just not counted for purposes of the Coordination rules.

If a character has an Autofire attack that's also Constant, it continues to affect the target with the same number of shots that hit him the first time, unless the GM rules otherwise based on the circumstances.

Area-Effecting Autofire Attacks

If a character has an attack that lets him Autofire an area-effecting attack (such as Darkness, or a power with the *Area Of Effect* or *Explosion* Advantage), it's possible he might miss some shots even though he attacks against DCV 3. Here's how to resolve that.

For multiple shots against a single target, the Attack Roll determines how many shots hit the target. The rest are considered misses and have no effect on the target. You can randomly determine the "scatter" for the missed shots, adapting the rules on pages 375-76 of the *HERO System 5th Edition, Revised*, if you want, but the target should not suffer any additional damage. If the GM wants to go to a lot of extra trouble, he can determine the exact area affected by each missed attack, and if any of them overlap the target or another character, apply the damage as appropriate.

If attack misses entirely, make one calculation for where the shots would scatter to based on the normal rules, then apply the damage from that one attack to the affected area. Again, the rest are considered misses and have no effect on the area hit (which may or may not overlap to hit the target anyway),

unless the GM wants to resolve each miss separately.

In either case, lots of other things may get destroyed in the area from the other "missed shots," but they shouldn't have any effect in game terms — it's just a special effect — unless the GM wants to take the time and trouble to come up with a more "realistic" result.

For single shots against multiple targets, determine whether each hits, and for any misses determine the scatter normally.

BOUNCING AN ATTACK

As the *HERO System 5th Edition, Revised* says, the Bouncing rules are appropriate for some types of Heroic campaigns, and that includes *Dark Champions*. Characters can use the Bouncing rules in appropriate circumstances with appropriate types of attacks (primarily gunfire). For example, some law enforcement officers are trained to "skip" bullets under cars to hit the legs of criminals hiding behind the car. However, characters can't properly Bounce certain bullets (such as frangible rounds). They can take a -¼ Limitation, *Cannot Be Bounced*. The GM may reduce this to -0 if Bouncing is uncommon in the campaign; if he allows it, other Ranged attacks (such as arrows or throwing knives) can also take it, if appropriate.

CONCEALMENT

Concealment occurs frequently in *Dark Champions* games; characters like to crouch behind walls and trees, in ditches, and around corners to avoid enemy gunfire. Since *Dark Champions* games typically use the Hit Location rules, the normal Concealment OCV penalties don't apply. Instead,

the attacker simply aims for an un-Concealed part of the target's body, applies the OCV penalty from the Hit Location Table for that part, and makes his Attack Roll.

Firing Into Melee

Gamemasters may, if they wish, use the normal Concealment rules when a character tries to make a Ranged Attack against a character in the middle of a HTH Combat with one or more other persons (“firing into melee,” in gaming parlance). In this situation, the GM decides how much “cover” the other bodies in the battle provide, based on the number of combatants, how quickly they’re moving around, their relative sizes, and other factors. The attacker then makes his Attack Roll against the target’s DCV, including the OCV penalty from Concealment. If the roll misses *solely as a result of the Concealment OCV penalty* (i.e., it misses by less than or equal to the penalty), then the attacker may have actually hit the cover — one of the other people in the melee. The GM decides which combatant is the potential target (either randomly, or based on his evaluation of the fighters’ positions when the attacker fired). The attacker must make another Attack Roll against that target, using only his base OCV from DEX (no bonuses from Combat Skill Levels, Combat Maneuvers, or the like apply). If that Attack Roll hits, the attacker’s shot has accidentally hit someone other than his intended target!

Example: *Lt. Andy Barrett, a skilled sniper, wants to help out the other soldiers in his squad, who have run out of ammunition while assaulting a terrorist training camp and are now involved in a swirling hand-to-hand melee with the terrorists. He decides to shoot the terrorist who’s fighting his friend Sgt. Ortiz. Barrett has an OCV of 10, and the terrorist he targets has DCV 6. The GM decides that, based on the swirling confusion of the combat, the terrorist has a little more than half cover — ordinarily a -3 OCV penalty for Barrett. However, the GM also thinks that the fact the terrorist’s a little larger than Ortiz helps Barrett, so he reduces the penalty to -2 OCV, giving Barrett a final OCV of 8.*

Unfortunately, Barrett rolls a 14, so he misses by 1. He missed by less than or equal to the Concealment penalty of 2, so he may hit someone else in the battle. Since there are six other combatants (Ortiz, Private Michaels, and four terrorists), the GM rolls 1d6 (1-2 for Barrett’s friends, 3-6 for the terrorists). He gets a 4 — the potential victim is another terrorist, fortunately! Barrett uses his base OCV of 6 to make an Attack Roll against the terrorist’s DCV of 5. He rolls a 10, a hit! At least he didn’t hit his friends....

ENCUMBRANCE

Action-adventure heroes sometimes need to carry a lot of equipment — weapons, ammunition, food, camping gear, communications devices, and so on — and thus may become Encumbered. The

ENCUMBRANCE TABLE

Encumbrance (Total Weight Carried)						
STR	0-10%	11-24%	25-49%	50-74%	75-89%	90-100%
5	0-5.4	5.5-12.4	12.5-24.5	24.6-37.0	37.1-44.5	44.6-50.0
8	0-7.5	7.6-18.0	18.1-36.8	36.9-55.5	55.6-66.8	66.9-75.0
10	0-10.0	10.1-24.0	24.1-49.0	49.1-74.0	74.1-89.0	89.1-100.0
13	0-15.0	15.1-36.0	36.1-73.5	73.6-111.0	111.1-133.5	133.6-150.0
15	0-20.0	20.1-48.0	48.1-96.0	96.1-148.0	148.1-178.0	178.1-200.0
18	0-30.0	30.1-72.0	72.1-147.0	147.1-222.0	222.1-267.0	267.1-300.0
20	0-40.0	40.1-96.0	96.1-196.0	196.1-296.0	296.1-356.0	356.1-400.0
23	0-60.0	60.1-144.0	144.1-294.0	294.1-444.0	444.1-534.0	534.1-600.0
25	0-80.0	80.1-192.0	192.1-392.0	392.1-592.0	592.1-712.0	712.1-800.0

0-10%: No Encumbrance penalty
 11-24%: -1 DCV/DEX Rolls
 25-49%: -2 DCV/DEX Rolls, -1” movement, 1 END per Turn
 50-74%: -3 DCV/DEX Rolls, -2” movement, 2 END per Turn
 75-89%: -4 DCV/DEX Rolls, -4” movement, 3 END per Turn
 90-100%: -5 DCV/DEX Rolls, -8” movement, 4 END per Turn
 Greater than 100%: Character cannot move or take other actions
 All weights listed are in kilograms (kg).

accompanying table provides a quick reference for how much characters can carry at various levels of Encumbrance; see page 379 of the *HERO System 5th Edition, Revised* for additional explanation and rules.

For purposes of calculating Encumbrance, you should count not just worn/carried items, but items held in the hand as well.

Because the Encumbrance movement penalties can become severe, GMs may wish to modify the rules slightly for characters who only have the standard 2” of Swimming. For any level of Encumbrance from 50-89%, a character in the water cannot move, but can tread water and keep himself afloat by paying the END for his Swimming and his Encumbrance. At 90% Encumbrance and above, the character can only tread water by paying *double* those END costs. At 100%+, the character sinks like a stone.

Characters must pay the END cost for Encumbrance in their first Phase of each Turn. As a default, the character pays the entire END cost in his first Phase, but the GM may, if he wishes, divide the END cost equally over the character’s Phases for the Turn. At the GM’s option, characters so Encumbered that they must pay END do not get Post-Segment 12 Recoveries (and possibly not even normal Recoveries) until they get rid of enough weight to remove the penalty, or sit down and do nothing but rest.

ENVIRONMENTAL CONDITIONS

All of the listed environmental conditions apply in most *Dark Champions* games, though some (zero gravity, muddy ground in urban campaigns) are fairly rare. Characters accustomed to functioning in such environments often buy Environmental Movement to counteract the penalties.

The OCV, DCV, and DC penalties for Climbing and other conditions apply to both HTH and Ranged Combat.

If a character is swimming, apply the Environmental Condition penalties for being “underwater.”

MULTIPLE ATTACKERS

The Multiple Attackers penalty to a character's DCV works well for relatively "realistic" *Dark Champions* combats, in which masses of weaker foes can easily overwhelm and defeat a single target in HTH Combat, or cut him to ribbons with a fusillade of gunfire. But it may not be appropriate for more cinematic games, where the heroes can wade through a sea of gunfire, calmly firing back without getting hit.

SPREADING AN ATTACK

This Modifier rarely applies in *Dark Champions* games. Guns and other common *Dark Champions* missile weapons take the *Beam* Limitation. Similarly, characters with weapons that inherently affect an area (such as flamethrowers) can't Spread such attacks. But if the GM allows Spreading, use the standard rules.

SURPRISED

The *Surprised* Combat Modifier crops up frequently in *Dark Champions* games. Ninja-trained special forces operatives sneak up behind their foes to slit their throats, and skilled snipers set up ambushes to wreak havoc on enemy forces.

The text of Surprised distinguishes between "in combat" and "out of combat," but generally assumes the modifier doesn't apply to anyone who's "expecting an attack." Gamemasters have to interpret the latter phrase with a little common sense. Obviously, anyone who's in combat expects to be attacked, so in most cases other attackers entering the fray (even by surprise, as with unexpected reinforcements arriving) won't inflict the Surprised penalty. However, it's possible for a character in combat to be attacked from so unexpected a quarter, or in so unexpected a way, that the character suffers a Surprised penalty. Some possible examples include:

- a clever spy sneaks up behind the character via Stealth and stabs him in the back
- a character who seems like an ordinary soldier suddenly reveals that he has ninja abilities
- a heretofore unrevealed sniper fires at the character

On the other hand, if the character has good reason to suspect the presence of a sneaky attacker, a sniper, or the like, Surprised probably wouldn't apply. And if the character has Defense Maneuver, whether he's expecting surprise attacks really doesn't matter; he's automatically prepared for them.

THROW OBJECT

This Combat Modifier is for non-weapon objects; it doesn't apply to weapons like throwing knives, which are meant for throwing. A character does his STR damage with a thrown object, up to the DEF+BODY of the object. For example, a costumed vigilante with STR 20 who throws a coffee mug (DEF 1, BODY 1) at someone only does 2d6 of damage — even though he can do 4d6 STR damage with a blow, the object's DEF+BODY equals two, which limits him to 2d6.

COMBAT MANEUVERS

The following guidelines, notes, and options apply to Combat Maneuvers in a modern-day action-adventure context. A Maneuver not discussed typically follows the standard rules and/or needs no further description for *Dark Champions* purposes. Most *Dark Champions* campaigns use all of the Optional Combat Maneuvers, many of which are intended primarily for the sort of gunfights and other combat normally seen in the modern-day action-adventure genre.

BLOCK

The rules for Block don't distinguish between the type of attack being Blocked (armed or unarmed) and how the character performs the Block (armed or unarmed). At the GM's option, a character performing an unarmed block (*i.e.*, one using just his hands and arms, not a weapon, shield, or the like) against a HTH weapon attack suffers a -2 OCV penalty, since it's harder to keep himself from getting hurt.

BLAZING AWAY

Blazing Away is a great way for *Dark Champions* characters to draw attention to themselves, intimidate their enemies, and get Presence Attack bonuses.

When Blazing Away, a character must specify in advance how many shots he wishes to make. He's not allowed to make them one-by-one, seeing if each one hits before deciding whether to launch additional shots.

Using an Area Of Effect attack, Explosion, or the like doesn't change the effects of Blazing Away — a character can still only hurt the target if he rolls a 3 on his Attack Roll. The missed area-affecting attacks can't harm his enemy.

If an attack has the *Extra Time* Limitation, usually that means a character cannot use it to Blaze Away. However, the GM should consider the nature of the Limitation and the special effects involved. If the Limitation only applies to activating the power the first time, but not thereafter, a character might be able to Blaze Away with it after it's been activated.

BRACE AND SET

These two Maneuvers, commonly used together, are the stock-in-trade of the sniper and skilled shooter. They're also handy for characters who have to shoot at fleeing enemies at long distances.

Although Brace is a Combat Maneuver, using it does not constitute an Attack Action, and therefore does not end a character's Phase — as stated in the rules, it's a Zero-Phase Action. In effect, it "tacks on" to another Combat Maneuver, allowing a character to Brace and then make an Attack Action all in the same Phase. Set works differently. A character who wants to Set must spend a Full Phase aiming, during which he can do nothing else other than Zero-Phase Actions — and that means no attacking. Once he's spent a Full Phase establishing his Set, he can attack in later Phases with the appropriate bonus as described in the rules.

If a character is Bracing and/or Setting, and he's Stunned by an attack, he loses the effects of either maneuver (or both, if using both).

Characters cannot use Set in HTH Combat. It's for Ranged Combat only.

CLUB WEAPON

Characters can use firearms to perform the *Club Weapon* Combat Maneuver. However, due to the high Damage Classes in many guns (particularly those using exotic ammunition), don't convert the DCs directly to Normal Damage, as described in the rules. Instead, base the amount of damage done on the type of firearm: a handgun does +1d6 Normal Damage; a submachine gun or carbine +2d6 Normal Damage; and a rifle, shotgun, or assault rifle +3d6 Normal Damage. This damage adds to the character's Normal Damage from STR, as if it were a Hand-To-Hand Attack.

COVER

In many action-adventure stories and movies, characters seem to be able to break out of being Covered with considerable ease — doing so doesn't require a distraction or a momentary lapse on the Covering character's part. At the GM's option, in *Dark Champions* campaigns, a character can make an attack (usually a Disarm) while Covered, without the Covering character going first, under the following circumstances:

- if he has Fast Draw and makes his roll by more than the Covering character makes a Sight Group PER Roll;
- if he has Sleight Of Hand and makes his roll by more than the Covering character makes a Sight Group PER Roll; or
- if he makes a DEX Roll by more than the Covering character makes his DEX Roll.

Before attempting to break the Cover, the character must decide which of the three methods to use. If he fails his roll, the character Covering him can choose to attack him with the Covering attack.

DISARM

Dark Champions characters can perform Disarms (but not Martial Disarms or the like) with ranged weapons — for example, by shooting a gun out of an enemy's hand. Determining the outcome of the attack is a two-step process.

First, the character has to make an Attack Roll to hit the weapon. He doesn't suffer the standard -2 OCV penalty for making a HTH Disarm; instead, the OCV penalty depends on the size of the weapon (or other object) he's trying to shoot out of the target's hand (see accompanying table).

Second, if the character hits the object, convert the Damage Classes of the attack into STR at the rate of 1 DC = 5 STR. The GM may rule that some Damage Classes (such as those provided by exotic types of bullets) don't count for purposes of calculating the "STR" of a shot. Once you know the attack's "STR," roll a STR Versus STR Contest in the standard method for the Disarm maneuver.

TARGETING WEAPONS AND GADGETS

Weapon	Attack Roll Penalty
Assault Rifle	-3 to -5
Bow	-4 to -6 (this assumes the character is targeting the bow itself; targeting the bowstring would be a -12, but any hit to a bowstring will break it)
Crossbow	-3 to -6 (most crossbows are large and bulky enough that they're fairly easy to hit, but pistol crossbows are as difficult to target as a handgun)
Grenade	-6 to -7
Handgun	-5 to -8 (especially large handguns, such as the AMT Automag, would be -5; derringers and other small guns are -7 or -8. Most handguns are -6)
Knife	-5 to -8
Machine Gun	-2 to -5
Rifle	-3 to -4
Shotgun	-3 to -5
Submachine Gun	-4 to -6
Sword	-3 to -5

For example, a 1d6+1 RKA bullet has 4 DC, which equals 20 STR for Disarm purposes, and would roll 4d6 to determine the "BODY damage" done by his STR for Disarming.

A Disarmed weapon usually ends up ½d6 inches away from its former holder in the direction the Disarming attack travels (Disarming player's choice, within reason). The GM decides whether the Disarmed weapon suffers damage.

You can also use this system to determine whether the force of a particular attack is enough to knock over an object. But the GM should apply some standards of "realism" to this sort of action — it isn't usually possible to tip over cars and other large objects with guns, even if they have the "STR" to do it.

As an alternative to using the Disarm rules, characters can simply try to wound their enemies in ways that make them drop held objects. A character who takes an Impairing or Disabling wound to the Hand or Arm may drop whatever he's holding. The character makes an EGO Roll at -1 to the roll for each 2 BODY taken; if he succeeds, he maintains his grip, if he fails, he drops the held object.

DIVE FOR COVER

When the grenades and bombs start to fly, this Combat Maneuver always comes in handy. Here are some additional rules and guidelines for Diving For Cover.

Acrobatics And Breakfall

Characters cannot use Breakfall or Acrobatics to avoid the DCV penalty for Dive For Cover, or to avoid being prone after a Dive For Cover. Nor may they use either Skill as a "Complementary Roll" for the DEX Roll to Dive For Cover.

DROPPING PRONE

While it's not necessarily as useful as Dodging or Diving For Cover, sometimes characters need to drop to the ground — to become prone, in other words. This halves a character's DCV, but it's often the best way to get behind Concealment quickly, avoid being run over by a subway train, or the like.

Dropping prone requires a Zero-Phase Action; getting back to one's feet takes a Half-Phase Action (unless the character uses Break-fall). Neither dropping down nor standing up costs END. Dropping prone counts as a "defensive action" for purposes of Aborting.

Combat Skill Levels

A character cannot apply Combat Skill Levels to the DEX Roll he makes when Diving For Cover, since CSLs only affect CV. Nor can a character buy 2-point Combat Skill Levels with Dive For Cover, since that type of Level only affects OCV. However, he can apply 3-point and more expensive CSLs to increase his DCV while Diving For Cover, if appropriate. If a character has Skill Levels that can apply to DEX Rolls, he may use those to improve his DEX Roll when Diving For Cover, provided he has not already allocated them in the Segment when he uses the Maneuver.

Declaring A Dive For Cover

In most situations, a character must declare his Dive For Cover before his attacker makes an Attack Roll or announces what type of attack he's using — when the weapon's pointed at him but not yet fired, so to speak. Otherwise, problems may arise if a character declares some other defensive Action (primarily a Dodge or Block), then tries to switch to a Dive For Cover when he discovers his attacker's using an area-affecting attack. While some area-affecting attacks (such as grenades, flamethrowers, or area-affecting attacks previously encountered) are obvious (and thus alert the character to Dive For Cover instead of Dodging or Blocking), others are not. The existence of the *Dive For Cover* Maneuver doesn't grant characters prescient knowledge of the types of attacks used against them.

Failing The DEX Roll

As noted in the rulebook, failing the DEX Roll to Dive For Cover means the character's considered to be "in the air" in his starting hex. This means he hasn't automatically avoided the attack, and if it hits him, the GM rolls 1d6 less for calculating Knockback (if the campaign uses the Knockback rules). It doesn't change his DCV or when he next acts (though if he Aborted to Dive For Cover, that obviously factors in).

The "in the air" condition for a failed Dive For Cover applies until the character's next Phase. Of course, he doesn't literally remain "in midair" the entire time — all this means is that the penalties and consequences of failing the Dive For Cover roll remain in effect until his next Phase. At that point, he "lands" and is "prone;" he must spend a Half Phase to "get up." If he was hit while in midair, that may affect the situation by causing Knockback, Stunning him, or the like, and the GM should deal with that situation normally. If the attack has no significant effect on the character other than the loss of some STUN and/or BODY, he still "lands" in his next Phase as described above.

Movement With Dive For Cover

Making a Half Move before Diving For Cover doesn't affect how far a character can Dive For Cover with a mode of movement — he's still restricted to only half his maximum movement. For example, if Lt. Barrett has Running 10", and he's already made a Half Move of 5", then he can only use Running to Dive For Cover a maximum of 5". He can choose to Dive less than 5" if he wants to,

but the rules don't force him to do so. If a character makes more than a Half Move, that of course constitutes a Full Move and prevents him from Diving For Cover that Phase.

A character can Dive For Cover using his Noncombat Movement, unless the GM forbids this for reasons of game balance, dramatic sense, or the like. This allows him to Dive for up to half his Noncombat Movement distance. But of course, doing this halves his DCV, making it more likely he'll be hit if the Dive For Cover fails.

Multiple Dives For Cover

A character can Dive For Cover two or more times in a row, provided the special effects and timing allow for that. For example, a character who Dives For Cover and ends up prone, but is attacked in a later Segment before he's had a chance to get to his feet, might not be allowed to Dive For Cover again, since he hasn't had a chance to reorient himself and get into a position that would allow him to move quickly again. But in some *Dark Champions* campaigns, the GM might let characters who are "prone" Dive For Cover by scrambling, rolling, or crawling out of the way.

Standard And HTH Attacks

As noted in the rulebook, a character can use Dive For Cover to avoid attacks that don't affect an area, including HTH Combat attacks. When doing this, a character is not required to literally dive behind cover or the like. All he has to do is travel far enough to get away from the effect of the attack. In many cases, moving 1" out of the way does the trick; in other cases, he may have to move further. The GM may, of course, establish a minimum distance based on the nature of the attack (for example, a character trying to Dive For Cover to avoid an attack by a spear-wielding opponent should have to Dive at least the length of the spear), or specify that the character has to Dive in a particular direction. In any event, a clever opponent may try to take advantage of the character's ½ DCV if he simply dives a mere 1" away. As always, common sense, dramatic sense, special effects, and the GM's discretion should apply.

HAYMAKER

A character could Haymaker a gunshot, unless the GM forbids him to. This could represent carefully aiming to hit the most vulnerable part of a target.

PULLING A PUNCH

A character can Pull A Punch with a Ranged attack with the GM's permission.

RAPID FIRE

Rapid Fire is a favorite combat maneuver of many gun-wielding characters. It lets them squeeze off several shots quickly against one or multiple targets, giving them a significant tactical advantage... provided they're willing to use a Full Phase Action and risk the consequences of halving their DCVs. Here are some additional rules and guidelines about it; see also *Storm Of Lead*, page 195, for more information on the subject of firing guns quickly.



Combat Skill Levels

A character could buy 2-point CSLs just to improve his OCV with Rapid Fire (or Sweep, for that matter), regardless of what type of weapon or attack he Rapid Fires with. If he buys 3-point CSLs with Rapid Fire (or more expensive CSLs that could apply to Rapid Fire), he can use them to increase his OCV and/or DCV with Rapid Fire (but note the order of application of CV modifiers in the checklists on page 372-73 of the *HERO System 5th Edition, Revised*, which in effect halves any Levels applied to DCV).

If a character has 2-point Combat Skill Levels with an attack, can he apply those Levels to his OCV when Rapid Firing (or Sweeping) with that attack.

If a character uses a Combat Skill Level to increase the damage done by, or his OCV with, a Rapid Fire (or Sweep) attack, the CSL applies to every “shot” that hits the target. He doesn’t have to divide them up among the shots. As always, the GM may change this rule if he finds it unbalancing.

Combat Value

For Rapid Fire (and Sweep), the attacker determines his OCV at the beginning of the sequence, based on the OCV modifiers from Rapid Fire itself and other factors. That OCV should remain unchanged throughout the sequence of shots, unless the GM deems it appropriate to alter the attacker’s OCV for some reason. If the attacks are made against a single target, the target’s DCV remains the same throughout the sequence in most situations. However, if the circumstances of the attack change his DCV in some way (for example, if one attack frees him from an Entangle or Knocks him Out), then his DCV

changes for all shots thereafter. The GM may choose to ignore this rule, and maintain the DCV the target had at the start of the sequence, if he prefers to run the attack in a simpler fashion.

If the attacks are made against multiple targets, with each being attacked once, each has its own DCV, determined by the conditions at the time the sequence began. If some targets are attacked more than once, the rules stated above apply.

A character using a Rapid Fire (or Sweep) may elect to stop his attack after any successful “shot.” However, he cannot, by doing so, retroactively diminish the OCV and DCV penalties for using the Maneuver.

Differing Weapons

With the GM’s permission, a character can use Rapid Fire to fire two different Ranged weapons, one in each hand, the same way he can perform a Sweep with multiple Combat Maneuvers.

Haymaker

Characters cannot combine Rapid Fire with Haymaker.

Time Considerations

If an attack has the *Extra Time* Limitation, usually that means a character cannot use it to Rapid Fire. However, the GM should consider the nature of the Limitation and the special effects involved. If the Limitation only applies to activating the power the first time, but not thereafter, a character might be able to Rapid Fire with it after it’s been activated.

A character cannot spread his Rapid Fire over multiple Segments (e.g., one shot in Segment 12,



one in Segment 1, one in Segment 2, and so forth). All shots are fired in the Segment in which the character has a Phase and uses the Maneuver.

ROLL WITH A PUNCH

A character cannot Roll With A Punch after an unsuccessful Block or Dodge, whether he Aborted to the Block or Dodge or not.

SUPPRESSION FIRE

Characters use Suppression Fire more in the *Dark Champions* genre than any other; it's perfect for laying down "covering fire" so a friend can reach safety without the enemy firing at him or to deny the enemy access to an area. Here are some additional rules and guidelines about it.

Shots Fired And Targets Attacked

When a character uses Suppression Fire, he must fire into the defined area the maximum number of shots he can fire with the Autofire power/weapon being used, unless the GM rules otherwise. The shots aren't equally divided into all the hex lines; they're considered to be fired into the defined area as a whole. As noted in the rules, the character fires these shots every *Segment* — so he may quickly run out of ammunition if he's not careful. (If he's using an attack that costs END instead of Charges, the character should declare how many "shots" he's firing, with a minimum of one per hex line.)

The maximum number of hits a character can obtain with Suppression Fire in a Segment equals the number of shots fired in that Segment. Once he rolls that many successful Attack Rolls against targets moving through the affected area, he automatically cannot hit any more targets. A character using Suppression Fire cannot decline to make an

Attack Roll against a target in the area — in each Segment, he must make one roll per hex line every target moves through until he has used up all his hits for that Segment. However, if two targets enter the "Suppression Fire zone" at the same time, the character can choose which one to make his Attack Rolls against first. If any issues of timing arise, the GM determines which targets the character can (or must) attack first.

A character cannot "overlap" his Suppression Fire so he can attack a target more than once per hex line. Autofire Skills have no effect on Suppression Fire.

Pinning Targets Down

To be hit by Suppression Fire, a target has to move into, out of, or through the "Suppression Fire zone," or take some other Action that indicates movement (such as attacking the character who's using Suppression Fire, or most other targets). If he doesn't move in any way, the fire has him "pinned down" — which is often the point of the maneuver anyway. The GM determines what Actions, if any, a "pinned down" target can take without exposing himself to the Suppression Fire.

Going Beyond Hex Lines

Not every area a character wants to cover with Suppression Fire neatly divides into hex lines. If the GM can't count some reasonable approximation of hex lines, he should come up with a reasonable definition for the number of "hex lines" in the area affected and use that modifier. Such "hex lines" for Suppression Fire must be adjacent to each other as much as reasonably possible.

DAMAGE



This section contains guidelines, advice, and optional rules pertaining to damage and its effects, and related matters such as healing.

OPTIONAL EFFECTS OF DAMAGE

Most *Dark Champions* campaigns are Heroic-level games, and as such often use the various optional effects of damage: Wounding, Hit Locations, Impairing, Disabling, Knockdown, and Bleeding. Of these, the Hit Location rules are most often used; almost all *Dark Champions* campaigns have them in place.

Whether the GM chooses to use the other optional rules (or even the Hit Location rules) depends on several factors. First and foremost, how much attention, effort, and detail do the GM and players want to put into combat? The optional rules provide a lot more information about what goes on in a battle, how characters get hurt, and the effects of their injuries. If that level of detail helps you visualize and roleplay combat, the optional rules are worth considering. However, bringing the optional rules into the game tends to slow combat down. Instead of just rolling damage and subtracting defenses, you now have to account for the part of the body the attack hit, possible impairing effects, loss of blood, and so on.

Second, how “realistic” do you want your *Dark Champions* campaign to be? The optional rules all favor the grim and gritty nature of “reality” instead of the more “dramatic” presentation of the basic rules. Ordinarily characters don’t have to worry about things like laming wounds, bleeding, and infection — either in the game, or in most action-adventure comic books and movies. Introducing the optional rules into your game emphasizes the “realistic” feel, which may not be what you want. If it is what you want — if your goal is to make combat an even scarier proposition than it already is — then the Optional Effects of Damage rules may be just what you’re looking for.

HIT LOCATIONS

As mentioned above, the Hit Location rules are used in almost every *Dark Champions* campaign. Here are some suggestions and additional rules on the subject. (See also the rules about “described shots” in the sidebar on page 177.)

Expanding The Hit Location Chart

The accompanying text box lists some optional “new” Hit Locations. These are provided only for targeting purposes; they don’t change the Hit Location chart itself.

ADDITIONAL HIT LOCATIONS

Location	STUNx	N STUN	BODYx	To Hit
Finger	x1	x½	x¼	-8
Eye*	x5	x2	x2½	-12
Knee/Elbow	x2	x1	x½	-7
Spine†	x3	x1	x1	-7
Neck/Throat‡	x5	x1	x2	-9

Notes

*: In many cases, even well-protected characters have little or no eye protection.

†: A hit to the spine from which the target takes BODY usually results in some sort of paralysis; the extent and duration of the paralysis depends on the wound. A character can only target the spine from behind.

‡: A hit to the throat usually causes loss of voice or similar problems in addition to any other damage it causes.

Adjustable Hit Locations

As an optional rule for campaigns that use the Hit Location rules, the GM can allow characters to adjust the location they rolled by up to 1 point (not one step, one point) up or down the Hit Location chart for each 1 point by which they make their Attack Rolls. In other words, an Attack Roll that succeeds by a large margin has a greater chance to hit a vulnerable spot, thus reflecting the degree of the character’s success.

Example: *Renegade shoots at a bank robber. He needs a 13- to hit, and rolls a 10, making the roll by 3. Then he rolls on the Hit Location Table and gets an 11 — the Chest. Using this optional rule, he can adjust the 11 up or down by up to 1 point for each point he made the roll by (i.e., three points). So, he could take it up the chart to 10 (still the Chest), 9 (Shoulders), or 8 (Arms), or down the chart to 12 (Stomach), 13 (Vitals), or 14 (Thighs). He decides to go for the “good shot” and adjusts to 13 (Vitals) for the deadliest possible wound he can inflict.*

A character cannot adjust to a Hit Location that he can’t see or that’s blocked from his line of fire by Concealment or the like.

Area-Affecting Attacks

Attacks which have the *Area Of Effect* or *Explosion* Advantages, or which otherwise affect an entire area, use the standard Hit Location rules — the character rolls a Hit Location, and the GM applies the damage accordingly. The roll indicates the part of the target's body that's the most directly affected by the blast. Alternately, the GM can dispense with the Hit Location rules for explosions and the like, and just apply the damage generally with a rolled STUN Multiplier.

Killing Damage

Some *HERO System* GMs are concerned that Killing Damage weapons don't put victims down with even the spotty regularity of real-world weapons. The *HERO System* simulates dramatic, heroic action. That means characters can take a lot of damage and keep going. You can use the Impairing/Disabling rules to get around this, but those rules are a little complicated. Or you could change all the DCs for weapons, which takes time and effort.

As a simpler option for more "realistic" campaigns, try this instead: double the BODYx Column of the Hit Location Chart for Killing Damage attacks. With this approach, the Head and Vital locations have a BODYx multiple of x4, instead of x2, with Killing Damage only (Normal Damage would still use x2). Hands, Arms, Legs and Feet would be x1 instead of x½, and Shoulders, Chest, Stomach, and Thighs would be x2 instead of x1. This makes Killing Damage weapons much more fearsome.

WOUNDING

The GM should take care not to let Wounding interfere with the game. Wounding tends to come into play much more frequently than Disabling or Impairing, and therefore has a greater potential to disrupt or slow down the game. It also has a higher "frustration potential": most players can understand having to worry about massive wounds that Impair or Disable them, but no player likes to have his character "nickel-and-dimed" to death by taking a couple of BODY here, a couple of BODY there. Use the rule with discretion and dramatic sense, and it should work fine. Alternately, the GM can change the way the rule works — either just for the PCs (because they're the heroes, after all) or for everyone — to minimize its impact. For example, maybe the PCs only suffer a -1 to the EGO Roll for every 3 BODY damage taken, instead of every 2 BODY.

Characters can use Resistance to aid their EGO Roll when wounded (or buy an ability like *It Doesn't Hurt That Much* on page 126).

DISABLING

Unlike the more merciful Impairing rules, the Disabling rules have the potential to be more dangerous in *Dark Champions* games than in other genres. Unlike Fantasy, superhero, or Cyberpunk characters, modern-day action-adventure heroes don't usually have access to any sort of advanced healing or "body repair" methods. That means a Disabling wound can easily become a permanent facet of a character, and this may ruin a player's fun.

But there are ways to avoid this unpleasant fate. First, as noted in the rulebook, if a character makes a CON Roll, the Disabling effects he suffers should be less severe, or even temporary (convert them to Impairments instead). Second, the GM could rule that characters with access to immediate medical attention (such as another PC who knows Paramedics) who get treatment quickly suffer an Impairment effect instead of a Disabling one. Third, the GM could grant Disabled characters extra Experience Points they can only use to buy back Characteristics and abilities lost to Disabling wounds. The GM should do this gradually, over many game sessions — but eventually, a Disabled PC will be back to full strength.

If possible, don't let a character suffer from more than one Disabling wound at a time. The GM should let him to heal before severely injuring him again. After all, few players want to play characters who are always walking wounded.

KNOCKDOWN

Almost all *Dark Champions* games use the Knockdown rules, not Knockback; only the most cinematic action-adventure campaigns allow Knockback. At the GM's option, characters might suffer Knockdown not only when they suffer an Impairing or Disabling wound, but whenever they would ordinarily suffer Knockback (*i.e.*, roll as if rolling for Knockback; if any Knockback results, the character suffers Knockdown). Also at the GM's option, characters can convert the *Does Knockback* (+¼) Advantage into *Does Knockdown* — any hit from a weapon with this Advantage automatically does Knockdown, even if it inflicts no STUN or BODY damage past the target's defenses.

BLEEDING

Bleeding is the one optional damage rule *Dark Champions* GMs should consider ignoring entirely. Although it *is* realistic, it adds a great deal of book-keeping to the game; it can also ruin a player's day if his character bleeds to death just seconds before completing some vital task. Keep these things in mind before opting to use the Bleeding rules.

OTHER DAMAGE EFFECTS

Here are some additional rules regarding damage that may be appropriate for some *Dark Champions* campaigns.

Critical Hits

Warning: These critical hits rules, if added to a campaign, make combat more dangerous and unbalancing. The GM should only add them to his campaign if he wants unpredictable and lethal combats.

A “critical hit” is a blow so accurate it does maximum damage. One occurs when a character’s roll to hit is less than half of what he needed to hit the target.

Examples: *An OCV 6 character shoots at a DCV 5 character. He needs a 12 or less to hit. To make a critical hit, he needs less than a (12/2) 6 to hit — i.e., he must roll a 5 or below.*

An OCV 7 character attacks a DCV 5 character. He needs a 13 or less to hit. To make a critical hit, he needs less than a (13/2) 6.5 to hit — he must roll a 6 or less.

If a character makes a critical hit, he does maximum damage for the attack. Therefore, a Killing Attack 2d6 does 12 BODY. An 8d6 Normal Damage attack does 48 STUN, 16 BODY. A 2d6 NND attack does 12 STUN.

If the campaign uses the Hit Location rules, a Killing Attack uses the normal STUN Multiplier for the location — 12 BODY to the Vitals does 48 STUN, for instance. If those rules are not in use, a Killing Attack does the maximum possible STUN; if the STUN Multiplier is 1d6-1, as with most Killing Attacks, then 12 BODY corresponds to 60 STUN.

Characters may only do critical hits to living targets. Ignore critical hit results against targets like doors and walls (it would be far too easy to get a critical hit on a DCV 0 door, for instance).

FUMBLES

Related to critical hits are fumbles — disastrous occurrences that sometimes afflict combatants. After all, if characters can score high levels of success with excellent rolls, as a balancing factor they should suffer some problem if they roll very poorly.

Any roll of 18 on an Attack Roll constitutes a fumble (a fumble should also occur if the character ever gets a 1 on any of his Unluck dice rolled during combat). If you want fumbles to occur more frequently, set a threshold based on how badly the attacker misses. For example, perhaps any attack that rolls an 18 or misses by 4 or more results in a fumble.

The GM determines the exact effects of a fumble. Some possibilities include:

- the character suffers a reduced DCV (maybe even half DCV) until his next Phase
- the character loses his weapon: it slips from his grasp and goes flying into the street, it jams so badly it needs out-of-combat repairs, it breaks, or the like

- the character may hit one of his friends; he must make an attack at his base OCV against the friend’s DCV (a Surprised penalty may apply)

- the character stumbles and falls, suffering penalties for being prone until his next Phase

Mystery Damage

This is an option which only works for GMs willing to keep track of more details in combat. It’s not recommended for any GM unless he likes being the one to keep track of character damage, or has a special reason in a one-shot game to keep his players off-balance.

In real life, a person cannot suffer an injury and know “Ah-ha, I’ve taken 4 BODY, it hurts but I’m not in any danger yet.” He just knows he’s hurt, and may have some vague idea of the wound’s severity, but can’t be confident in his ability to shrug it off.

If you want to simulate this in the game, the GM himself must keep track of all BODY damage done by Killing Attacks; he can let the players keep track of their own STUN damage from Killing Attacks, and of STUN and BODY damage from Normal Damage attacks. He’ll have to know how much BODY the characters start with, and their Resistant Defenses (and what parts of the body they protect). He must make sure the players tell him about any BODY their characters take from Normal Damage attacks, and must record that BODY with the Killing Damage they’re taking.

Mystery Damage Without Hit Locations

Whenever an NPC hits a PC with a Killing Attack, the GM rolls the damage, rolls the STUN Multiplier, and announces something like this: “Ed, he’s stabbed you in the chest, right below the ribs. It hurts a lot: take 12 STUN.”

Now, Ed knows only that it “hurts a lot” from the STUN total he took; he doesn’t know how bad the injury is. He doesn’t know if the GM rolled 3 BODY and a 4x STUN Multiplier; perhaps it was 6 BODY and a 2x STUN Multiplier; maybe it was 2 BODY and a 6x STUN Multiplier (from the *Increased STUN Multiplier Advantage*) or even 12 BODY and a 1x STUN Multiplier.

To get an idea of how bad the wound is, he must use a Half Phase Action to look at it. At that point, the GM should say nothing more than: “It looks shallow,” or “It looks deep but you’ve had worse,” or “It’s deep and nasty-looking.” Thus, characters won’t know when they’re mortally wounded, though the GM can tell them how they’re bleeding like stuck pigs and swiftly growing weaker and weaker.

Mystery Damage With Hit Locations

When you use Hit Locations in your game, mystery damage becomes a bit more complicated. A character who’s stabbed in the stomach and takes 12 STUN automatically knows he took 3 BODY. Therefore, in campaigns using Hit Locations, you have to do things a little differently.

In this sort of campaign, you don't just use the STUNx column from the Hit Location chart. You use that column, but also make two quick rolls. First, make a 1d6 roll for subtract/add: a 1-3 means subtract, and a 4-6 means add. Second, roll 2d6 to determine how much STUN to add or subtract to the STUN done by the attack.

Alternately, the GM can simply keep track of the STUN of the attack, along with the BODY.

STUN Damage In Dark Champions

The *HERO System* rules reflect “dramatic reality” — the “reality” depicted in genre novels, movies, comic books, and television shows. This has many implications for *Dark Champions* game play, such as the fact that it's easier to knock an enemy out than to kill him.

One of the most important aspects of dramatic reality is this: heroes don't die. They may get beaten, battered, bruised, and even crippled, but they don't die. They're a hardy bunch — and they've got to be, considering the opposition they face and the fact that they're on “center stage” throughout the entire story. The *HERO System* rules reflect this by making it relatively difficult to kill player characters. They often get Stunned or Knocked Out, but they rarely die.

But since all characters, player and non, are built using the same rules and procedures, this “hard to kill” effect carries over to enemies and villains. It's usually not quite as stark, because the PCs are the heroes and therefore built on more Character and Experience Points than many of their adversaries, but it does exist.

The result is that, at the end of a *Dark Champions* combat, the PCs often face a battlefield littered with as many unconscious opponents as dead ones. This leads to a major dilemma: what to do with the surviving foes? In some cases the PCs can just walk away, but all too often that's not an option. Player characters who don't want to burden themselves with lots of prisoners (in other words, almost all PCs) are left with one unpleasant option — putting a bullet in the head of each unconscious enemy.

In the darkest of *Dark Champions* campaigns, this is perfectly acceptable behavior: never leave a living enemy behind, as they say. But in others, particularly the more lighthearted genres like *Dark Champions: The Animated Series* and cinematic spies, having to slaughter a bunch of unconscious people simply for the sake of convenience destroys the mood of the setting and the game. After all, can you imagine James Bond walking around the field of combat after every battle and killing off all the survivors? Of course not, because it's completely contrary to the sense of drama and heroism inherent in such stories. The author either arranges things so the hero escapes from the fight somehow, or he has the enemies conveniently die of the wounds they suffered in honorable, dramatic combat. Killing an enemy in battle is highly appropriate; having to kill one in cold blood after the battle is not.

Of course, novels and movies aren't games, and games aren't novels and movies — although they have many similarities, they function differently and you have to approach them in slightly different ways. What works in a novel or movie doesn't necessarily work in a game. In a novel, the author can ensure that all the enemies die in battle, thus sparing the hero the need to kill them afterwards. A roleplaying game can't do that, because it's a mutually-crafted story told by the GM and players together, which means there must be rules to define what characters can do and how events unfold. And unfortunately, rules don't always quite portray dramatic reality the way you'd like it to — a poor die roll, or the like, cheats you of a dramatically appropriate moment or event.

However, it's possible for a GM and players to adapt the rules, or their approach to combat, to make a *Dark Champions* game a little more like novels and movies by using some or all of the following optional rules. They should only apply to minor or trivial NPCs; major enemies and villains should function in combat just like PCs do.

Ignore STUN Damage

The first, and perhaps most drastic, option is to ignore the STUN damage caused by Normal Damage and Killing Damage attacks altogether. STUN would still matter for Drain STUNs, knock-out poisons, the *Club Weapon* Maneuver, and the like, but not for purposes of typical combat attacks. Once a minor enemy hits 0 BODY, he falls over dead.

In addition to eliminating the “coup de grace dilemma,” this optional rule has a useful side effect: it speeds up combat. It removes the need to count STUN damage or roll a STUN Multiplier. However, it may also make fists and Normal Damage weapons (such as clubs) less effective; if you find this to be the case, consider converting them to Killing Damage attacks with the same number of DCs of damage.

Stunned = Dead

With this option, any time a minor NPC becomes Stunned by a Normal Damage or Killing Damage attack, he's not Stunned — he's dead. This may make PCs *too* powerful, as they dispatch minor NPCs like flies (though that would certainly make many combats go quicker). If you find that's the case, consider changing the rule so that only Knocked Out enemies automatically die.

One-Hit Wonders

Gamemasters using this option don't worry about the exact STUN and BODY a minor enemy has — they simply decide how many hits it takes to kill him. The weakest are one-hit wonders: a single successful Attack Roll against them kills them. Stronger foes require more, or better, hits. For example, a two-hit foe takes two successful Attack Rolls to kill, or only a single Attack Roll that's made by 2 or more; a three-hit foe needs three hits, or one hit made by 3 or more; and so on. To disguise what he's doing, the GM should still have the players roll damage dice; if a character gets an especially good roll, the GM may treat that as the equivalent of having made the Attack Roll by 1 or 2 points more.

Major Wounds

Sometimes it's not quantity that counts, but quality. With this optional rule, any time a character inflicts a single wound on a foe that does half or more of the foe's normal full positive BODY (after the foe applies defenses), that foe dies. For example, if Sarge fights a Mafia gunman (BODY 10) and inflicts a single wound that does 5 BODY or more (after the Mafiosi applies his armor to reduce the damage), the Mafiosi dies. Note that it doesn't matter if the gunman had already taken 7 BODY damage so that he only had 3 BODY left; it's his regular BODY (10) that counts for this rule.

Altered Bleeding Rules

A character injured so that his BODY falls below 0 bleeds to death at the rate of 1 BODY at the end of each Turn. A foe with positive BODY never bleeds (unless you use the optional Bleeding rules). Altering the bleeding to death rules may eliminate the *coup de grace* problem in your game. Some possibilities include:

- Minor characters at 0 BODY or below bleed at the rate of 1 BODY per *Segment*.
- Minor characters at 0 BODY or below bleed at the rate of 1 BODY per Turn *per wound*.
- Minor characters who are Knocked Out bleed at a rapid rate (1 BODY per Phase or per Segment, for example), even if they still have positive BODY
- No bleeding to death — any minor character who reaches 0 BODY dies.

Increased BODY Damage

Lastly, you can solve this problem by increasing the BODY damage of weapons relative to the STUN damage. That improves the chances a minor NPC dies in battle. For example, maybe you could halve all STUN damage rolls without changing the BODY rolled. Or you could give all weapons another die or two of damage only for BODY, rolled after the character determines the STUN and BODY from his "main" damage dice.

STUN DAMAGE AND DEFENSES

One of the reasons the "Stunned, but not dead" problem arises in *Dark Champions* games is the comparative level of attacks versus defenses. Most *Dark Champions* characters have relatively low defenses — Normal Characteristic Maxima caps their natural PD and ED at 8 (assuming they buy that much), and the heaviest body armor (which characters often don't have access to) only adds about 13 DEF. Most *Dark Champions* characters also have fairly low STUN scores.

On the other hand, just about everyone *does* have access to fairly powerful weapons. Between weapons, STR, Combat Skill Levels, Martial Maneuvers, Haymakers, and other options, many characters can get up to the point where they dish out seven or more Damage Classes' worth of damage without too much trouble. The result is large STUN totals applied to comparatively paltry defenses — which leads to lots of characters getting Stunned and Knocked Out.

If this causes problems in your game, but you don't want to increase defenses overall (*Dark Champions* characters aren't supposed to be walking tanks, after all), consider applying a "reversed" form of Reduced Penetration to weapons damage (or at least to Normal Damage weapons, which do more STUN damage on the average). When a character is hit, roll the STUN and BODY damage of the attack normally. The character applies his defenses against the full BODY damage of the attack, but splits the STUN in half and applies his defenses separately to each portion. After he determines how much STUN he takes from each attack, he adds the taken damage together and compares it to his CON to determine if he's Stunned. This keeps BODY damage about the same, but reduces the frequency with which characters become Stunned or Knocked Out. (Naturally, you probably don't want to apply this rule to minor NPCs, though important NPCs should use it.)

HEALING AND RECOVERING DAMAGE

Combat inevitably leads to characters getting injured, or even killed. That raises the issue of what they can do to heal the wounds they sustain.

The Role And Place Of Healing

Before deciding what optional rules (if any) to adopt for healing (see below), GMs need to decide what role healing plays in the campaign.

In most *Dark Champions* campaigns, healing is rare. It's restricted to "realistic" methods such as drugs, surgery, and hospital care. There are no magic spells, wonder technology, or healing potions to patch a character up in just a few seconds or minutes. If a character suffers BODY damage, particularly in significant amounts, it's likely to be with him for quite a while.

The GM may need to compensate for the lack of quick-and-easy healing methods in the way he designs and runs scenarios. It's common, in most *Dark Champions* adventures, for the PCs to go through a series of encounters, each more difficult or deadly than the last, until they reach the climax of the story (which often features a major battle of some sort). If the PCs get "nicked" a little here and there along the way, by the time they reach the big finale they'll be so close to dead that they may have trouble triumphing. The situation gets worse if a few unlucky dice rolls leave the heroes badly injured before the climactic encounter. If the GM wants to avoid this (which he may not, in some highly "realistic" campaigns), he has several possible options.

First, he can arrange the scenario and its encounters to de-emphasize or eliminate most combats and other potentially injurious encounters in the early stages of a scenario. Instead of battles, he puts the PCs in situations where they have to conduct investigations, engage in diplomacy, foil or avoid security systems, and so on. However, this method may prove difficult to use frequently, or make things seem "too easy" for the adventurers.

Second, he can interpret his dice rolls "creatively." As long as he keeps them secret (as most GMs do), he can convert hits into misses, high damage rolls into low damage rolls, and so forth — all in the interest of making the story flow in a more appropriately dramatic fashion. If handled properly, this method works very well, though some GMs find it a little distasteful.

Third, he can find substitutes for injuring the PCs. For example, if the dice indicate a character's about to suffer a bad wound, the GM might choose to damage one of the character's weapons or some of his equipment instead. He might even give the player the choice: "OK, you can either take a 5 BODY hit, or your assault rifle can be so badly damaged it won't work until repaired — your decision."

Fourth, he can use some of the optional rules described below to let mundane healing methods have more effect than they "realistically" ought to. In *Dark Champions* stories and movies, often all a

character needs to get back into fighting trim is a little "patching up," so it's perfectly appropriate to use the *Paramedics* Skill and other rules to keep the heroes in relatively good repair. (Alternately, the characters can buy abilities like the *Rapid Healing* Talent on page 91).

Optional Healing Rules

Here are some optional rules to help GMs deal with healing issues in their *Dark Champions* games. To make use of these methods, players should keep track of their characters' individual wounds. Rather than simply knowing his character's lost 6 BODY, a player needs to know his character has suffered three wounds of 1 BODY, 3 BODY, and 2 BODY.

These rules tend to make body armor even more valuable to characters, since it increases the likelihood a wound only does low BODY damage. The GM should consider them carefully before deciding to implement them, and be prepared to withdraw them from the campaign if they prove too effective.

ENHANCED HEALING

At the GM's option, the *Paramedics* Skill can fix minor wounds completely and make major wounds a little less painful. For each wound a character takes, another character with *Paramedics* can make a roll to restore 1 BODY of damage. To do this, the character must make a roll at a penalty of -1 per 2 BODY of the wound; this takes at least 1 Minute per BODY of the wound (and of course requires appropriate doctoring supplies, such as bandages, painkillers, and surgical needle and thread). If he succeeds, he heals 1 BODY of the damage. If he fails, he restores no BODY; if he fails by 4 or more, he inflicts another 1 BODY of damage.

A character may only have one character apply *Paramedics* to each wound in this fashion. Once a wound is treated, further treatment (even by another character with *Paramedics*) cannot benefit it any. However, if a character fails his *Paramedics* roll for a particular wound; another character can try his own *Paramedics* roll. Generally, a character cannot perform this type of *Paramedics* on himself, but the GM may allow it for some types of wounds. If so, the character takes double the penalty described above for his roll.

MINOR WOUNDS

If the GM chooses to use this optional rule, characters automatically "heal" minor wounds after they finish a battle. This represents the fact that the wounds weren't as bad as they first seemed — even a little bandaging repairs them just fine, the character has the willpower to ignore the pain and keep functioning, and so forth. The rule doesn't help a character at all during combat, but it helps keep him going through a series of encounters.

A "minor wound" is any wound of 1 BODY. If the injured character, or any other character, makes a *Paramedics* roll to treat the wound (no penalty to the roll, no significant supplies required, and takes 1 Turn), then the lost point of BODY is restored to



the character in just a few minutes (the GM decides exactly when). Even if the character has no way to use Paramedics on his minor wounds, he automatically heals up to his REC worth of minor wounds per day. The GM may apportion the healing over the course of the day if desired, restore all the lost BODY to the character when he rests for the night, or the like.

If combined with the enhanced Paramedics rule, the minor wounds rule means any wound of 2 BODY can be treated down to 1 BODY, then healed as a minor wound. (This requires a second Paramedics roll, of course.) Thus, only wounds of 3 BODY or greater have any long-term effect on characters.

Recovery

Closely related to healing in general is REC and the character's ability to Recover lost STUN, END, and BODY. Gamemasters who want to run more "realistic" games may find that REC allows characters to keep functioning a little too long — particularly when it comes to Recovering END. To shorten battles a little, GMs may want to restrict characters' ability to Recover. Some possibilities include eliminating the Post-Segment 12 Recovery, and forbidding characters to take Recoveries in the middle of combat.

GUNFIGHTING



CAVEAT

The rules for increasing the effectiveness of gunfire increase the excitement of the game, but they can also make the battlefield a much more dangerous place for the PCs. The GM should keep this in mind when deciding whether to adopt them, and if so which ones to adopt. He may even want to arrange the campaign so that only the PCs and their major enemies can use the variant rules; standard enemies and thugs are stuck with the less favorable rules.

In most *Dark Champions* campaigns, the most common type of combat is the gunfight — a battle between two (or more) characters (or sides) using pistols, shotguns, assault rifles, and other types of firearms. Here are some special rules, options, and variants to help you more enjoyably simulate gunfire in *HERO System* terms.

Altering The Range Modifier

For most *Dark Champions* games, the standard Range Modifier works just fine. However, GMs looking for a particular “feel” for their games may want to consider changing it.

If you want a more “cinematic” atmosphere in your game, increase the Range Modifier to -2 per 5”, 6”, or more. The larger you make the number, the greater the chance characters can hit distant targets — in effect, you’re giving every character a certain number of Range Skill Levels “for free.” Extend the Range Modifier far enough, and your cinematic spies, soldiers, and vigilantes will be able to reliably shoot their enemies at 100 yards with handguns.

On the other hand, if you prefer a more “realistic” or “gritty” feel to your game, decrease the Range Modifier to 3” (any more than that is probably too restrictive, even for “high realism” games). That makes it much tougher to hit distant targets.

If you’d rather not change the measurement, you can achieve a similar result by altering the penalty itself. For a cinematic feel, switch to -1 OCV per 4”; for a more realistic game, try -3 OCV per 4”. Or you could even combine the two, thus creating a Range Modifier of -1 per 3”, -3 per 5”, or the like.

Point Blank Shooting

At the GM’s option, gunshots at very close ranges have an easier chance to hit their targets. If the target is within 2” (13 feet) of the shooter, the shooter receives a +1 OCV bonus.

Blowthrough ▲

“Blowthrough” is a gun user’s term for the ability of a bullet to penetrate some barriers or targets and keep traveling with relatively little loss of energy.

Blowthrough Versus Barriers

In some action films and novels, characters can shoot through a door, wall, table, or even roof to hurt a target on the other side. You can do this easily enough with the standard *HERO System* rules for damaging objects, but it’s not as effective as in the movies, since the DEF and BODY of the intervening surface reduce the damage done by the attack.

To make this trick work, use this optional rule:

if half of the damage caused by the firearm attack equals or exceeds the DEF+BODY of the barrier, the barrier does not reduce the damage the attack causes at all. If the attack has an Advantage that affects how it does damage to inanimate objects, such as *Armor Piercing*, it applies to determine if blowthrough occurs. If the attack doesn’t do enough damage to cause blowthrough, the barrier reduces the attack’s damage as usual.

Of course, whether blowthrough occurs or not, firing through a barrier often presents one drawback: since the character can’t perceive his target with a Targeting Sense, he’s at 0 OCV for attacking at Range (unless he can make a PER Roll with a Nontargeting Sense to reduce the penalty to half OCV). On the other hand, the target may not be expecting an attack, so the shooter could gain a Surprise bonus.

Example: *Firefight* knows his opponent is on the other side of a door. He cannot see his foe, but he makes a PER Roll with Hearing, and so attacks at half OCV; his foe is trying to be still and stealthy and does not see the attack coming, so he is at 0 DCV. *Firefight*’s Attack Roll succeeds. His handgun does RKA 2d6 damage. The GM rules the door has 2 DEF, 2 BODY. *Firefight* rolls RKA 1d6 and gets 4 BODY — just enough for blowthrough! *Firefight*’s target takes the full 4 BODY damage (though he still gets to apply his personal defenses, of course).

If appropriate, the GM can also use the blowthrough rules even when characters aren’t deliberately trying to shoot through a barrier. For example, if the PCs are trying to clear a building of terrorists, the knowledge that a stray shot might penetrate a wall and hit a friend or hostage on the other side may restrain their tendencies to shoot wildly.

Blowthrough Versus Characters

It’s also possible to do blowthrough damage against living targets — sometimes a bullet penetrates the body, passes through, and exits out the other side with enough energy left to injure someone else. To determine this, compare the BODY damage rolled for the attack to the BODY + Resistant PD of the target. If the BODY damage is less than or equal to this number, then no blowthrough occurs. If it’s greater, the GM rolls 1d6; on a 1-3, blowthrough occurs. When this happens, the bullet can still do ((BODY rolled) - (first target’s BODY + rPD)) BODY damage to another target. If there’s one in the shooter’s line of fire (*i.e.*, directly behind the first target along the path the bullet’s traveling), the shooter makes another Attack Roll using just his base OCV (*i.e.*, without any modifiers from

Combat Maneuvers, the weapon used, or the like) against the second target's DCV. If that roll succeeds, the second target gets hit by the bullet and takes damage as described above.

Close Quarters Combat

It's not uncommon for some types of *Dark Champions* characters, such as gun-wielding vigilantes and cops, to find themselves in gunfights in cramped building interiors and the like — what's sometimes referred to as *close quarters combat*. In some cases, these gunfights take place at ranges not much further than hand-to-hand!

In a close quarters situation, characters using longer, larger, bulkier firearms may find themselves at a disadvantage. It's harder to move a weapon around and bring it to bear on the target when walls, furniture, fellow combatants, and other obstacles may get in the way. If the GM wants to simulate this (whether for the sake of "realism" or some other reason), he can use the following optional rules:

In close quarters combat, the longer a weapon is, the "slower" it is — the longer it takes the character to avoid any obstacles and aim at the target properly. Short weapons (*e.g.*, handguns) don't really have this problem, but using any firearm longer than a pistol imposes a penalty to the character's DEX solely for purposes of determining who acts first in a Segment. In other words, a character using a large gun in close quarters combat gets his Phase a little later in a Segment because he's got to move his gun around. The accompanying table lists the suggested DEX penalties for different types of firearms.

The GM can ignore or reduce the DEX penalty based on the circumstances. For example, if the character brings his gun to bear on a target, in later Segments he can keep firing at that same target without any penalty to initiative (provided the target doesn't move around).

CLOSE QUARTERS COMBAT TABLE

Type Of Firearm	DEX Penalty*
Handgun	-0
Submachine gun	-1
Shotgun, short/sawed-off	-1
Shotgun, regular	-2
Assault rifle	-2
Rifle, regular	-2
Rifle, long/sniper	-3

*: This penalty applies only for purposes of determining when a character's Phase occurs. It does not affect his CV, his DEX Rolls, his Agility Skill rolls, or the like.

Grace Under Fire

In most action-adventure movies, comics, and novels, an action hero's ability to think and act clearly and efficiently in extremely dangerous situations (*e.g.*, a gunfight) is more or less taken for granted — after all, that's one of the things that makes a hero a hero. Thus, the gamers in most *Dark Champions* campaigns don't concern themselves with whether characters can get up the nerve to leap onto a moving car or stick their heads and arms out from behind cover to fire back at a numerically superior enemy.

But in more "realistic" games, GMs may want to introduce an element of uncertainty. Can a character *really* bring himself to jump onto that car? Does a character *really* dare to expose himself to

GRACE UNDER FIRE TABLE

PRE Roll	Result
Made it by 4+	Character may perform his declared Action, and gains a bonus of +2 to all rolls involved (including Attack Rolls)
Made it by 2-3	Character may perform his declared Action, and gains a bonus of +1 to all rolls involved (including Attack Rolls)
Made it 0-1	Character may perform his declared Action
Failed by 1	Character may perform his declared Action, but he suffers a penalty of -1 to all rolls involved (including Attack Rolls)
Failed by 2-3	Character hesitates and loses a Half Phase. If it's still possible for him to perform his declared Action, he may do so, but he suffers a penalty of -2 (or more) to all rolls involved (including Attack Rolls). If he prefers, he may change to some other Action that he can perform in a Half Phase, provided that other Action is defensive or otherwise diminishes the danger or anxiety that caused him to hesitate.
Failed by 4+	The character is paralyzed with fear, hesitation, doubt, or the like. He loses a full Phase, may take no Actions, and is at half DCV. Alternately, he may panic, taking action that's detrimental to himself or his side in the fight (<i>e.g.</i> , accidentally shoot an ally, block the path of escape, knock something over and start a fire)
PRE Roll Modifier	Circumstance
+1 or more	Outcome of Action is crucial (will help save the city, or the like)
+1 or more	Action will help to save/protect character's loved ones from danger
+1 to +3	Action agrees with one of character's Psychological Limitations (+1 for Moderate, +2 for Strong, +3 for Total)
-1 to -3	Action contradicts one of character's Psychological Limitations (-1 for Moderate, -2 for Strong, -3 for Total)
-1 or more	Danger to character is extreme

enemy gunfire? Rather than leaving this matter up to roleplaying, you can use the optional *Grace Under Fire* rules to determine what characters can and cannot make themselves do in a dangerous situation.

In a campaign using the *Grace Under Fire* rules, whenever a character's going to do something the GM considers "very dangerous," the character must make a PRE Roll to perform the action. What constitutes a "very dangerous" action varies from campaign to campaign, based upon just how "realistic" the GM wants the game to be. But in most circumstances, anything that poses a risk of death or serious bodily harm should qualify.

If the character's PRE Roll succeeds, he can perform his declared Action, and he may even get a bonus if he rolled really well. If the roll failed, the character cannot act, and may suffer other problems. See the accompanying *Grace Under Fire* Table for specifics, including some suggested modifiers to the PRE Roll (GMs can add more modifiers if they wish, or allow an EGO Roll as a Complementary Skill Roll).

Recoil

Thanks to the physical law of action and reaction, guns, particularly ones fired on full automatic, have a tendency to recoil violently and to "ride up" — *i.e.*, jerk upward when fired, thus throwing off the shooter's aim for shots after the first. The *HERO System* rules don't specifically account for recoil when guns are fired. In "realistic" *Dark Champions* games, the GM may want to do so by adopting the following rules:

- For Autofire and Multifire (see below) against a single target, the attack suffers a recoil penalty of -1 OCV per shot fired after the first. For example, a five-shot Autofire burst would suffer a -4 OCV penalty; three Multifired shots would suffer a -2 OCV penalty. (If the GM feels this penalty is too harsh, he can reduce it to -1 OCV per two shots after the first, or use any other calculation that seems appropriate to him.)
- For Autofire against multiple targets, the standard -1 OCV per hex fired into accounts in part for recoil; no further penalty is imposed.
- For Rapid Fire against single or multiple targets, the standard -2 OCV penalty per shot after the first accounts in part for recoil; no further penalty is imposed.

Characters can attach *recoil compensators* to some guns to reduce the penalties imposed by

recoil. These devices affect the recoil for Autofire, Multifire, or Rapid Fire against a single target, but have no effect on the OCV penalty for using Autofire or Rapid Fire against multiple targets. See page 233 for more information.

Alternate Recoil Rules

For GMs who prefer not to impose straightforward OCV penalties for recoil, a possible alternative is to have the firing of multiple shots temporarily affect a firearm's STR Minimum. In effect, the gun becomes harder to "control" because the character can't take the time between shots to bring the gun properly back on target as he could if he were firing single shots. Using this rule, for each shot after the first, increase the gun's STR Minimum by 2. From that the GM can then determine if the character suffers an OCV penalty using the rules on page 478 of the *HERO System 5th Edition, Revised* rulebook. Of course, this method only works if the character has to make a separate Attack Roll for each shot.

This rule applies to all three types of multiple firing, and regardless of the number of targets.

Reloading

The *HERO System* rules assume a character can reload a weapon with clips of Charges (whether the character pays for those Clips by modifying the *Charges* Limitation, or they're just standard magazines available to him as equipment in a Heroic campaign) as a Full Phase Action (or a Half Phase Action if he makes a Fast Draw roll). To keep things simple and speed game play, the rules don't differentiate between the type of ammunition or firearm involved. In a game emphasizing "realism," that may not be satisfactory. The accompanying box text lists the time required to reload different types of firearms.

Rapid Reloading Devices

Firearms manufacturers and users have created many different devices and techniques to make reloading faster. None of these cost any Character Points.

A *speedloader* is a device that allows a character to reload all the cylinders in a revolver at once (rather than one at a time, as usual). In game terms, this means reloading the revolver takes only a Full Phase (or a Half Phase with a successful Fast Draw roll).

Character using assault rifles, submachine guns, and other weapons with long clips can

obtain devices that hold two clips together, end-to-end or side-by-side. These provide a +2 bonus to the Fast Draw roll to change clips more quickly. A low-tech way to simulate such devices is simply to tape two clips together end-to-end.

RELOADING TABLE

Type Of Firearm	Reloading Time	Reloading Time With Fast Draw
Automatic (belt-fed)	Full Phase	Half Phase
Automatic (magazine-fed)	Full Phase	Half Phase
Revolver (any type)	Extra Phase	Full Phase
Semi-Automatic (any type)	Full Phase	Half Phase
Shotgun (break-fed)	Extra Phase	Full Phase
Shotgun (pump-action)	Extra Phase	Full Phase
Shotgun (semi-automatic)	Full Phase	Half Phase

As indicated in the table, a character can halve the reloading time for any firearm by succeeding with a Fast Draw (Small Arms) roll.



Slow Firearms

The *HERO System* rules assume that firing a gun — any type of gun — is an Attack Action, and takes the typical amount of time required for an Attack Action. However, not all firearms are fired in the same way. If the GM wants to stress “realism” more than dramatic action, some guns should take slightly longer to fire. For example:

- cocking a single-action handgun requires a Half Phase Action. Once it’s cocked, firing it requires an Attack Action.
- pumping a pump-action shotgun to chamber a shell requires a Half Phase Action. Once the shell is chambered, firing the shotgun requires an Attack Action.
- preparing to fire a bolt-action rifle (*i.e.*, chambering a round) requires a Half Phase Action. Once a round is chambered, firing the rifle requires an Attack Action.

At the GM’s option, a character can reduce any of these Half Phase Actions to a Zero-Phase Action if he succeeds with a Fast Draw roll.

Storm Of Lead

One of the things that makes many action-adventure movies so exciting is the fast-paced combat... which usually features an enormous amount of gunfire. By the end of some cinematic gunfights, the ground is littered with spent bullet casings, the air is heavy with cordite-laced smoke, and nothing in the vicinity has been spared the brunt of flying lead — except, of course, for the intrepid hero.

If that’s the sort of action you’re looking for in your *Dark Champions* combats, here are some optional and expanded rules that can help you achieve it.

Reworked Rapid Fire

For the most part, the *Rapid Fire* Combat Maneuver is the best way to get lots of lead flying in your campaign. It lets characters fire a lot of shots, but maintains game balance by imposing some fairly heavy restrictions on the user. But if *Rapid Fire* isn’t sufficient for your needs as-is, here are some ways you can change it to ratchet the gunplay up a notch or three. They’re not exclusive; the GM can choose to allow several or all of them.

First, consider making *Rapid Fire* require only a Half Phase Action, like most other Attack Actions (*i.e.*, give everyone in the campaign the Skill *Rapid Attack* (Ranged) for free). That way characters can keep moving around the battlefield while they fire, which really adds to the cinematic feel of the gunfight.

Second, consider reducing the OCV modifier. -2 OCV per shot after the first can be a pretty steep penalty in some games, especially those where the GM establishes ceilings on CVs. A penalty of -1 per shot after the first, or -2 per shot after the first two, goes a long way toward persuading characters to let fly with lots of shots.

Third, consider reducing the DCV modifier. The halving of DCV is even more likely to make characters hesitate about using Rapid Fire than the OCV penalty. If you change it to a flat amount, such as -2 or -3 DCV, Rapid Fire becomes a much more attractive proposition.

Fourth, to speed game play, consider revising Rapid Fire against a single target so that it works something like Autofire: impose a flat OCV modifier (even -0, if you're so inclined), and then have the attacker make one Attack Roll. If he makes it exactly, he hits with one shot; for every two points beyond that by which his roll succeeds, he hits with another shot. If the GM uses this variant, he should consider capping Rapid Fire at three or four shots, so that characters still have a reason to buy Autofire weaponry.

If you incorporate any of these changes into your campaign, make sure to adjust other game elements as needed. For example, if you change the OCV penalty, you may want to refigure the cost of the *Two-Weapon Fighting Skill*.

Reworked Autofire

Another possible method for increasing the excitement of the gunfights in your game is to revise Autofire to encourage higher rates of fire and the like. The standard Autofire rules, like those for Rapid Fire, are designed in part to provide a certain level of game balance. If you're willing to tilt the playing field less in favor of "game balance" and more in favor of "cinematic action," Autofire can really improve the flavor of your *Dark Champions* game.

The following suggested rules changes apply only for the use of Autofire against a single target. When a character tries to Autofire multiple targets, the standard rules apply. (Characters who want to be better at shooting multiple targets should consider buying one or more Autofire Skills [page 63].)

First, consider providing an OCV bonus for high rates of Autofire: the more shots a character fires at a single target, the better his chance to hit. For a standard "burst fire" of 2-3 rounds, there's no bonus. For a 4-9 shot burst, the character receives a +1 OCV bonus; for a 10-14 shot burst a +2 OCV bonus; for a burst of 15 or more shots, he receives a +3 OCV bonus (the maximum). The GM can adjust the shots-fired-to-OCV-bonus ratio as he sees fit to strike just the right balance for his campaign. Of course, an Autofire firearm has to be capable of firing, for example, 10 shots per use to gain the +2



OCV bonus; this option doesn't give a gun automatic fire capabilities it hasn't paid for. (Alternately, the GM can provide a damage bonus for Autofire, similar to the one for Multifire described below.)

Second, consider changing the way you calculate Autofire hits to favor characters, thus encouraging them to take more shots. For example, instead of applying one hit if the Attack Roll succeeds exactly, and +1 hit for every 2 points beyond that by which the roll succeeds, maybe you allow +1 hit for every 1 point by which the roll succeeds. Or maybe you allow two hits for a basic success instead of one.

Multifire

Besides making Rapid Fire more attractive, another way to promote high rates of fire with non-Autofire weapons (particularly handguns) is *Multifire*. The GM may want to consider this a new Combat Maneuver for *Dark Champions* games, or simply think of it as a combat option available to gun-wielding characters. Using Multifire requires a Full Phase, unless the character has the *Rapid Attack* (Ranged) Skill (in which case it requires a Half Phase Action) or the GM rules otherwise.

Multifire treats non-Autofire firearms as if they all had Boostable Charges: a character can fire multiple shots at a single target in a single round (up to five), and for each shot after the first, he increases the damage of the attack by +1 Damage Class if he hits. He only makes one Attack Roll, and he can only hit the target one time; the special effect of the extra damage is "he hit him multiple times, or scored one really good hit on a vital spot."

If the GM allows Multifire, he has to choose in what ways, if any, he wants to restrict or penalize its use to balance its utility. If he wants to model the "real world" closely, where two- and three-round bursts of pistol fire tend to be standard in many firefights, he may not want to impose any penalties, or at worst minor ones. If he's more interested in strict game balance, some penalties are definitely called for (though they can't be too onerous, or characters won't want to use Multifire much). Some possibilities include:

- always requiring a Full Phase Action to use Multifire
- imposing a small OCV penalty on Multifire (say, -1 or -2 OCV) to represent recoil and other factors (alternately, the GM may only apply a penalty at a certain level of Multifire, such as three or more shots)
- invoking the Burnout rule associated with Boostable Charges, so that too much Multifiring runs the risk of making a gun jam

Alternately, Multifire may not increase damage, but instead increase OCV. In that case, for every two shots a character fires (maximum of six) from a non-Autofire gun against a single target, the character gets a +1 OCV (maximum of +3). He only makes one Attack Roll, and he can only hit the target one time.

CINEMATIC GUNFIGHTING TRICKS

In a lot of action movies, characters can perform some pretty amazing stunts with guns. "Realistically," most of these actions are at the very least ridiculous, if not utterly counterproductive, but in some "cinematic" campaigns they may fit right in. Some of the Super-Skills on pages 106-49 represent cinematic gunfighting abilities; here are a few that characters don't necessarily have to pay Character Points for.

PISTOL TRICKS

If a character makes a DEX Roll to "flick" his pistol in the direction of his target, his shots do +1 point of damage. After all, he's making the bullet travel faster, isn't he?

Another "pistol trick" is to hold the gun sideways while threatening someone, so that the grip is parallel to the ground instead of perpendicular. This has no combat effect, but gives the character +3 PRE for purposes of making Presence Attacks that Segment.

(In "realistic" games, flicking the pistol imposes -2 OCV penalty and has no beneficial effect. Holding a handgun sideways gives it a Jamming roll of 16-, but the character still gets the PRE bonus.)

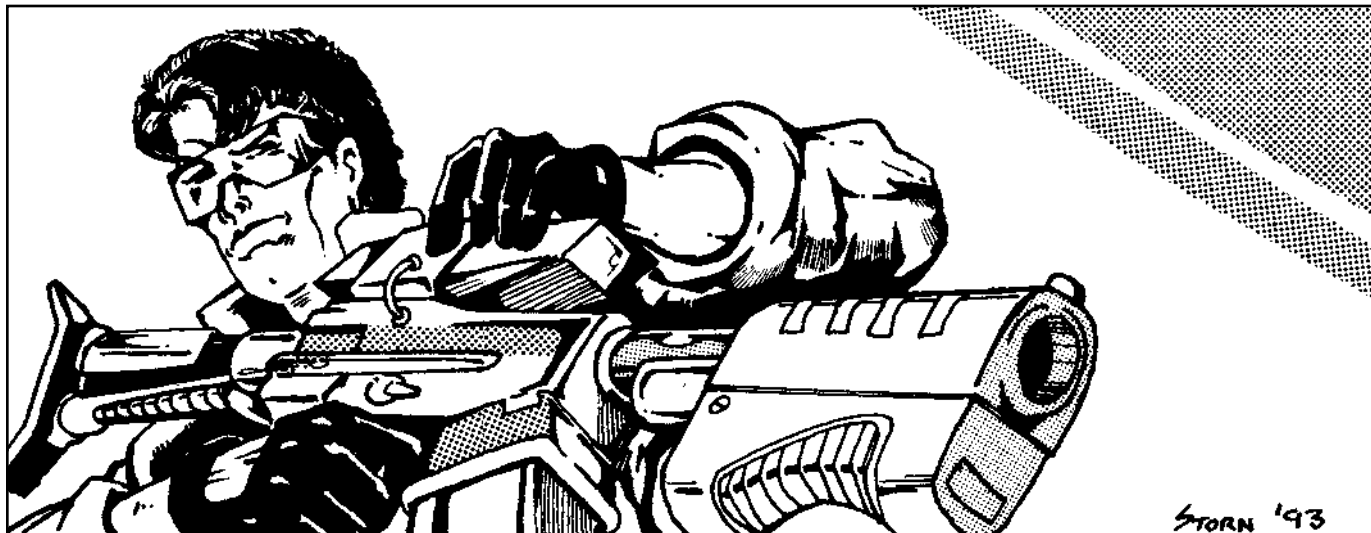
SHOOTING FROM A REFLECTION

Sometimes a character has to aim at a target based not upon direct line of sight but on a reflection in a mirror, pool of water, or similar object. All such shots suffer a -3 OCV penalty... but if a character makes one, he may get a small bonus to any relevant Presence Attacks he makes that Segment against anyone who witnesses his skillful shooting.

UNCONTROLLED MOVEMENT

In action movies, it's not uncommon for characters to fire guns (usually handguns) while in uncontrolled motion — during a fall, riding on a gurney, sliding down a bannister, or the like. At the GM's option, a character using uncontrolled movement during combat suffers a -1 OCV penalty, but a +1 DCV bonus. Furthermore, because he's not moving under his own power, uncontrolled movement allows him to keep moving without using a Half Phase Action.

A character can initiate uncontrolled movement in two ways. First, he can make a Half Move — for example, he could run for a Half Move and dive onto a gurney, which keeps rolling along without his having to use his remaining Half Phase Action to move. Even if the character doesn't actually move any inches in the process, he has to use a "Half Move" (*i.e.*, a Half Phase Action) to begin uncontrolled movement. Second, he might start uncontrolled movement against his will — for example, when an enemy throws him onto a gurney or out a window.



In either case, how fast and far a character travels with uncontrolled movement is up to the GM (and possibly on the falling rules). It usually depends on the nature of his uncontrolled movement and how swiftly the character was moving when it started.

UNLIMITED AMMO

In a lot of movies and comic books, *Dark Champions* characters seem to have an almost infinite supply of ammunition. Despite the fact that they're using, say, a six-shot revolver, or a submachine gun with a 32-shot clip, they can fire as often, and as fast, as they want without ever reloading.

In game terms, if the GM wants to simulate this, he can simply rule that although all guns are bought with Charges, they never run out of Charges (except, of course, when he wants them to at a dramatically appropriate moment!). Characters can shoot as much as they want, but they only have to reload when they have the time and opportunity to do so.

Alternately, the GM can allow this only if characters pay for it. That means they either have to recalculate the cost of a favorite gun to have the *Reduced Endurance* (0 END) Advantage and no Charges, or they need some sort of ability that lets them apply *Reduced Endurance* to any firearm as a naked Advantage.

OTHER TRICKS AND STUNTS

Characters often want to try crazy stunts in combat to gain some sort of advantage. Since this adds color, drama, and excitement to a cinematic game, the GM should normally allow it — but he may also want to impose an OCV penalty so the PCs don't get the advantage of the maneuver without working for it. The easiest way to do this is to analogize the stunt to an existing Combat Maneuver or Modifier and base the penalty on that.

Example: *Randall is fighting some mafiosi in a swank restaurant with lots of chandeliers. He wants to shoot the support beam so the chandeliers will fall and injure three of his enemies (who each happen to be standing beneath a chandelier). Since this stunt is a way for Randall to hit multiple opponents in one Phase, just like Rapid Fire, the GM imposes a -2 OCV penalty per target after the first (total of -4), similar to the penalty for Rapid Fire. This reflects not the difficulty of hitting the support beam so much as it does the difficulty of timing the shot so the chandeliers hit their intended targets.*

chapter five:



THE ARSENAL

WEAPONS

FIREARMS



FIREARMS AND “REALISM”

Few subjects in gaming cause as much debate and discussion as how to “correctly” or “realistically” simulate firearms and other weapons in the game. Gamers with an interest in the subject argue endlessly about bullet caliber, muzzle velocity, the relationship of barrel length to accuracy, which rounds have the greatest “stopping power,” and a thousand other topics — and how they all relate to, or “should” work within, a given game system.

As if this mixture of highly technical and potentially complex topics weren't enough, gun experts (be they gamers or not) often don't agree on particular facts regarding the use and effects of firearms. People who carry guns every day in their jobs, and whose lives often depend on them, argue vociferously and endlessly about these exact same subjects... and often reach very different conclusions. In the process they keep an entire publishing industry of gun magazines and books alive and active.

All of this discussion and debate can be both fascinating and informative, but it's not appropriate for this genre book, for several reasons. First, this is a gaming supplement, not a technical manual on firearms. There's a limit to how much information a roleplaying game

Creating any type of gun using the *HERO System* rules is a fairly simple matter. After you establish the basics using the *Ranged Killing Attack Power* and certain Limitations, you can add other Power Modifiers and capabilities with specialized ammunition, gun attachments, and gun modifications.

This book doesn't discuss most aspects of gun and bullet design — types of actions, rimfire versus centerfire cartridges, blowback versus recoil operation, and so forth — because that information has no bearing on game play or on gun design using the *HERO System* rules. Readers who are interested in learning more about real-world gunsmithing and firearms technology should consult reference materials, including some of the books listed in the Bibliography.

FIREARMS BASICS

In the *HERO System*, most firearms are built with the following Limitations:

- **FOCUS:** Firearms are OAFs. They're Universal Foci (anyone can use them) unless they have personalization features (page 240).
- **STR Minimum:** Guns have STR Minima. The Limitation must include the *STR Minimum Cannot Add/Subtract Damage* (additional $-\frac{1}{2}$) modifier — the STR Minimum indicates the STR needed to hold, properly aim, and fire the weapon.
- **Beam:** Bullets can't be Spread, and only make relatively small “punctures” in barriers such as walls and doors.
- **Real Weapon:** See below for more information.
- **Charges:** Guns fire bullets, which you represent with Charges. Characters don't necessarily have to wait a day to get back the Charges for (*i.e.*, reload) a firearm — they can reload if they have access to more ammunition (such as by going to their headquarters or the local gun store and picking up another box of bullets).

ADDITIONAL MODIFIERS

Long arms such as rifles and shotguns have the *Two-Handed Weapon* ($-\frac{1}{2}$) Limitation. If the campaign uses the Knockback rules, guns should also have the *No Knockback* ($-\frac{1}{4}$) Limitation.

Weapons capable of automatic fire, such as submachine guns and assault rifles, have the *Auto-fire Advantage*. Usually they take it at the $+\frac{1}{2}$ level, meaning they can fire up to five shots with a single squeeze of the trigger.

See below under *Shotgun Ammunition* for more information about shotguns and how they're built in *HERO System* terms.

REAL WEAPON

As noted on page 480 of the *HERO System 5th Edition, Revised* rulebook, the *Real Weapon* Limitation signifies that a gun functions “realistically” — if it's not cleaned or maintained, it won't work properly. In game terms, this usually means the weapon becomes subject to the *Optional Firearms Malfunction* rules on page 331 of the rulebook. Some possible occurrences that may cause the GM to invoke the Malfunction rules include:

- the gun becomes wet (if it's not designed to resist this; see *Watertight*, page 240)
- the gun becomes dirty (*e.g.*, the character drops it in mud or sand)
- the character uses the gun for a day without cleaning it

If one of these circumstances occurs, the GM imposes a temporary Activation Roll on the gun. Typically the Activation Roll starts at 15-, but the GM can set it lower if he feels that's appropriate to represent the circumstances. Whenever the character fires the gun after that, the GM rolls the Activation Roll. If the roll ever fails, the gun experiences a Malfunction. For every day that passes without the character taking the time to thoroughly clean his gun (which requires proper equipment and at least 20 Minutes, if not longer), the GM lowers the Activation Roll by 1. The GM can also lower the roll for any other appropriate reason (such as if the character drops his gun in the mud multiple times, or gets it dirty after having not cleaned it for a while).

At the GM's option, a character can increase the value of the *Real Weapon* Limitation if a gun has a lower starting Activation Roll. For each step up the Activation Roll Table (14-, 12-, 11-, and so on), increase the value of *Real Weapon* by an additional $\frac{1}{4}$ Limitation. Of course, the GM should only allow this if there's a significant chance that it actually restricts the use of the gun. Gun-toting urban vigilantes typically have lots of opportunities to clean their guns, so the GM might not allow them to take this expanded Limitation. On the other hand, soldiers who spend weeks in the field might have trouble keeping their firearms clean, and therefore get to take it.

MODIFIERS TO OCV AND THE RANGE MODIFIER

Some firearms have bonuses to the user's OCV, either overall or just to counteract the Range Modi-

fier. This represents guns that are inherently more accurate or easy to aim than average, which are designed for long-distance shooting, or the like. On the other hand, some guns suffer an OCV penalty or an increased Range Modifier; these firearms are not as well made, have features that make them difficult to use, and so forth.

An OCV bonus for a firearm is bought as a 5-point Combat Skill Level with the *Focus, Required Hands*, and *Real Weapon* Limitations.

A Range Modifier (RMod) bonus for a firearm is bought as a 3-point Penalty Skill Level versus the Range Modifier with the *Focus, Required Hands*, and *Real Weapon* Limitations. An RMod bonus never raises a character's base OCV, it can only negate Range Modifier penalties.

An OCV and/or RMod penalty for a firearm is bought as a minor Side Effect (automatically occurs; -½) for the weapon. (This same value applies until the total penalties on a weapon reach the 30 Active Point level [calculate the cost using negative Combat Skill Levels and Penalty Skill Levels] — something that's highly unlikely to ever occur.)

In most cases, OCV and RMod modifiers for a gun shouldn't exceed +/-2 in either category (and in fact most guns don't have more than +/-1). The GM has the final say on what combat modifiers are appropriate for a gun.

AMMUNITION

The most important factor for determining how much damage a firearm can do, and how to represent its effects in *HERO System* terms, is the type of ammunition it fires.

Standard Firearms Ammunition

Standard firearms fire bullets — lead projectiles contained in a casing (usually made of brass or steel) that also holds an explosive propellant. When a shooter pulls the trigger, the trigger draws back the hammer of the gun and then pulls it forward. When the hammer causes the firing pin to strike the primer in the back of the bullet case, it ignites the propellant, which propels the lead projectile down the barrel and toward the target at tremendous velocity. In an automatic or semi-automatic firearm, the force of the shot is then channeled to eject the empty bullet casing and insert a new round into the chamber; in a revolver, the empty casing remains in the cylinder until the cylinder's emptied by hand.

In game terms, the amount of damage done by a bullet depends first and foremost on the bullet's size (defined primarily by *caliber*, or roughly speaking the bullet's "width," and the bullet's length). The Ammunition Damage Table (page 203) lists the damage for various calibers of bullets (some expressed in traditional English measurements, some in metric, and some in both).

AMMUNITION TYPES

Here are descriptions of the many types of ammunition available to *Dark Champions* characters. For information on the cost of these rounds, by caliber (and accounting for Charges and other factors), refer to the Firearms Cost/Upgrade Tables, pages 214-31.

Standard

Standard ammunition, also known as "ball" ammunition, is the default type of ammunition used in guns in *HERO System* terms. It's the common plain lead projectile described above, and does the amount of damage indicated in the Ammunition Damage Table.

In game terms, Standard rounds do straightforward RKA damage — the larger the caliber, the more damage. Large calibers also have +1 Increased STUN Multiplier (this applies to all other rounds, unless their descriptions indicate otherwise).

AET

AET (accelerated energy transfer) bullets are high-tech rounds designed to dump as much of their energy into their target as quickly as possible. Standard AET rounds expand very quickly, similar to Hollow Points, but this in turn makes it difficult for them to penetrate armor or barriers. An example of an AET round is the Equalloy, a British bullet made of an aluminum alloy with a nylon coating. The Equalloy, which is about twice as long as a standard round and is intended primarily for use in revolvers, achieves high velocities but still expands very quickly when it hits a target and remains in the target's body.

In game terms, AET rounds do a little extra damage (from +1 point to +1 DC, depending on caliber) and have the Limitations *Reduced Penetration* (-¼) and *Cannot Be Bounced* (-¼).

AET Composite

AET Composite rounds were designed to overcome the penetration problems of the basic AET round. Typically they have a steel pin or other substance pressed into the center of the hollow in the bullet to allow for better penetration without affecting the wounding capabilities of the round. An example of an AET Composite round is the Geco BAT, a hollow copper alloy bullet with a plastic core and cap. The plastic parts fall away from the bullet after it is fired, leaving a "hollow" bullet to chew large wound channels through flesh without losing penetration capability. (The Geco is also designed to tumble, and may be bought as a Tumbler round (*q.v.*) instead if the character prefers.)

In game terms, AET Composite rounds do a little extra damage (from +1 point to +1 DC, depending on caliber) and have the Limitation *Cannot Be Bounced* (-¼).

Armor Piercing

Armor Piercing ("AP") bullets are designed to penetrate armor more easily than conventional rounds. The downside to this is that they travel through targets easily, imparting less energy to them (thus possibly causing less damage); this also

Continued from last page

book can and should provide on subjects such as this. Second, and perhaps more importantly, the *HERO System* is about *dramatic realism*, not true "realism" (whatever that might be). The only thing that adhering to some elaborate set of ballistics data is likely to accomplish is diminishing gamers' enjoyment of the game. While *Dark Champions* games have to at least nod in the direction of "realism" to maintain verisimilitude, ultimately they focus on the dramatic realism of action movies, comic books, and spy novels, not the absolute realities (whatever they are) of modern-day combat.

The information in this chapter is based on extensive research, but where necessary decisions have been made in the interest of enjoyable game play, not "realism." The text sometimes includes information about more "realistic" or "cinematic" options and alternatives, but the goal of this chapter is not to offer a précis of ongoing debates about the performance of firearms and related technologies — it's to provide fun, easily-used source material for *Dark Champions* campaigns. Readers whose opinions about these topics differ from what's presented in this book are welcome to revise the information in this chapter to suit themselves.

FIREARMS OF THE FUTURE

Dark Champions focuses on the modern day — the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries. However, some campaigns and characters might involve the more advanced firearms of the near future. Some possible developments for future personal firearms include:

Liquid Propellants: Instead of using powder in a bullet casing, guns will mix two inert chemicals in the barrel behind the bullet. When mixed, the two chemicals become a powerful propellant. This system allows for larger bullets fired at a higher, and also steadier-increasing, pressure, resulting in greater damage to the target.

Electrothermal-Chemical Propellant: “ETC” propellant systems use electricity to enhance the energy from chemical propellants. The electricity creates a high-density plasma that ignites the propellant in a way that controls the release of the chemical energy so the bullet accelerates all the way down the barrel (not just in the firing chamber). That means the bullet flies faster and strikes harder (and thus inflicts greater wounds).

Rail Guns: Instead of chemical and/or electrical energy, a gun could use magnetic energy to propel a steel bullet. Assuming a sufficiently robust power source, this could result in personal arms with extremely high muzzle velocities (and thus damage potential), virtually no recoil or noise, and a high rate of fire. Also known as “gauss guns” or “electromagnetic propellant guns.”

means they’re more likely to pass through a target and cause collateral damage.

AP rounds are usually built with a hard core or tip and softer jacket. Modern AP bullets often have steel tips or cores, and are coated with Teflon so the hard metal can travel down the barrel with no loss of energy (or damage to the gun) and thus achieve high velocities.

In game terms, AP rounds do slightly less damage than Standard bullets (-1 point or -1 DC, depending on caliber) and have the *Armor Piercing Advantage*. See the variant AP, Improved AP, and Semi-AP rounds listed below for similar types of bullets.

Armor Piercing Depleted Uranium

Armor Piercing Depleted Uranium (APDU) are made with depleted (non-radioactive) uranium instead of other heavy metals. They resemble APHC (see below) in most ways, with one difference: when they penetrate metal armor (such as on tanks and some automobiles), they strike sparks, and thus can start a fire.

Both the United States and Russia have manufactured APDU rounds for small arms, but have not introduced them for general service. *Dark Champions* characters probably need high-level military Contacts, similar resources, or the ability and materials to manufacture their own if they want to use APDU ammo.

In game terms, APDU rounds do slightly less damage than Standard bullets (-1 point or -1 DC, depending on caliber), but have the *Armor Piercing Advantage* and 1 point of Piercing (Resistant Defenses). (If the GM does not use the *Piercing* rule [page 95], treat APHC ammunition as if it were ordinary AP ammo.) Additionally, they’re bought with the following additional ability:

RKA 1 point, Continuous (+1), Reduced Endurance (0 END to enable Uncontrolled effect; +½), Sticky (only affects flammables; +¼), Uncontrolled (effect ends when it runs out of fuel or oxygen, or someone extinguishes the flames; +½) (16 Active Points [the addition of other Advantages, such as Charges, may change this]); OAF (-1), Activation Roll 13- (-¾), Linked (-½), Only If APDU’s RKA Does BODY Through Metal Armor (-1), Real Weapon (-¼), other Limitations vary based on firearm. Total cost: varies.

Armor Piercing Explosive

Armor Piercing Explosive (APEX) bullets combine armor piercing features with a small explosive charge, creating a round that penetrates armor well and then causes tremendous damage to the target. Realistically, they’re available only in calibers of 10mm and larger (since smaller rounds can’t pack enough explosive to matter), but in many *Dark Champions* campaigns it’s possible to make any size round APEX.

In game terms, APEX rounds do slightly more damage than Standard bullets (from +1 point to +1 DC, depending on caliber) and have the *Armor Piercing Advantage* and the Limitation *Cannot Be Bounced* (-¼).

Armor Piercing Hardcore

Armor Piercing Hardcore (APHC) rounds are basically the same as AP rounds, but use tungsten (or other heavy metals) as their cores. In game terms, they do slightly less damage than Standard bullets (-1 point or -1 DC, depending on caliber), but have the *Armor Piercing Advantage* and 1 point of Piercing (Resistant). (If the GM does not use the *Piercing* rule [page 95], treat APHC ammunition as if it were ordinary AP ammo.)

Armor Piercing Hardcore Explosive

Armor Piercing Hardcore Explosive (APHEX) bullets combine the features of APEX and APHC rounds. Realistically, they’re available only in calibers of 10mm and larger (since smaller rounds can’t pack enough explosive to matter), but in many *Dark Champions* campaigns it’s possible to make any size round APHEX.

In game terms, APHEX rounds do slightly more damage than Standard bullets (from +1 point to +1 DC, depending on caliber), have 1 point of Piercing (Resistant), and have the *Armor Piercing Advantage*.

Armor Piercing Incendiary

Armor Piercing Incendiary (API) bullets are AP rounds with an incendiary charge. In game terms, they combine the features of AP rounds (slightly less damage and the *Armor Piercing Advantage*) with those of Incendiary rounds (firestarting).

Armor Piercing Saboted

As mentioned under AP rounds, the harder metal with which AP bullets are made can cause damage to gun barrels (which would also slow the bullet down and decrease its damage). Teflon coating overcomes this problem; and so does putting the AP round in a sabot — a plastic container that falls apart as it exits the gun barrel. This means the round is a little smaller than other AP rounds of the same caliber (since the projectile has to be small enough to fit into the sabot), but the round’s increased velocity makes it do just as much damage to the target. The projectile itself won’t bear any rifling marks, making it impossible to match to the barrel forensically.

Because of the sabot, APS rounds can’t be used in combat aircraft (the bits of plastic pose many hazards). The U.S. Army refers to APS rounds as SLAP (Saboted Light Armor Piercing).

In game terms, APS rounds are like normal AP rounds, but also have the Advantage *Invisible Power Effects* (no rifling marks on bullet; +¼).

Cased Telescoped (CTA)

Cased Telescoped Ammunition, or CTA, rounds don’t have conventional casings. Instead, the bullet is “telescoped” down into a cylindrical case. The case allows for a slightly larger bullet and a powerful propellant, resulting in a bullet that does more damage than others of the same caliber. The shape of round also makes it less likely to jam or cause similar problems. Depending on the casing, a CTA round may weigh as much as 30% less than a Standard round. However, because CTA rounds are slightly larger, a clip can’t hold as many of them as it can of Standard rounds of the same caliber (and revolvers typically can’t use them at all).

AMMUNITION DAMAGE TABLE

CALIBER, ENGLISH	CALIBER, METRIC	BASIC DAMAGE
.177		½d6
	4.6x30mm	2d6
	4.73x33mm Caseless	2d6
	4.85mm	1½d6
.22	5.56x29mm	1d6-1
	5mm	2d6
.22 LR	5.7x17mm R, 5.7x28mm	1d6
.221		1½d6
.223 Remington	5.56x45mm N, 5.45x39mm R	2d6 +1 STUN Modifier
.25 ACP	6.35mm	1d6
.270	6.8x43mm	2d6
.30	7.62x25mm R, 7.62x33mm	1d6+1
.30-06	7.62x63mm	2d6+1 +1 STUN Modifier
.308 Winchester	7.62x51mm N, 7.62x54mm R	2d6+1 +1 STUN Modifier
.300 Winchester Magnum, .300 Remington SAUM	7.62x66mm	2½d6 +1 STUN Modifier
.310	7.62x39mm R, 7.62x36mm	2d6 +1 STUN Modifier
.32 ACP, .32 S&W	7.65x17mm	1d6
.303 British	7.7x58mm	2½d6 +1 STUN Modifier
	7.92x57mm	2½d6 +1 STUN Modifier
.350		1½d6
.357 Magnum, .350 Magnum	9x33mm R	1½d6
.38, .380 Automatic	9x17mm, 9x29mm R	1d6
	9x19mm N P (Luger), 9x18mmR	1d6+1
.40	10.11x21.6mm	1d6+1
.41 Magnum, .41 Action Express	10.41x32.76mm, 10.41x22mm, 10x25mm	1½d6
.44 Magnum	10.97x33mm R	2d6 +1 STUN Modifier
	11mm	2d6-1 +1 STUN Modifier
.45 ACP, .458	11.43x23mm, 11.56x33mm	2d6-1 +1 STUN Modifier
.45 Winchester Magnum		2d6 +1 STUN Modifier
.454 Casull, .475 Linebaugh		2d6+1 +1 STUN Modifier
.50 Action Express	12.7x32.64mm	2d6+1 +1 STUN Modifier
.50 Browning	12.7x99mm, 12.7x107mm R	3d6 +1 STUN Modifier
	13x64mm	
	14.5x114mm	3d6+1 +1 STUN Modifier
.60	15.2mm	3½d6 +1 STUN Modifier
*	20x80mm, 20x99mm, 20x128mm	4d6 +1 STUN Modifier
*	25x184mm	4d6+1 +1 STUN Modifier
*	30x113mm, 30x170mm	4½d6 +1 STUN Modifier
*	35x228mm	5d6 +1 STUN Modifier
*	40mm	5d6+1 +1 STUN Modifier
*	45mm	5½d6 +1 STUN Modifier
*	50x330mm	6d6 +1 STUN Modifier
*	57mm	6d6+1 +1 STUN Modifier
*	60mm, 66mm, 67mm	6½d6 +1 STUN Modifier
*	76mm	7d6 +1 STUN Modifier
*	83mm, 85mm, 88mm, 90mm	7d6+1 +1 STUN Modifier
*	105mm	7½d6 +1 STUN Modifier
*	120mm	8d6 +1 STUN Modifier
*	127mm	8d6+1 +1 STUN Modifier
*	140mm, 155mm	9d6 +1 STUN Modifier

KEY

ACP: Automatic Colt Pistol
 LR: Long Rifle
 N: NATO
 R: Russian

P: Parabellum
 SAUM: Short Action Ultra Magnum
 S&W: Smith & Wesson

*: Cannon rounds and larger ammunition; generally cannot be fired from small arms

FIREARMS AS MULTIPOWERS

Technically speaking, it would be more “accurate” in game terms to buy firearms as Multipowers, with one slot for each type of ammunition the firearm could fire and a Limitation on the reserve reflecting the fact that the slots available at any given time are restricted by the type of rounds loaded in the gun. (Another possibility would be giving all guns the *Variable Advantage* Advantage.) However, that’s also cumbersome in game terms, and usually pointless. The approach taken by this book is to buy firearms as shooting Standard ammunition (or Standard Shot, for shotguns). If a character wants to shoot some other type of ammunition, he may do so regardless of the fact that he hasn’t “paid for it” with the firearm as constructed. If you want to know the Character Point cost of having clips of different types of ammunition for the same gun, use the Firearms Cost/Upgrade Table on pages 214-31.

In game terms, CTA rounds do a little extra damage (from +1 point to +1 DC, depending on caliber). If subjected to the Optional Firearms Malfunction rules, CTA rounds have an Activation Roll 1 point higher than normal, to a maximum of 18- (for example, if a gun would normally have a Malfunction on a 13-, with CTA rounds it Malfunctions on a 14-). If characters keep track of the weight of their gear right down to bullets, CTA rounds weigh 70% of Standard rounds. However, characters must reduce the number of Charges of CTA they can fit into a magazine by 20% (round in the character’s favor, but a minimum of -1 Charge).

Caseless

A Caseless round does not have a metal jacket. Instead, its “case” is a block of propellant. This allows for a high rate of fire (since there are no shell casings to be ejected) and decreased chance of malfunction, and reduces the weight of the loaded weapon. As a side benefit for many vigilantes and criminals, the lack of case eliminates the possibility of shell casings being used as evidence.

In game terms, Caseless rounds do the same damage as Standard bullets and are bought as the Advantage *Invisible Power Effects* (no shell casings as evidence; +¼). They weigh about 30% less than Standard rounds. If subjected to the Optional Firearms Malfunction rules, Caseless rounds have an Activation Roll 2 points higher than normal, to a maximum of 18- (for example, if a gun would normally have a Malfunction on a 13-, with Caseless rounds it Malfunctions on a 15-).

Duplex

A Duplex bullet looks like a single bullet but contains two smaller, lighter projectiles in one casing. The two rounds separate in flight. (Some Triplex bullets, with three projectiles, have also been made.)

In game terms, a Duplex (or Triplex) bullet does slightly increased damage (from +1 point to +1 DC, depending on caliber) and has the *Reduced Penetration* (-¼) Limitation.

Electric

Electric rounds (still experimental as of mid-2004) are designed to incapacitate rather than kill. They have a disk of piezoelectric material that releases a 50,000-volt electrical charge on contact — enough to stop nearly anyone.

Electric rounds can be Standard or Rubber. In game terms, the Electric bullet is an NND attack Linked to the RKA or Energy Blast of the bullet:

For firearms whose base attack is less than 80 Active Points: *Energy Blast 8d6*, *NND (defense is insulated rED; +1) (80 Active Points [the addition of other Advantages, such as Charges, may change this])*; *OAF (-1)*, *Beam (-¼)*, *Linked (-¼)*, *Real Weapon (-¼)*, *other Limitations vary based on firearm. Total cost: varies.*

For firearms whose base attack is greater than 80 Active Points: *Energy Blast 8d6*, *NND (defense is insulated rED; +1) (80 Active Points [the addition of other Advantages, such as Charges, may change this])*; *OAF (-1)*, *Beam (-¼)*, *Linked (-½)*, *Real Weapon (-¼)*, *other Limitations vary based on firearm. Total cost: varies.*

Explosive

Explosive bullets come in two types, each with the same effect in game terms. The first, more properly referred to as a “liquid-filled” bullet, has a hollow tip containing mercury, oil, grease, wax, or some other liquid or semi-liquid substance. Firing the bullet compresses the liquid to the back of the hollow. Upon impact, the substance vaporizes and “explodes” outward, causing large wounds. The other type actually contains an explosive substance, such as lead azide, which explodes upon impact (though it may fail to explode; an explosion is more likely if the bullet impacts bone).

In game terms, Explosive bullets do extra damage (from +1 point to +1 DC, depending on caliber). (For greater “realism,” buy the +1 DC separately with an Activation Roll 11-.)

Fiberglass/Plastic

Fiberglass/Plastic bullets do the same damage as normal lead bullets. However, they’re much harder to detect on an x-ray or during an autopsy.

In game terms, Fiberglass/Plastic rounds are like Standard rounds, but also have the Advantage *Invisible Power Effects* (hide cause of death, imposes a -3 penalty to Forensic Medicine or PS: Read X-Rays rolls; +¼).

Flechette

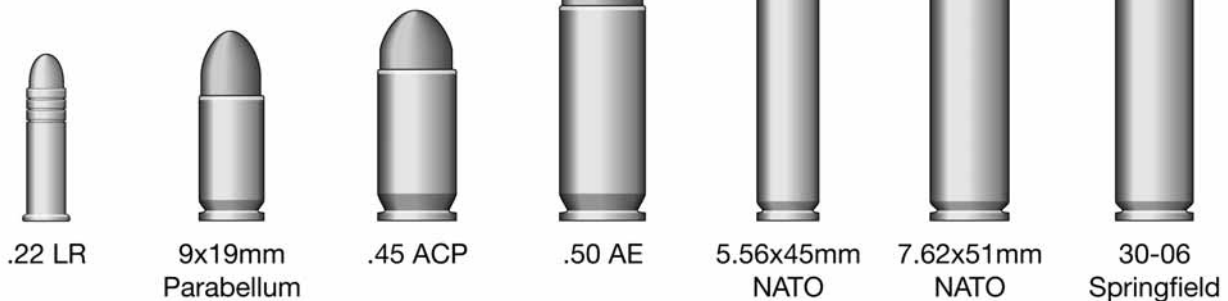
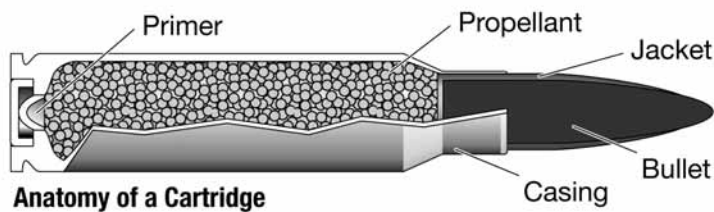
Flechettes are small metal darts. While they’re most often used in specialized shotgun shells (see below) or grenades, some bullets containing a single flechette have been manufactured. Typically they’re fired in sabots which peel away after firing. Because of its light weight, a flechette can travel much further than ordinary bullets. Because of its shape, it pierces armor with ease (and after impact it often bends like a fishhook, causing the fins to hit the target and inflict another wound). Additionally, Flechettes can easily be Poisoned (see below).

In game terms, Flechettes do a little extra damage (from +1 point to +1 DC, depending on caliber) and have the Advantages *Armor Piercing* (+½), *Invisible Power Effects* (no rifling marks on projectiles; +¼), and *Increased Maximum Range* (x2 normal range; +¼).

Frangible

Frangible bullets are bullets that either (a) contain multiple projectiles which are released upon impact, or (b) fragment upon impact with the target. Either variety causes tremendous damage to the target. However, because they “break” upon impact this way, Frangible bullets can easily be deflected by glass, windshields, wallboard, and many other substances. This makes them popular with some law enforcement units because of the low possibility of collateral damage from ricochets.

Common Ammunition



All ammunition shown actual size



Examples of Frangible bullets include: the Glaser Blue Safety Slug (containing 300-500 pellets of No. 12 birdshot); the MagSafe SWAT round; Razor-Ammo (a bullet using both a fragmenting space-age polymer and No. 4 birdshot pellets); the Spartan (which is composed of polymer and lead dust molded into the shape of a bullet); and the Thunderzap (a plastic frangible round). The Beehive/Core-Shot bullet is a slightly less effective Frangible round (subtract 1 DC).

Frangible bullet statistics can also be used for some flechette-based pistol rounds, such as bullets which contain multiple semi-stabilized flechettes that are released from the bullet at the point of impact.

In game terms, Frangible bullets do extra damage (typically +2 DCs), but take several Limitations: Cannot Be Bounced (-¼), Reduced Penetration (-¼), and No Effect Through Barriers (-¼).

Gyrojet

Gyrojet rounds are essentially miniature rockets: they contain a load of fuel that propels the bullet once ignited. However, a character needs a special gun to fire Gyrojets; they can't be used in standard firearms. The gun ignites the bullet and then recocks itself as the bullet leaves the chamber. The entire bullet leaves the gun; there's no case to be ejected. Gyrojets travel further than standard bullets, and stabilize firing due to the lack of recoil. Because they're self-contained, they can be fired underwater.

In game terms, Gyrojet rounds do standard damage, but have the Advantages *Invisible Power Effects* (no shell casings as evidence; +¼) and *Increased Maximum Range* (x2 normal range; +¼). If subjected to the Optional Firearms Malfunction rules, Gyrojet rounds have an Activation Roll

2 points higher than normal, to a maximum of 18- (for example, if a gun would normally have a Malfunction on a 13-, with Gyrojet rounds it Malfunctions on a 15-). If the GM uses the optional Recoil rules (page 194), Gyrojet guns do not suffer any Recoil penalties for taking multiple shots.

Hollow Point

Hollow Point ("HP" or Dum Dum) bullets have the tip of the metal jacket cut away, exposing the lead core beneath. This causes the bullet to "mushroom," or expand quickly, when it hits the target, creating large wounds. The lead core inside may be shaped or notched so as to improve the bullet's expansion. Examples of Hollow Points include the Winchester Silvertip, Federal Hydra-Shok, the Starfire, the Remington Golden Saber, and the CCI-Speer Gold Dot.

An interesting variation on the standard HP is a bullet in which the jacket is also used to injure the target. With these bullets, such as the Winchester Black Talon, the jacket of the Hollow Point bullet is designed to peel back into sharp edges which cut flesh as the bullet expands. In game terms, these typically function the same as standard HP rounds, but the GM may add +1 pip of damage if desired.

Characters can make crude HP rounds by cutting notches in the noses of ordinary bullets. These bullets gain +1 pip of damage (at most) instead of the +1 DC most HPs get.

In game terms, HP rounds do a little extra damage (from +1 point to +1 DC, depending on caliber) and have a +1 Increased STUN Multiplier (in addition to any from caliber).

Hybrid Frangible/Hollow Point

Hybrid Frangible/Hollow Point bullets combine the best features of the HP and Penetrating

FICTIONAL BULLETS

Don't feel that you have to limit yourself to real-world forms of ammunition if your campaign welcomes a touch of the fantastic. Some fictional bullets that might be appropriate for some *Dark Champions* games include:

Anti-Vampire Bullets, which are like liquid-filled Explosive bullets, except that the liquid is holy water or garlic juice. The holy water version's also good for use against demons and similar entities that can't stand the touch of holy things.

Blessed Bullets, bullets specially blessed by a priest so that they have "holy" properties.

Silver Bullets, just the thing for taking down werewolves or pretending to be the Lone Ranger.

Tranq Bullets, high-tech tranquilizer darts in a sabot so they can be fired from a regular firearm. They could contain poison, various drugs, or the like instead of knockout juice.

Wooden Bullets, whose projectiles are made from hardened wood instead of lead so that they affect vampires just as if they were wooden stakes... provided the character shoots the vampire through the heart, of course.

Frangible rounds. As the bullet expands, it breaks apart into deadly fragments, inflicting terrible wounds. Examples include the Triton Quik-Shok (which breaks apart into three large fragments) and the Omega Star (which contains a solid rear core, and a front core composed of Nos. 2 and 4 birdshot).

In game terms, Hybrid Frangible/HP rounds do extra damage (as much as +2 DCs) and have the Advantages *Penetrating* (+½) and +1 *Increased STUN Multiplier* (+¼) (in addition to any from caliber) and the Limitation *Cannot Be Bounced* (-¼).

Improved Armor Piercing

Improved Armor Piercing rounds have even greater armor-penetrating effect than normal AP rounds, but this causes them to impart even less energy to their target and hence do less damage as well.

In game terms, Improved AP rounds do less damage than Standard bullets (as much as -2 DCs, depending on caliber) and have the *Armor Piercing* (x2; +1) Advantage.

Incendiary

Incendiary rounds contain a small incendiary charge that ignites upon impact. Any flammable materials struck by the bullet are set on fire. A living victim may take fire damage in the Segment after being shot (and nothing more after that), or he may take no additional damage at all (the GM decides). Flammable objects the victim wears or carries may catch fire, causing him to take further damage in later Segments.

In game terms, Incendiary bullets do the same damage as Standard rounds, but have the following additional effect:

RKA 1 point, Continuous (+1), Reduced Endurance (0 END to enable Uncontrolled effect; +½), Sticky (only affects flammables; +¼), Uncontrolled (effect ends when it runs out of fuel or oxygen, or someone extinguishes the flames; +½) (16 Active Points [the addition of other Advantages, such as Charges, may change this]); OAF (-1), Activation Roll 13- (-¾), Linked (-½), Real Weapon (-¼), other Limitations vary based on firearm. Total cost: varies.

Penetrating Frangible

Penetrating Frangible bullets are designed to overcome the Frangible bullet's inability to shoot through barriers. They penetrate further into the target before releasing their load or fragmenting. Examples of Penetrating Frangible rounds include: the Glaser Silver Safety Slug (containing No. 6 birdshot); the LeMas Ltd. "Blended Metal Technology" bullet (which supposedly penetrate hard materials like armor easily, but fragment rapidly and very destructively when they hit soft materials like flesh or drywall); and the MagSafe Defender and MAX rounds (containing No. 2, 3, or 4 birdshot embedded in epoxy).

In game terms, Penetrating Frangible bullets do extra damage (typically +2 DCs) and have the Advantage *Penetrating* (+½). They do not take the three Limitations imposed upon standard Frangible rounds.

Reversed Ogive

Reversed Ogive bullets (also called THV ammunition) have a special concave cutting edge. This not only allows the bullet to achieve very high velocities, it imparts an armor-piercing effect *and* allows the bullet to transfer more of its energy to the target via increased hydrostatic shock.

In game terms, Reversed Ogive bullets do +2 DCs damage and have the Advantages *Armor Piercing* (+½) and +1 *Increased STUN Multiplier* (+¼) (in addition to any from caliber).

Rubber

Rubber bullets are non-lethal rounds intended for use against rioters, prisoners, and other targets the shooter wishes to disable but not kill. However, note that the term "non-lethal" does not mean harmless — Rubber bullets can break bones and cause other serious injuries, depending on where they hit.

In game terms, Rubber bullets do Normal Damage instead of Killing Damage, in DCs equivalent to the RKA for their caliber.

Semi-Armor Piercing

A Semi-AP round is better than Standard ammunition, but worse than true AP rounds, when it comes to penetrating armor. Typically they have a steel insert, or a specially-shaped nose, to achieve the semi-AP effect.

In game terms, Semi-AP rounds do the same damage as Standard rounds and have the *Semi-Armor Piercing* (+¼) Advantage (see page 97).

Silent

These unusual bullets have an internal piston that traps the expanding gases from the exploding propellant and propels the bullet. As a result, noise, muzzle flash, and smoke are all considerably reduced, making it much more difficult than normal to perceive the shooter.

In game terms, Silent bullets do the same damage as Standard, but have the following additional power:

Change Environment 1" radius, -3 to Hearing Group PER Rolls and -1 to Sight Group PER Rolls to perceive, Multiple Combat Effects (19 Active Points [the addition of other Advantages, such as Charges, may change this]); OAF (-1), Linked (-½), No Range (-½), Real Weapon (-¼), Self Only (-½), other Limitations vary based on firearm. Total cost: varies.

Spent Uranium

Spent Uranium bullets are made from depleted (non-radioactive) uranium, which is heavier than lead. As such, the same amount of powder that would be used with a lead bullet makes an SU bullet move more slowly — but it has greater momentum, meaning better armor penetration and more energy transference when it hits the target.

In game terms, Spent Uranium rounds do the same damage as Standard bullets, but have the Advantages *Armor Piercing* (+½) and +1 *Increased STUN Multiplier* (+¼) (in addition to any from caliber).

AMMUNITION SUMMARY TABLE

Ammunition Type	.357 M								Notes
	.22	.32 .38	.40 9mm	.41 M 10mm	.45 ACP 11mm*	.44 M .45 WM*	.223 5.56mmN*	.50 AE 7.62mmN*	
Standard	1d6-1	1d6	1d6+1	1½d6	2d6-1	2d6	2d6	2d6+1	
AET	1d6	1d6+1	1½d6	2d6	2d6	2d6+1	2d6+1	2½d6	RP, CBB
AET Composite	1d6	1d6+1	1½d6	2d6	2d6	2d6+1	2d6+1	2½d6	CBB
Armor Piercing	½d6	1d6-1	1d6	1d6+1	1½d6	2d6-1	2d6	2d6	AP
Armor Piercing Depleted Uranium	½d6	1d6-1	1d6	1d6+1	1½d6	2d6-1	2d6	2d6	AP, Piercing 1, firestarting
Armor Piercing Explosive	1d6	1d6+1	1½d6	2d6	2d6	2d6+1	2d6+1	2½d6	AP
Armor Piercing Hardcore	½d6	1d6-1	1d6	1d6+1	1½d6	2d6-1	2d6	2d6	AP, Piercing 1
Armor Piercing Hardcore Explosive	1d6	1d6+1	1½d6	2d6	2d6	2d6+1	2d6+1	2½d6	AP, Piercing 1
Armor Piercing Incendiary	½d6	1d6-1	1d6	1d6+1	1½d6	2d6-1	2d6	2d6	AP, firestarting
Armor Piercing Saboted	½d6	1d6-1	1d6	1d6+1	1½d6	2d6-1	2d6	2d6	AP, IPE (no rifling marks)
Cased Telescoped Ammunition	1d6	1d6+1	1½d6	2d6	2d6	2d6+1	2d6+1	2½d6	Slightly larger than normal
Caseless	1d6-1	1d6	1d6+1	1½d6	2d6-1	2d6	2d6	2d6+1	IPE (no shell casings)
Duplex	1d6	1d6+1	1½d6	2d6	2d6	2d6+1	2d6+1	2½d6	RP
Electric	1d6-1	1d6	1d6+1	1½d6	2d6-1	2d6	2d6	2d6+1	Linked EB 8d6, NND
Explosive	1d6	1d6+1	1½d6	2d6	2d6	2d6+1	2d6+1	2½d6	
Fiberglass/Plastic	1d6-1	1d6	1d6+1	1½d6	2d6-1	2d6	2d6	2d6+1	IPE (-3 to Forensic Medicine)
Flechette	1d6	1d6+1	1½d6	2d6	2d6	2d6+1	2d6+1	2½d6	AP, IPE (no rifling marks), IMR2
Frangible	1d6+1	1½d6	2d6	2d6+1	2d6+1	2½d6	2½d6	3d6	RP, CBB, Not Through Barriers
Gyrojet	1d6-1	1d6	1d6+1	1½d6	2d6-1	2d6	2d6	2d6+1	IPE (no shell casings), IMR2
Hollow Point	1d6	1d6+1	1½d6	2d6	2d6	2d6+1	2d6+1	2½d6	+1 STUN Multiplier
Hybrid Frangible/Hollow Point	1d6+1	1½d6	2d6	2d6+1	2d6+1	2½d6	2½d6	3d6	+1 STUN Multiplier, Penetrating, CBB
Improved Armor Piercing	½d6	½d6	1d6-1	1d6-1	1d6	1d6	1½d6	2d6-1	AP(x2)
Improved Propellant	1d6+1	1d6+1	1½d6	2d6-1	2d6	2d6+1	2d6+1	2½d6	
Incendiary	1d6-1	1d6	1d6+1	1½d6	2d6-1	2d6	2d6	2d6+1	Firestarting
Match-Grade +P, +P+	1d6-1	1d6	1d6+1	1½d6	2d6-1	2d6	2d6	2d6+1	+1 OCV
	1d6	1d6+1	1d6+2	1½d6+1	2d6	2d6+1	2d6+1	2d6+2	
Penetrating Frangible	1d6+1	1½d6	2d6	2d6+1	2d6+1	2½d6	2½d6	3d6	Penetrating
Poisoned	1d6-1	1d6	1d6+1	1½d6	2d6-1	2d6	2d6	2d6+1	Carries poison
Reversed Ogive	1d6+1	1½d6	2d6	2d6+1	2d6+1	2½d6	2½d6	3d6	AP, +1 STUN Multiplier
Rubber	2d6 EB	3d6 EB	4d6 EB	5d6 EB	6d6 EB	6d6 EB	6d6 EB	7d6 EB	
Semi-Armor Piercing	1d6-1	1d6	1d6+1	1½d6	2d6-1	2d6	2d6	2d6+1	Semi-AP
Silent	1d6-1	1d6	1d6+1	1½d6	2d6-1	2d6	2d6	2d6+1	CE (-3 Hearing, -1 Sight)
Spent Uranium	1d6-1	1d6	1d6+1	1½d6	2d6-1	2d6	2d6	2d6+1	AP, +1 STUN Multiplier
Subsonic	½d6	1d6-1	1d6	1d6+1	1½d6	2d6-1	2d6	2d6	Moves at subsonic speeds
Tracer	1d6-1	1d6	1d6+1	1½d6	2d6-1	2d6	2d6	2d6+1	+1 OCV
Tumbler	1d6-1	1d6	1d6+1	1½d6	2d6-1	2d6	2d6	2d6+1	RKA +1d6, Act 11-
Wadcutter	1d6	1d6+1	1d6+2	1½d6+1	2d6	2d6+1	2d6+1	2d6+2	

Listed damage is Killing Damage unless indicated otherwise

KEY

Act: Activation Roll
 AP: Armor Piercing (the Advantage)
 CBB: Cannot Be Bounced
 CE: Change Environment
 EB: Energy Blast
 IMR2: Increased Maximum Range (x2)
 IPE: Invisible Power Effects

M: Magnum

N: NATO
 NND: No Normal Defense
 Piercing1: 1 point of Piercing (Resistant)
 RP: Reduced Penetration
 Semi-AP: Semi-Armor Piercing
 WM: Winchester Magnum
 *: Rounds in these columns gain a +1 STUN Modifier from size in addition to other listed effects

Tumbler

Unlike other bullets, which are designed to spin along their long axis and hence fly straight, Tumbler bullets tumble end-over-end towards the target. This makes the round tear into the target and ricochet around inside him, causing grievous internal wounds.

The “tumbling” effect is most easily achieved with high-velocity Standard rounds (*i.e.*, rifle rounds, not handgun rounds), and is created by decreasing the barrel-twist rate (to, *e.g.*, 1-in-14, meaning one twist to 14 inches of barrel). This is a function of gun design, not ammunition design; Tumbler is listed here because it involves changing the flight of the bullet and requires a choice of ammunition.

One drawback to Tumbler rounds is that they're less accurate than normal bullets, particularly in cold weather (-1 OCV). This is a -0 Side Effect.

In game terms, the Tumbler does the same damage as Standard bullets, but with the “Tumbler effect” added in:

RKA +1d6 (15 Active Points [the addition of other Advantages, such as Charges, may change this]); OAF (-1), Activation Roll 11- (-1), Does Not Work If Bullet Is Bounced (-0), Only Applies If Bullet's Ordinary Damage Does BODY Damage (-½), Real Weapon (-¼), Side Effects (-1 OCV in cold weather, always occurs; -0), other Limitations vary based on firearm. Total cost: varies.

Of course, the target does not get to apply his defenses to this +1d6, since the initial attack has already penetrated his defenses.

BULLET MODIFICATIONS

There are several ways to modify existing bullets. In some cases these modifications only work with certain types of bullets; others work with all types. The examples given in the Ammunition Summary Table and Firearms Cost/Upgrade Tables assume a Standard round.

Improved Propellant

Improved Propellants rounds are bullets made with improved powders. Improving the powders and propellants makes a bullet travel faster — sometimes as much as 200-300 fps (feet per second) faster.

In game terms, bullets with Improved Propellant add +1 Damage Class of damage to a bullet.

Magnum

Magnum is a trademarked name for certain kinds of bullets which contain more gunpowder, and thus have greater pressure and energy than normal rounds. This causes them to do more damage than an ordinary bullet of the same size. However, this means the weapons which fire them have to be heavier, to contain the force they generate when fired — a magnum gun can fire ordinary bullets, but an ordinary gun cannot fire magnum rounds without risk of an explosion or similar problems (decrease the chances for a Malfunction by 1; for example, if the Activation Roll for a Malfunction were normally 15-, in this case it becomes 14-).

In game terms, some of the ammunition listed on the Ammunition Damage Table is Magnum, and this is reflected in the damage done. Magnum rounds cannot be made +P or +P+.

Match-Grade

A character can increase the accuracy of a particular gun through careful experimentation to determine the optimum round (in terms of projectile and propellant mix) for it. This requires the *Weaponsmith* Skill; characters can't buy Match-Grade ammunition “off the shelf.”

In game terms, only Standard rounds and the various forms of Armor Piercing ammunition can be made Match-Grade, which is bought as a +1 OCV bonus for a firearm.

+P And +P+

+P and +P+ rounds are made by increasing the charge and pressure in a bullet while typically making the bullet somewhat smaller than normal. This results in a projectile which flies faster than normal and hits with greater energy. Furthermore, the lighter projectile stops more quickly when it hits its target, thus transferring more of its energy into the target.

In game terms, only Standard and Hollow Point rounds can be made +P or +P+. Either adds +1 point of damage to the gun's RKA. Magnum rounds cannot be made +P or +P+.

Poisoned

Poisoned bullets are simply normal bullets coated with cyanide, arsenic, or some other type of poison. Even the smallest bullet can carry enough of a potent poison to kill someone, and even an otherwise trivial flesh wound is enough to introduce it into the target's system.

Thus, even if they only cause a small wound, the victim can still die. These bullets are purchased by buying an appropriate poison with the Limitation *Bullet's RKA Must Do BODY* (-½). For example:

*Drain CON 4d6, Delayed Return Rate (points return at the rate of 5 per Hour; +1), NND (defense is Life Support [appropriate Immunity]; +½), Ranged (+½) (120 Active Points); 4 Charges (-1), Bullet's RKA Must Do BODY (-½), Extra Time (onset time begins 1 Minute after victim is shot; -1½), Gradual Effect (4 Minutes; 1d6/1 Minute; -½), Linked (to poison's RKA; -½) (total cost: 24 points) **plus** RKA 4d6, NND (defense is Life Support [appropriate Immunity]; +1), Does BODY (+1) (180 Active Points); No Range (-½), 4 Charges (-1), Bullet's RKA Must Do BODY (-½), Extra Time (onset time begins 1 Minute after victim is shot; -1½), Gradual Effect (4 Minutes; 1d6/1 Minute; -½) (total cost: 36 points). Total cost: 60 points.*

Subsonic

Subsonic rounds are designed for use in silenced weapons; they are not, by themselves, silent. They travel slower than the speed of sound, so they do not create the distinctive “crack” typical bullets do when they break the sound barrier. They do approximately 75% of the damage of regular bullets of the same type. The example given in the chart is a Standard bullet; other types of bullets can also be made Subsonic.

In game terms, the typical Subsonic bullet does slightly less damage than a Standard round (-1 point or -1 DC, depending on caliber).

Tracer

Tracer rounds contain chemicals which ignite when the bullet is fired, causing the bullet to glow and “trace” a path to the target, making it easier to correct aim to hit that target. They work best at night or in the dark, but are bright enough for daytime use. Similar to the Tracer is the Observation bullet, which emits a puff of smoke and a flash when it hits.

One drawback to Tracers is that they give away the shooter’s position. Two variants correct that problem. The first is *dark ignition tracers*, which don’t “light up” until they’ve traveled a hundred yards or more. The second is *dim tracers*, which glow in infrared and thus are only visible to personnel wearing nightvision goggles or the like.

In game terms, the Tracer effect can be combined with most other bullet types (though not with any type of Frangible round). It’s bought as a +1 OCV bonus with the standard Limitations, plus *Cannot Apply To First Shot Against A Target* (-½). This means the shooter can’t use the Level for his first shot against a given target, or to any subsequent shots that he takes in Phases after Phases in which he didn’t fire at that target (in other words, he has to maintain a continuous “stream” of fire at the chosen target, firing at least once per Phase, to keep using the Level). The shooter only gets +1 OCV no matter how many bullets he fires, not +1 OCV per bullet.

Wadcutter

Wadcutter rounds are regular bullets with flat noses instead of the usual rounded nose. They tend to cut larger holes in the target. However, the flat nose may cause feed problems with automatic or semi-automatic guns (reduce Activation Roll to jam by 1).

In game terms, only Standard, CTA, Caseless, Gyrojet, Incendiary, and Spent Uranium rounds can be Wadcutters; Wadcutter can be combined with Subsonic or Tracer. A Wadcutter round does +1 point of damage. If subjected to the Optional Firearms Malfunction rules, Wadcutter rounds have an Activation Roll 1 point lower than normal (for example, if a gun would normally have a Malfunction on a 13-, with Wadcutter rounds it Malfunctions on a 12-).



SHOTGUN BORES

The method used to determine gauges for shotguns is a traditional system that's centuries old. Basically, "gauge" means the number of lead balls with a diameter equal to the bore of the shotgun needed to make one pound of that size ball. For example, a 10-gauge shotgun has a bore whose size is such that 10 lead balls of that diameter weigh one pound.

For reference purposes, here's the nominal measurement of the bore of barrels of different gauge shotguns.

4 gauge = .905 inch
 10 gauge = .775 inch
 12 gauge = .729 inch
 16 gauge = .662 inch
 20 gauge = .615 inch
 24 gauge = .580 inch
 28 gauge = .550 inch
 .410 bore = .410 inch

Shotgun Ammunition

Shotguns are smoothbore guns — that is, their barrels aren't rifled, so the projectiles they fire don't spin the way bullets do. Instead of bullets, they fire shells. Most shells contain shot — lead pellets. The size of the pellets varies depending on the gauge of the shotgun (the larger the gauge, the smaller the shot). Shot size is ranked from #1 to #9, #1 being the largest. Buckshot, a type of shot which is larger than normal, is ranked from BB to 000. 00 ("double-ought") buckshot in a 12-gauge shell is the most common combat shot round. Other gauges include .410 (actually a caliber measurement), 28, 20, 16, 10, and even 4 for some combat shotguns.

A 12-gauge shotgun loaded with 00 buckshot fires nine pellets, each with about the same energy as a .32 bullet. This blast of multiple projectiles makes the shotgun a devastating combat weapon at close range — the shot inflicts tremendous damage. However, the further one gets from the shotgun, the more the shot spreads (in a roughly circular pattern) and the more energy it loses, making the shotgun a relatively poor weapon at long ranges. By about 40 meters (20") for most shotguns, the pattern has spread so much that the chance of scoring a disabling wound is comparatively slight (especially if the target has cover, wears body armor, or the like).

The spread on shot varies according to barrel length (the shorter the barrel, the faster the spread) and "choke" (the amount of restrictions reducing the barrel's diameter at its end). Some chokes are "shot diverters" that can cause shot to spread in a more rectangular or oval pattern, or "shot spreaders" that create greater spread. Some chokes are adjustable, allowing the user to vary the spread from one pull of the trigger to another. Some types of shot (such as cubic shot) can also affect the spread pattern.

SHOTGUNS IN THE HERO SYSTEM

In *HERO System* terms, a shotgun has most of the standard Limitations described on page 200 for all firearms (OAF, STR Minimum, Real Weapon, and Charges), and also has the Advantage *+1 Increased STUN Multiplier* (+¼) and the Limitation *Two-Handed* (-½). For game purposes, you should design shotguns as being intended to fire shot, though of course they can fire slugs or other rounds if necessary. If a character wants to carry and shoot the other type of ammunition, you can use the Firearms Cost/Upgrade Tables on pages 214-31 to determine the cost.

In addition to the Power Modifiers listed below for shot and slugs, a shotgun may have other Advantages and Limitations, depending on the type of shot or slug used.

Double-Barrelled Shotguns

Some types of shotguns, primarily ones intended for hunting, have two barrels (usually mounted side-by-side). They're typically "break-fed" — they open using a hinge on the bottom of the barrel near the trigger, allowing the shooter to insert one shell into each of the two barrels (in game terms, this would

be bought as a clip of 2 Charges). Usually each of the barrels has its own trigger. This raises the possibility of a character pulling both triggers at once, and thus shooting an enemy with a double blast. In game terms, characters should buy such shotguns with *Autofire* (2 shots; +¼) and the Limitation *Both Shots Must Be At The Same Target* (-0). That way they don't have to use both barrels at once, but they can if they feel like it.

Shotguns And Hit Locations

Shotguns use the standard Hit Location rules. For shot, this can represent the part of the target's body that gets hit by the most pellets, or which bears the brunt of the shotgun blast.

SHOTGUN AMMUNITION TYPES

Here are descriptions of the many types of shotgun ammunition available to *Dark Champions* characters. For information on the cost of these shells and slugs, by gauge (and accounting for Charges and other factors), refer to the Firearms Cost/Upgrade Tables, pages 214-31.

Standard Shot

The basic description of shotguns, above, also describes shot. In game terms, a shotgun that fires shot does not take the *Beam* Limitation. However, it does have the Limitations *Limited Range* (20"; -¼), *Reduced By Range* (-¼) and *Reduced Penetration* (-¼).

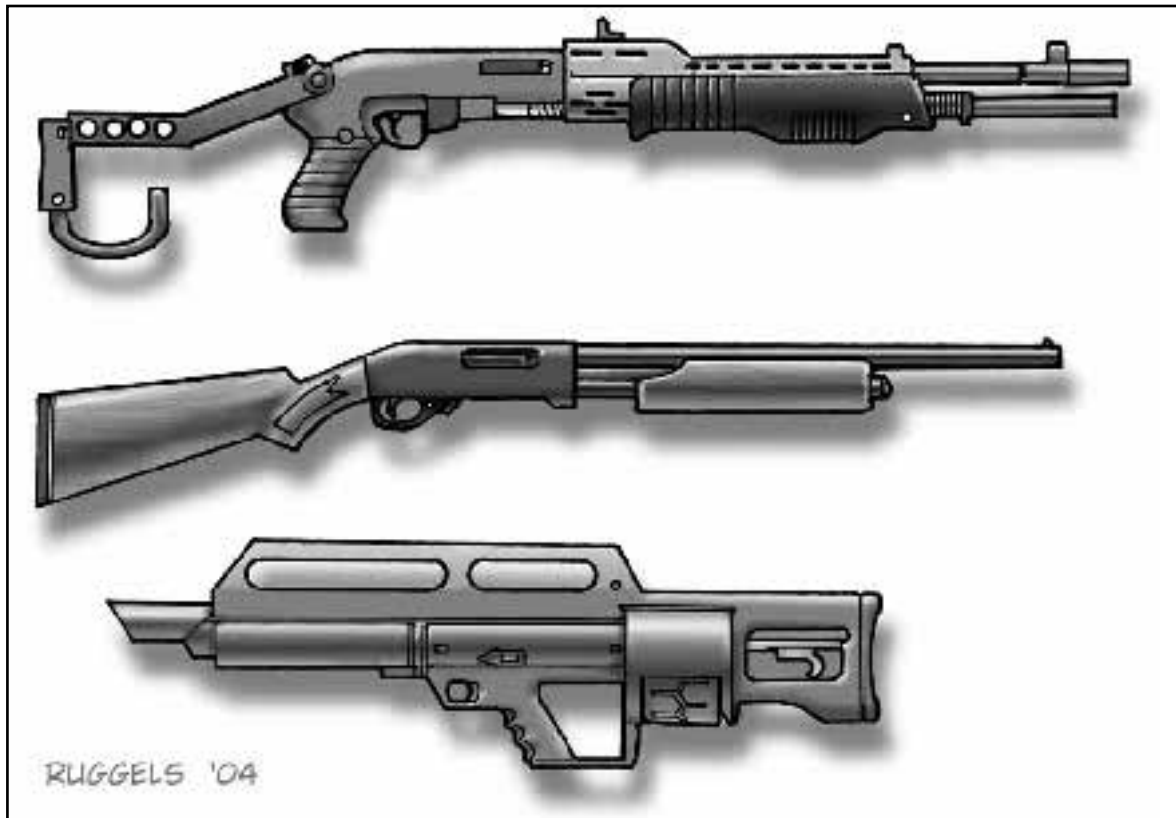
Shot takes the Advantage *Area Of Effect* (One Hex; +½). Depending on the type of shot and choke used and the distance to the target, the spread pattern ranges from approximately five inches (about 0.06") to 58 inches (about 0.75"). In game terms, the best way to simulate this is with a One Hex Area Of Effect, which reflects both the spread of the shot and the relative ease of hitting a target at close quarters. At the GM's option, shots at targets within 10" of the shooter do not get the One Hex; they only affect one target and are against his standard DCV instead of DCV 3.

For game purposes, assume a shotgun firing shot has no choke or a cylinder choke (the least restrictive type). For guns with improved, modified, or full chokes (or variable chokes used on those "settings"), the GM should increase the Limited Range of the shotgun by +1", +2", and +3" respectively — but add the same amount to the distance over which the character does not get the benefit of the One Hex Area Of Effect, since the choke inhibits the spread of the pellets. (At the GM's option, shotguns loaded with buckshot — *i.e.*, virtually all shot-firing shotguns *Dark Champions* characters are likely to use — all function as if the character used a full choke.)

The damage listed for shotguns in this book and other *HERO System* books assumes the gun is loaded with 00 buckshot. If the shell contains smaller shot, reduce the damage to 50-75% of that listed.

Standard Slug

Some shells fire not shot, but *slugs* — a single, large, roughly bullet-shaped mass of metal. Slugs do not spread out the way shot does, but their size and



force make them extremely lethal. However, since they're not fired from rifled barrels, they're not nearly as accurate as rifles.

In game terms, slugs have the *Beam* (-¼) Limitation, but not Reduced By Range or Reduced Penetration. They also have the Limitation *Limited Range* (50"; -¼).

Air Bomb

Air Bomb shells explode in mid-air near the target. They're designed to stun, injure, and incapacitate the target more than to kill.

In game terms, an Air Bomb shell is bought as an Energy Blast (with DCs equivalent to those in a Killing Attack shell of the same size), Area Of Effect (One Hex; +½) with the following Linked effect:

Sight and Hearing Group Flash 3d6, Area Of Effect (One Hex; +½) (30 Active Points); OAF (-1), Limited Range (20"; -¼), Linked (-½), Real Weapon (-¼), Two-Handed (-½), other Limitations vary based on firearm. Total cost: varies.

Armor Piercing Slug

Armor Piercing Slugs are slugs specially designed to penetrate armor.

In game terms, Armor Piercing Slugs have the *Armor Piercing* (+½) Advantage, but do slightly less damage than Standard Slugs (from -1 point to -1 DC, depending on gauge).

Baton/Beanbag

Baton rounds are solid projectiles made of plastic, rubber, or wood designed to stun a target without inflicting serious harm. Beanbag projectiles are similar, but fire a small, sturdy beanbag filled with metal or rubber shot. Although intended to be non-lethal, these rounds can still cause serious

injury or disability; a leg shot might, for example, cause numbness and pain that would prevent the target from walking for as much as a minute.

In game terms, these rounds are bought as an Energy Blast with DCs equivalent to those in a Killing Attack shell of the same size. They don't have Reduced By Range and Reduced Penetration, but do take the *Beam* (-¼) Limitation. They have a Limited Range of 20".

BRI Slug

BRI slugs are more like bullets than standard shotgun slugs. This construction is intended to increase their range and accuracy.

In game terms, BRI Slugs do not have the *Limited Range* (-¼) Limitation.

Buffered Shot

Buffered shot is designed to spread less than regular shot, which slightly extends the range of shot and makes it likely that more pellets hit the target.

In game terms, buffered shot changes a shotgun's Limited Range from 20" to 30" and removes the *Area Of Effect* (One Hex) Advantage. The gun does a little extra damage (from +1 point to +1 DC, depending on gauge).

Cubic Shot

Cubic Shot shells fire pellets that are cube-shaped instead of round. The cubic shot maximizes the spread of the pellets so that a target is hit. (Some shells achieve the same result by mixing small cards into ordinary shot.)

In game terms, a shotgun firing Cubic Shot has Area Of Effect (Cone) instead of One Hex, and replaces the *Limited Range* (-¼) Limitation with *No Range* (-½).

Explosive Slug

Explosive slugs explodes upon impact with the target, causing enormous damage. A properly-placed Explosive Slug can take out everyone in a small room or a car in one shot.

In game terms, an Explosive Slug is bought as if it were a slug, but it has the *Explosion* (+½) Advantage and the *Beam* (-¼) Limitation is removed. It affects ED, not PD.

Fireball

Fireball, or Incendiary, shells contain magnesium or some other flammable material that bursts into flame when it contacts the target, immolating him or it for several seconds.

In game terms, Fireball shells do the same damage as Standard Shot (though against ED rather than PD), but have the following additional effect:

RKA 1 point, Continuous (+1), Reduced Endurance (0 END to enable Uncontrolled effect; +½), Sticky (only affects flammables; +¼), Uncontrolled (effect ends when it runs out of fuel or oxygen, or someone extinguishes the flames; +½) (16 Active Points [the addition of other Advantages, such as Charges, may change this]); OAF (-1), Activation Roll 13- (-¾), Linked (-½), Real Weapon (-¼), other Limitations vary based on firearm. Total cost: varies.

Flare

Flare shells are something like Fireball shells, but are intended to blind the target temporarily, not injure him.

In game terms, a Flare shell is bought as a Sight Group Flash (with dice of effect equal to the RKA of the same gauge) with the Advantage *Explosion* (+½). It has a Limited Range of 20”.

Flechette

Flechette shells are filled with tiny metal darts. The flechettes in this shell are bigger and stronger than those in a bullet, and fly further than standard buckshot. At close range Flechette shells are extremely lethal. (Similar rounds replace the metal darts with razor-like blades, circles or tubes of metal with sharpened forward edges, or the like.)

For game purposes, treat Flechettes as if they were Standard Shot with a Limited Range of 50”, but they do a little extra damage (from +1 point to +1 DC, depending on gauge) and have the Advantage *Armor Piercing*.

Ice

Ice shells are used by assassins who want to kill without leaving traces. The impact of the ice-filled shell is still enough to kill, but the ice soon melts, leaving the exact cause of the injuries a mystery. Of course, this only works if the shooter can use the shell very soon after removing it from the freezer, or else the ice in the shell melts, making it unusable.

In game terms, Ice shells are like Standard Shot, but also have the Advantage *Invisible Power Effects* (hide cause of death, imposes a -3 or greater penalty to Forensic Medicine rolls; +¼).

Linked Shot

Linked shot uses steel wire to connect the shot, thereby in theory inhibiting the spread and ensuring that more pellets hit their target. However, the greater air resistance slows the shot down, and the wire takes up room in the shell that would otherwise contain more pellets. Buffered shot accomplishes much the same result without these drawbacks.

In game terms, Linked shot does slightly less damage (from -1 point to -1 DC, depending on gauge), changes a shotgun’s Limited Range from 20” to 30”, and removes the *Area Of Effect* (One Hex) Advantage.

Lockbreaker

Lockbreaker rounds, also known as “lock-buster” or “Hatton” shells, are filled with lead or iron powder. When fired at a lock, they destroy the lock’s internal workings, allowing the shooter (or his companions) to quickly pull or kick open the door. Its effects upon humans are not as great as those of ordinary shotgun shells.

In game terms, Lockbreaker shells do the same damage as Standard Shot, but take the Limitation *Half Effect On Targets Other Than Locks And Hinges* (-½). This halving of damage takes place before the application of Reduced Penetration, but after the application of Reduced By Range.

Rubber Shot

Rubber Shot shells were invented for anti-riot purposes. They’re designed to stun the target with several .30 caliber rubber pellets. Although intended to be non-lethal, these rounds can still cause serious injury or disability; a leg shot might, for example, cause numbness and pain that would prevent the target from walking for as much as a minute.

In game terms, these rounds are bought as Standard Shot, but as an Energy Blast with DCs equivalent to those in a Killing Attack shell of the same size.

Saboted Slug

Some slug shells contain the slug in a sabot. This means the slug is smaller than it otherwise could be, but it can attain greater velocity. Its shape and speed give it significant penetrating power, and also make it likely to tumble.

In game terms, a sabot slug functions like a Standard Slug, but with 1 point of Piercing (Resistant). Characters can also buy the Tumbling effect (page 208) for it if desired (the sample rounds listed elsewhere in this book do not have the Tumbling effect).

Semi-Armor Piercing Slug

Semi-Armor Piercing Slugs are like AP Slugs, but have slightly less penetrating capability.

In game terms, Semi-Armor Piercing Slugs have the *Semi-Armor Piercing* (+¼) Advantage.

Silent

Silent shells are constructed so that the expanding gases that propel the round (a large metal and plastic flechette) forward are trapped inside the shell, which acts as a sort of “ram” to

propel the flechette toward the target. Because the gases cannot escape properly, the shotgun is much quieter. A Silent round has to be relatively low-powered, and therefore (a) does slightly less damage than standard shells, and (b) cannot be fired in semi-automatic and automatic shotguns because it cannot cycle the action.

In game terms, Silent shells do slightly less damage (from -1 point to -1 DC, depending on gauge) than Standard Slugs and have less range (30”), but have the *Armor Piercing* (+½) Advantage. They also have the following additional power:

Change Environment 1” radius, -3 to Hearing Group PER Rolls and -1 to Sight Group PER Rolls to perceive, Multiple Combat Effects (19 Active Points [the addition of other Advantages, such as Charges, may change this]); OAF (-1), Linked (-½), No Range (-½), Real Weapon (-¼), Self Only (-½), STR Minimum (varies), other Limitations vary based on firearm. Total cost: varies.

Smoke

Smoke shells are miniature smoke grenades. Instead of injuring the target, they create a large cloud of thick smoke to blind the enemy, create temporary visual cover, or the like.

In game terms, Smoke shells of any gauge are bought as follows:

Change Environment 4” radius, -3 to Sight Group PER Rolls (21 Active Points); OAF (-1), Limited Range (20”; -¼), Real Weapon (-¼), STR Minimum (varies), a number of Continuing Charges lasting 1 Turn each that depends on the type of shotgun used. Total cost: varies.

Steel Shot

Some shot is made from steel instead of lead. Steel shot typically deforms less and spreads less than lead shot, and thus shoots with a denser pattern.

In game terms, Steel Shot does the same damage as Standard Shot, but does not have the *Area Of Effect* (One Hex; +½) Advantage, and its Limited Range increases to 30”.

SHOTGUN AMMUNITION SUMMARY CHART

Ammunition Type	.410	28, 24	20, 16	12	10	4	Notes
Standard Shot	1½d6	2d6	2d6+1	2½d6	3d6	3d6+1	AE1, LR (20”), RR, RP
Standard Slug	1½d6	2d6	2d6+1	2½d6	3d6	3d6+1	Beam, LR (50”)
Air Bomb	5d6 EB	6d6 EB	7d6 EB	8d6 EB	9d6 EB	10d6 EB	AE1, LR (20”), Linked Flash 3d6
Armor Piercing Slug	1d6+1	2d6-1	2d6	2d6+1	2½d6	3d6	AP, Beam, LR (50”)
Baton/Beanbag	5d6 EB	6d6 EB	7d6 EB	8d6 EB	9d6 EB	10d6 EB	Beam, LR (20”)
BRI Slug	1½d6	2d6	2d6+1	2½d6	3d6	3d6+1	Beam
Buffered Shot	2d6-1	2d6+1	2½d6	3d6-1	3d6+1	3½d6	LR (30”), RR, RP
Cubic Shot	1½d6	2d6	2d6+1	2½d6	3d6	3d6+1	AEC, NR, RR, RP
Explosive Slug	1½d6	2d6	2d6+1	2½d6	3d6	3d6+1	Exp, LR (50”)
Fireball	1½d6	2d6	2d6+1	2½d6	3d6	3d6+1	AE1, LR (20”), RR, RP, firestarting
Flare	5d6 Flash	6d6 Flash	7d6 Flash	8d6 Flash	9d6 Flash	10d6 Flash	Exp, LR (20”)
Flechette	2d6-1	2d6+1	2½d6	3d6-1	3d6+1	3½d6	AP, LR (50”), RR, RP
Ice	1½d6	2d6	2d6+1	2½d6	3d6	3d6+1	AE1, IPE, LR (20”), RR, RP
Linked Shot	1d6+1	2d6-1	2d6	2d6+1	2½d6	3d6	LR (30”), RR, RP
Lockbreaker	1½d6	2d6	2d6+1	2½d6	3d6	3d6+1	AE1, LR (20”), RR, RP, ½ damage
Rubber Shot	5d6 EB	6d6 EB	7d6 EB	8d6 EB	9d6 EB	10d6 EB	AE1, LR (20”), RR, RP
Saboted Slug	1½d6	2d6	2d6+1	2½d6	3d6	3d6+1	Beam, LR (50”), Piercing1
Semi-AP Slug	1½d6	2d6	2d6+1	2½d6	3d6	3d6+1	Beam, LR (50”), Semi-AP
Silent	1d6+1	2d6-1	2d6	2d6+1	2½d6	3d6	AE1, AP, CE, LR (30”)
Smoke	CE	CE	CE	CE	CE	CE	CE (-3 Sight PER in 4” radius)
Steel Shot	1½d6	2d6	2d6+1	2½d6	3d6	3d6+1	LR (30”), RR, RP
Tear Gas	8d6 Flash	8d6 Flash	8d6 Flash	8d6 Flash	8d6 Flash	8d6 Flash	AE2, Indirect, LR (50”), 1 Turn

Listed damage is Killing Damage unless indicated otherwise

All shotgun rounds have a +1 STUN Modifier.

KEY

- 1 Turn: Continuing Charges lasting 1 Turn each
- AE1: Area Of Effect (One Hex)
- AE2: Area Of Effect (One Hex Doubled)
- AEC: Area Of Effect (Cone)
- AP: Armor Piercing (the Advantage)
- CE: Change Environment
- EB: Energy Blast
- Exp: Explosion

- IPE: Invisible Power Effects
- LR: Limited Range
- NND: No Normal Defense
- NR: No Range
- Piercing1: 1 point of Piercing (Resistant)
- RP: Reduced Penetration
- RR: Reduced By Range
- Semi-AP: Semi-Armor Piercing



Tear Gas

Tear Gas shells fire finned projectiles that contain tear gas. They're used for riot control and other situations where the shooter needs to incapacitate people. The shell is specifically designed to penetrate walls and cars (if necessary) before releasing the gas. In game terms, regardless of gauge they're bought as follows:

Sight Group Flash 8d6, Area Of Effect (One Hex Doubled; +¼), Continuous (+1), Delayed Recovery (+2), Indirect (can penetrate walls and similar barriers within 30" of shooter, as described in text; +¼) (200 Active Points); OAF (-1), Limited Range (50"; -¼), Real Weapon (-¼), STR Minimum (varies), Two-Handed (-½), a number of Continuing Charges lasting 1 Turn each that depends on the type of shotgun used. Total cost: varies.

At the GM's option, if a tear gas round is fired directly at a target within 5" of the shooter (other than a barrier the shooter intends to shoot through, as described above), the shell strikes as a slug of the same gauge (but with -2 DCs of damage) before releasing the tear gas.

FIREARMS COST/ UPGRADE TABLES

The accompanying tables list the Character Point costs for firearms using different types of ammunition, based on the number of shots (Charges) the gun has. These charts all assume the gun in question has a STR Min of 6-14.

These charts have several uses. The first and simplest is to determine the cost of a firearm intended to fire a given type of ammunition, based on the number of Charges the gun has. If you want the gun to have multiple Clips, just move one column to the right on the appropriate table for every x2 Clips. Thus, two columns to the right is the cost of four clips, three is eight clips, and so forth (don't forget to allow for the doubling that occurs when you go from 13-16 Charges to 17-32 Charges, if appropriate).

Example: Hammer wants to carry a .45 semi-automatic handgun loaded with Hollow Point ammunition. The gun has 12 Charges. Consulting the Hollow Point table, he finds out that this gun will cost 12 Character Points. If he wants to have two Clips, it will cost 13 points.

Second, the tables tell you the cost of upgrading a firearm to carry more rounds of ammunition. Look at the table to find out the cost of the gun with the number of Charges you want it to have. Subtract the gun's current cost from that amount, and the remainder is the Character Point cost of upgrading the gun to carry more rounds. (Of course, in a Heroic game, the character doesn't necessarily have to pay these points — he may get them for free, or now have to allocate more points to the gun from his Equipment Points.)

Example: *After some intense firefights, Hammer decides he wants to carry 16 rounds in his .45 instead of twelve. Looking at the Hollow Point chart, he discovers that his gun would cost 13 Character Points with 16 Charges. He subtracts 12 (the cost of his gun with 12 Charges) from 13 and gets 1 — that's the cost of upgrading his gun.*

Third, you can use these tables to determine the cost of carrying a single clip of a special type of ammunition. A character typically builds a gun with the type of bullets he expects to fire in it normally. However, he might also want to have a clip or two of different types of ammunition. To figure out the Character Point cost of a single clip of a given type of ammunition, find the cost of the gun with its regular ammunition (or Standard, if no other type is specified). Then find the cost of the gun with the exact same caliber of the type of bullet the character wants to have in the single clip (the character can choose whatever size of clip — *i.e.*, how many Charges the clip has). Then subtract the first number from the second number, and that tells you the cost of the single clip in Character Points. (If the cost is 0 or a negative number, the single clip costs 1 Character Point.)

Example: *Hammer decides he'd like to have a single clip with 12 rounds of Reversed Ogive ammunition for his .45. Consulting the Reversed Ogive table, he finds that his gun with Reversed Ogive ammo would cost 19 Character Points. He subtracts 12 (the cost of his gun with its regular round, Hollow Points) from 19 and gets 7 — that's the cost of his single clip of Reversed Ogive ammo.*

Later Hammer also decides he wants a clip of 16 rounds of Armor Piercing ammunition. Consulting the Armor Piercing table, he finds that his gun with 16 Charges of AP ammo would cost 13 Character Points. He subtracts 12 (the cost of his gun with 12 Charges of its regular round, Hollow Points) from 13 and gets 1 — that's the cost of his single clip of Armor Piercing ammo.

KEY

Title: The title of the table, and possibly other text on the page, explain what type of firearm the table applies to. This covers such variables as standard firearms or shotguns, the STR Minimum in question, whether the weapon requires one hand or two hands to fire, and so forth.

Name: The name of the type of ammunition the table applies to. Other pertinent information, such as relevant Power Modifiers, are listed here as well.

Caliber: The size of the bullet, which determines the base damage a gun does. For shotguns, this becomes Gauge.

DMG: The base damage the gun causes, depending on type and size of ammunition.

STUN: The STUN Multiplier for the gun. Larger-caliber bullets have a +1 STUN Multiplier, as do all shotgun rounds, and the tables reflect this.

ACP: The Active Points in the firearm. Note that this changes in the columns for 17 or more Charges, since that applies an additional Advantage to the weapon.

Charges: The numbered columns indicate the number of Charges the firearm has. For non-Auto-fire weapons, this ranges from 1 to 65-125. For Autofire firearms, this ranges from 9-12 to 126+.

1 Turn: Continuing Charges lasting 1 Turn each

Act: Activation Roll

AE1: Area Of Effect (One Hex)

AE2: Area Of Effect (One Hex Doubled)

AEC: Area Of Effect (Cone)

AP: Armor Piercing (the Advantage)

CBB: Cannot Be Bounced

CE: Change Environment

EB: Energy Blast

IMR2: Increased Maximum Range (x2)

IPE: Invisible Power Effects

LR: Limited Range

M: Magnum

N: NATO

NND: No Normal Defense

Piercing1: 1 point of Piercing (Resistant)

RP: Reduced Penetration

RR: Reduced By Range

Semi-AP: Semi-Armor Piercing

Win Mag: Winchester Magnum

STANDARD FIREARMS TABLES

These tables are for standard firearms (*i.e.*, ones firing bullets) loaded with Standard ammunition.

STANDARD AMMUNITION, NON-AUTOFIRE, ONE-HANDED, STR MIN 6-14															
NAME	CALIBER	DMG	STUN	AcP	1	2	3	4	5-6	7-8	9-12	13-16	17-32	33-64	65-125
Standard STR Min 6-14	.22	1d6-1	1d6-1	12	2	2	2	3	3	3	3	3	15/4	18/5	21/6
	.32, .38	1d6	1d6-1	15	3	3	3	3	3	4	4	4	19/5	22/6	26/7
	.40, 9mm	1d6+1	1d6-1	20	4	4	4	4	5	5	5	6	25/7	30/9	35/10
	.357 M, .41 M, 10mm	1½d6	1d6-1	25	4	5	5	5	6	6	7	7	31/9	37/11	44/13
	.45 ACP, 11mm	2d6-1	1d6	34	6	7	7	7	8	8	9	10	40/11	47/13	54/15
	.44 M, .45 Win Mag	2d6	1d6	37	7	7	8	8	9	9	10	11	45/13	52/15	60/17
	.223, 5.56mmN	2d6	1d6	37	7	7	8	8	9	9	10	11	45/13	52/15	60/17
	.50 AE, 7.62mmN	2d6+1	1d6	44	8	9	9	10	10	11	12	13	52/15	61/17	70/20

STANDARD AMMUNITION, NON-AUTOFIRE, TWO-HANDED, STR MIN 6-14															
NAME	CALIBER	DMG	STUN	AcP	1	2	3	4	5-6	7-8	9-12	13-16	17-32	33-64	65-125
Standard STR Min 6-14	.22	1d6-1	1d6-1	12	2	2	2	2	2	3	3	3	15/4	18/4	21/5
	.32, .38	1d6	1d6-1	15	2	3	3	3	3	3	3	4	19/5	22/5	26/6
	.40, 9mm	1d6+1	1d6-1	20	3	4	4	4	4	4	5	5	25/6	30/7	35/9
	.357 M, .41 M, 10mm	1½d6	1d6-1	25	4	4	5	5	5	5	6	6	31/8	37/9	44/11
	.45 ACP, 11mm	2d6-1	1d6	34	6	6	6	7	7	7	8	8	40/10	47/12	54/13
	.44 M, .45 Win Mag	2d6	1d6	37	6	7	7	7	8	8	9	9	45/11	52/13	60/15
	.223, 5.56mmN	2d6	1d6	37	6	7	7	7	8	8	9	9	45/11	52/13	60/15
	.50 AE, 7.62mmN	2d6+1	1d6	44	7	8	8	9	9	10	10	11	52/13	61/15	70/17

STANDARD AMMUNITION, NON-AUTOFIRE, TWO-HANDED, STR MIN 15-17															
NAME	CALIBER	DMG	STUN	AcP	1	2	3	4	5-6	7-8	9-12	13-16	17-32	33-64	65-125
Standard STR Min 15-17	.22	1d6-1	1d6-1	12	2	2	2	2	2	2	3	3	15/3	18/4	21/5
	.32, .38	1d6	1d6-1	15	2	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	19/4	22/5	26/6
	.40, 9mm	1d6+1	1d6-1	20	3	3	4	4	4	4	4	5	25/6	30/7	35/8
	.357 M, .41 M, 10mm	1½d6	1d6-1	25	4	4	4	5	5	5	5	6	31/7	37/9	44/10
	.45 ACP, 11mm	2d6-1	1d6	34	5	6	6	6	7	7	7	8	40/9	47/11	54/13
	.44 M, .45 Win Mag	2d6	1d6	37	6	6	7	7	7	8	8	9	45/11	52/12	60/14
	.223, 5.56mmN	2d6	1d6	37	6	6	7	7	7	8	8	9	45/11	52/12	60/14
	.50 AE, 7.62mmN	2d6+1	1d6	44	7	8	8	8	9	9	10	10	52/12	61/14	70/16

STANDARD AMMUNITION, NON-AUTOFIRE, TWO-HANDED, STR MIN 18+															
NAME	CALIBER	DMG	STUN	AcP	1	2	3	4	5-6	7-8	9-12	13-16	17-32	33-64	65-125
Standard STR Min 18+	.22	1d6-1	1d6-1	12	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	3	15/3	18/4	21/5
	.32, .38	1d6	1d6-1	15	2	2	3	3	3	3	3	3	19/4	22/5	26/6
	.40, 9mm	1d6+1	1d6-1	20	3	3	3	4	4	4	4	4	25/5	30/7	35/8
	.357 M, .41 M, 10mm	1½d6	1d6-1	25	4	4	4	4	5	5	5	5	31/7	37/8	44/10
	.45 ACP, 11mm	2d6-1	1d6	34	5	6	6	6	6	7	7	7	40/9	47/10	54/12
	.44 M, .45 Win Mag	2d6	1d6	37	6	6	6	7	7	7	8	8	45/10	52/11	60/13
	.223, 5.56mmN	2d6	1d6	37	6	6	6	7	7	7	8	8	45/10	52/11	60/13
	.50 AE, 7.62mmN	2d6+1	1d6	44	7	7	8	8	8	9	9	10	52/11	61/13	70/15

Standard Firearms Tables (Continued)

STANDARD AMMUNITION, AUTOFIRE, ONE-HANDED, STR MIN 6-14										
NAME	CALIBER	DMG	STUN	AcP	9-12	13-16	17-32	33-64	65-125	126+
Standard AF5	.22	1d6-1	1d6-1	18	5	5	21/6	24/7	27/8	30/9
	.32, .38	1d6	1d6-1	22	6	6	26/7	30/9	34/10	37/10
STR Min 6-14	.40, 9mm	1d6+1	1d6-1	30	8	9	35/10	40/11	45/13	50/14
	.357 M, .41 M, 10mm	1½d6	1d6-1	37	10	11	44/13	50/14	56/16	62/18
	.45 ACP, 11mm	2d6-1	1d6	47	12	13	54/15	61/17	67/19	74/21
	.44 M, .45 Win Mag	2d6	1d6	52	14	15	60/17	67/19	75/21	82/23
	.223, 5.56mmN	2d6	1d6	52	14	15	60/17	67/19	75/21	82/23
	.50 AE, 7.62mmN	2d6+1	1d6	61	16	17	70/20	79/23	87/25	96/27

STANDARD AMMUNITION, AUTOFIRE, TWO-HANDED, STR MIN 6-14										
NAME	CALIBER	DMG	STUN	AcP	9-12	13-16	17-32	33-64	65-125	126+
Standard AF5	.22	1d6-1	1d6-1	18	4	4	21/5	24/6	27/7	30/7
	.32, .38	1d6	1d6-1	22	5	5	26/6	30/7	34/8	37/9
STR Min 6-14	.40, 9mm	1d6+1	1d6-1	30	7	7	35/9	40/10	45/11	50/12
	.357 M, .41 M, 10mm	1½d6	1d6-1	37	9	9	44/11	50/12	56/14	62/15
	.45 ACP, 11mm	2d6-1	1d6	47	11	12	54/13	61/15	67/17	74/18
	.44 M, .45 Win Mag	2d6	1d6	52	12	13	60/15	67/17	75/19	82/20
	.223, 5.56mmN	2d6	1d6	52	12	13	60/15	67/17	75/19	82/20
	.50 AE, 7.62mmN	2d6+1	1d6	61	14	15	70/17	79/20	87/22	96/24

STANDARD AMMUNITION, AUTOFIRE, TWO-HANDED, STR MIN 15-17										
NAME	CALIBER	DMG	STUN	AcP	9-12	13-16	17-32	33-64	65-125	126+
Standard AF5	.22	1d6-1	1d6-1	18	4	4	21/5	24/6	27/6	30/7
	.32, .38	1d6	1d6-1	22	5	5	26/6	30/7	34/8	37/9
STR Min 15-17	.40, 9mm	1d6+1	1d6-1	30	7	7	35/8	40/9	45/11	50/12
	.357 M, .41 M, 10mm	1½d6	1d6-1	37	8	9	44/10	50/12	56/13	62/14
	.45 ACP, 11mm	2d6-1	1d6	47	10	11	54/13	61/14	67/16	74/17
	.44 M, .45 Win Mag	2d6	1d6	52	11	12	60/14	67/16	75/18	82/19
	.223, 5.56mmN	2d6	1d6	52	11	12	60/14	67/16	75/18	82/19
	.50 AE, 7.62mmN	2d6+1	1d6	61	13	14	70/16	79/19	87/20	96/23

STANDARD AMMUNITION, AUTOFIRE, TWO-HANDED, STR MIN 18+										
NAME	CALIBER	DMG	STUN	AcP	9-12	13-16	17-32	33-64	65-125	126+
Standard AF5	.22	1d6-1	1d6-1	18	4	4	21/5	24/5	27/6	30/7
	.32, .38	1d6	1d6-1	22	5	5	26/6	30/7	34/7	37/8
STR Min 18+	.40, 9mm	1d6+1	1d6-1	30	6	7	35/8	40/9	45/10	50/11
	.357 M, .41 M, 10mm	1½d6	1d6-1	37	8	8	44/10	50/11	56/12	62/14
	.45 ACP, 11mm	2d6-1	1d6	47	10	10	54/12	61/13	67/15	74/16
	.44 M, .45 Win Mag	2d6	1d6	52	11	11	60/13	67/15	75/17	82/18
	.223, 5.56mmN	2d6	1d6	52	11	11	60/13	67/15	75/17	82/18
	.50 AE, 7.62mmN	2d6+1	1d6	61	13	13	70/15	79/17	87/19	96/21

EXOTIC AMMUNITION TABLES

These tables are for standard firearms (*i.e.*, ones firing bullets) loaded with exotic forms of ammunition, such as AET, Frangible, or Sub-sonic. All are for one-handed, non-Autofire weapons with a STR Minimum of 6-14.

AET AMMUNITION, NON-AUTOFIRE, ONE-HANDED, STR MIN 6-14															
NAME	CALIBER	DMG	STUN	AcP	1	2	3	4	5-6	7-8	9-12	13-16	17-32	33-64	65-125
AET CBB, RP, STR Min 6-14	.22	1d6	1d6-1	15	2	3	3	3	3	3	3	4	19/5	22/5	26/6
	.32, .38	1d6+1	1d6-1	20	3	4	4	4	4	4	5	5	25/6	30/7	35/9
	.40, 9mm	1½d6	1d6-1	25	4	4	5	5	5	5	6	6	31/8	37/9	44/11
	.357 M, .41 M, 10mm	2d6	1d6-1	30	5	5	6	6	6	7	7	7	37/9	45/11	52/13
	.45 ACP, 11mm	2d6	1d6	37	6	7	7	7	8	8	9	9	45/11	52/13	60/15
	.44 M, .45 Win Mag	2d6+1	1d6	44	7	8	8	9	9	10	10	11	52/13	61/15	70/17
	.223, 5.56mmN	2d6+1	1d6	44	7	8	8	9	9	10	10	11	52/13	61/15	70/17
	.50 AE, 7.62mmN	2½d6	1d6	50	8	9	9	10	10	11	12	12	60/15	70/17	80/20

AET COMPOSITE AMMUNITION, NON-AUTOFIRE, ONE-HANDED, STR MIN 6-14															
NAME	CALIBER	DMG	STUN	AcP	1	2	3	4	5-6	7-8	9-12	13-16	17-32	33-64	65-125
AET Composite CBB, STR Min 6-14	.22	1d6	1d6-1	15	3	3	3	3	3	3	4	4	19/5	22/6	26/7
	.32, .38	1d6+1	1d6-1	20	3	4	4	4	4	5	5	5	25/7	30/8	35/9
	.40, 9mm	1½d6	1d6-1	25	4	5	5	5	5	6	6	7	31/8	37/10	44/12
	.357 M, .41 M, 10mm	2d6	1d6-1	30	5	6	6	6	7	7	7	8	37/10	45/12	52/14
	.45 ACP, 11mm	2d6	1d6	37	6	7	7	8	8	9	9	10	45/12	52/14	60/15
	.44 M, .45 Win Mag	2d6+1	1d6	44	8	8	9	9	10	10	11	12	52/14	61/16	70/19
	.223, 5.56mmN	2d6+1	1d6	44	8	8	9	9	10	10	11	12	52/14	61/16	70/19
	.50 AE, 7.62mmN	2½d6	1d6	50	9	9	10	10	11	12	12	13	60/16	70/19	80/21

ARMOR PIERCING AMMUNITION, NON-AUTOFIRE, ONE-HANDED, STR MIN 6-14															
NAME	CALIBER	DMG	STUN	AcP	1	2	3	4	5-6	7-8	9-12	13-16	17-32	33-64	65-125
Armor Piercing AP STR Min 6-14	.22	½d6	1d6-1	15	3	3	3	3	3	4	4	4	17/5	20/6	22/6
	.32, .38	1d6-1	1d6-1	18	3	4	4	4	4	4	5	5	21/6	24/7	27/8
	.40, 9mm	1d6	1d6-1	22	4	4	5	5	5	5	6	6	26/7	30/9	34/10
	.357 M, .41 M, 10mm	1d6+1	1d6-1	30	5	6	6	7	7	7	8	9	35/10	40/11	45/13
	.45 ACP, 11mm	1½d6	1d6	44	8	9	9	10	10	11	12	13	50/14	56/16	62/18
	.44 M, .45 Win Mag	2d6-1	1d6	47	8	9	10	10	11	12	12	13	54/15	61/17	67/19
	.223, 5.56mmN	2d6	1d6	52	9	10	11	11	12	13	14	15	60/17	67/19	75/21
	.50 AE, 7.62mmN	2d6	1d6	52	9	10	11	11	12	13	14	15	60/17	67/19	75/21

AP DEPLETED URANIUM AMMUNITION, NON-AUTOFIRE, ONE-HANDED, STR MIN 6-14															
NAME	CALIBER	DMG	STUN	AcP	1	2	3	4	5-6	7-8	9-12	13-16	17-32	33-64	65-125
Armor Piercing Depleted Uranium AP, Piercing 1, firestarting STR Min 6-14	.22	½d6	1d6-1	35	5	7	7	7	7	8	8	8	39/11	42/11	45/12
	.32, .38	1d6-1	1d6-1	38	6	7	8	8	8	8	9	9	42/11	46/13	50/14
	.40, 9mm	1d6	1d6-1	43	7	8	9	9	9	20	10	11	47/13	52/14	56/15
	.357 M, .41 M, 10mm	1d6+1	1d6-1	50	8	10	10	10	11	11	12	13	56/15	62/17	68/19
	.45 ACP, 11mm	1½d6	1d6	65	11	13	13	14	14	15	16	17	73/20	80/22	87/24
	.44 M, .45 Win Mag	2d6-1	1d6	68	11	13	14	14	15	16	17	18	77/21	84/23	92/25
	.223, 5.56mmN	2d6	1d6	74	12	15	15	16	17	17	18	20	83/23	91/25	99/28
	.50 AE, 7.62mmN	2d6	1d6	74	12	15	15	16	17	17	18	20	83/23	91/25	99/28

Exotic Ammunition Tables (Continued)

ARMOR PIERCING EXPLOSIVE AMMUNITION, NON-AUTOFIRE, ONE-HANDED, STR MIN 6-14															
NAME	CALIBER	DMG	STUN	AcP	1	2	3	4	5-6	7-8	9-12	13-16	17-32	33-64	65-125
Armor Piercing Explosive AP CBB, STR Min 6-14	.22	1d6	1d6-1	22	4	4	4	5	5	5	5	6	26/7	30/8	34/9
	.32, .38	1d6+1	1d6-1	30	5	6	6	6	7	7	7	8	35/9	40/11	45/12
	.40, 9mm	1½d6	1d6-1	37	6	7	7	8	8	9	9	10	44/12	50/13	56/15
	.357 M, .41 M, 10mm	2d6	1d6-1	45	8	9	9	9	10	11	11	12	52/14	60/16	67/18
	.45 ACP, 11mm	2d6	1d6	52	9	10	10	11	11	12	13	14	60/16	67/18	75/20
	.44 M, .45 Win Mag	2d6+1	1d6	61	11	12	12	13	13	14	15	16	70/16	79/21	87/23
	.223, 5.56mmN	2d6+1	1d6	61	11	12	12	13	13	14	15	16	70/19	79/21	87/23
	.50 AE, 7.62mmN	2½d6	1d6	70	12	13	14	15	15	16	17	19	80/21	90/24	100/27

ARMOR PIERCING HARDCORE AMMUNITION, NON-AUTOFIRE, ONE-HANDED, STR MIN 6-14															
NAME	CALIBER	DMG	STUN	AcP	1	2	3	4	5-6	7-8	9-12	13-16	17-32	33-64	65-125
Armor Piercing Hardcore AP, Piercing1 STR Min 6-14	.22	½d6	1d6-1	19	3	4	4	4	4	5	5	5	23/7	26/7	29/8
	.32, .38	1d6-1	1d6-1	22	4	4	5	5	5	5	6	6	26/7	30/9	34/10
	.40, 9mm	1d6	1d6-1	27	5	5	6	6	6	7	7	8	31/9	36/10	40/11
	.357 M, .41 M, 10mm	1d6+1	1d6-1	34	6	7	7	7	8	8	9	10	40/11	46/13	52/15
	.45 ACP, 11mm	1½d6	1d6	49	9	10	10	11	11	12	13	14	56/16	63/18	70/20
	.44 M, .45 Win Mag	2d6-1	1d6	52	9	10	11	11	12	13	14	15	60/17	67/19	75/21
	.223, 5.56mmN	2d6	1d6	58	10	12	12	13	14	14	15	17	66/19	74/21	82/23
	.50 AE, 7.62mmN	2d6	1d6	58	10	12	12	13	14	14	15	17	66/19	74/21	82/23

AP HARDCORE EXPLOSIVE AMMUNITION, NON-AUTOFIRE, ONE-HANDED, STR MIN 6-14															
NAME	CALIBER	DMG	STUN	AcP	1	2	3	4	5-6	7-8	9-12	13-16	17-32	33-64	65-125
Armor Piercing Hardcore Explosive AP, Piercing1 STR Min 6-14	.22	1d6	1d6-1	27	5	5	6	6	6	7	7	8	31/9	36/10	40/11
	.32, .38	1d6+1	1d6-1	34	6	7	7	7	8	8	9	10	40/11	46/13	52/15
	.40, 9mm	1½d6	1d6-1	42	8	8	9	9	10	10	11	12	49/14	56/16	63/18
	.357 M, .41 M, 10mm	2d6	1d6-1	49	9	10	10	11	11	12	13	14	58/17	66/19	74/21
	.45 ACP, 11mm	2d6	1d6	58	10	12	12	13	14	14	15	17	66/19	74/21	82/23
	.44 M, .45 Win Mag	2d6+1	1d6	66	12	13	14	15	15	16	18	19	76/22	85/24	95/27
	.223, 5.56mmN	2d6+1	1d6	66	12	13	14	15	15	16	18	19	76/22	85/24	95/27
	.50 AE, 7.62mmN	2½d6	1d6	75	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	86/25	97/28	107/31

AP INCENDIARY AMMUNITION, NON-AUTOFIRE, ONE-HANDED, STR MIN 6-14															
NAME	CALIBER	DMG	STUN	AcP	1	2	3	4	5-6	7-8	9-12	13-16	17-32	33-64	65-125
Armor Piercing Incendiary AP, firestarting STR Min 6-14	.22	½d6	1d6-1	31	6	6	6	6	7	8	8	9	33/10	36/11	38/12
	.32, .38	1d6-1	1d6-1	34	6	6	7	7	8	8	9	10	37/11	40/12	43/14
	.40, 9mm	1d6	1d6-1	38	7	7	8	8	9	9	10	11	42/12	46/14	50/16
	.357 M, .41 M, 10mm	1d6+1	1d6-1	46	8	9	8	10	11	11	12	14	51/15	56/16	61/19
	.45 ACP, 11mm	1½d6	1d6	61	11	12	12	13	14	15	16	18	67/19	73/21	79/24
	.44 M, .45 Win Mag	2d6-1	1d6	64	11	12	13	13	15	16	16	18	81/20	78/22	84/25
	.223, 5.56mmN	2d6	1d6	68	12	13	14	14	16	17	18	20	77/22	84/24	92/27
	.50 AE, 7.62mmN	2d6	1d6	68	12	13	14	14	16	17	18	20	77/22	84/24	92/27

Exotic Ammunition Tables (Continued)

ARMOR PIERCING SABOTED AMMUNITION, NON-AUTOFIRE, ONE-HANDED, STR MIN 6-14															
NAME	CALIBER	DMG	STUN	AcP	1	2	3	4	5-6	7-8	9-12	13-16	17-32	33-64	65-125
Armor Piercing Saboted AP, IPE (no rifling marks on bullet) STR Min 6-14	.22	½d6	1d6-1	17	3	3	4	4	4	4	4	5	20/6	22/6	25/7
	.32, .38	1d6-1	1d6-1	21	4	4	4	5	5	5	6	6	24/7	27/8	30/9
	.40, 9mm	1d6	1d6-1	26	5	5	5	6	6	6	7	7	30/9	34/10	37/11
	.357 M, .41 M, 10mm	1d6+1	1d6-1	35	6	7	7	8	8	9	9	10	40/11	45/13	50/14
	.45 ACP, 11mm	1½d6	1d6	50	9	10	10	11	12	12	13	14	56/16	62/18	69/20
	.44 M, .45 Win Mag	2d6-1	1d6	54	10	11	11	12	13	13	14	15	61/17	67/19	74/21
	.223, 5.56mmN	2d6	1d6	60	11	12	13	13	14	15	16	17	67/19	75/21	82/23
.50 AE, 7.62mmN	2d6	1d6	60	11	12	13	13	14	15	16	17	67/19	75/21	82/23	

CASED TELESCOPED AMMUNITION, NON-AUTOFIRE, ONE-HANDED, STR MIN 6-14															
NAME	CALIBER	DMG	STUN	AcP	1	2	3	4	5-6	7-8	9-12	13-16	17-32	33-64	65-125
Cased Telescoped STR Min 6-14	.22	1d6	1d6-1	15	3	3	3	3	3	4	4	4	19/5	22/6	26/7
	.32, .38	1d6+1	1d6-1	20	4	4	4	4	5	5	5	6	25/7	30/9	35/10
	.40, 9mm	1½d6	1d6-1	25	4	5	5	5	6	6	7	7	31/9	37/11	44/13
	.357 M, .41 M, 10mm	2d6	1d6-1	30	5	6	6	7	7	7	8	9	37/11	45/13	52/15
	.45 ACP, 11mm	2d6	1d6	37	7	7	8	8	9	9	10	11	45/13	52/15	60/17
	.44 M, .45 Win Mag	2d6+1	1d6	44	8	9	9	10	10	11	12	13	52/15	61/17	70/20
	.223, 5.56mmN	2d6+1	1d6	44	8	9	9	10	10	11	12	13	52/15	61/17	70/20
	.50 AE, 7.62mmN	2½d6	1d6	50	9	10	10	11	12	12	13	14	60/17	70/20	80/23

CASELESS AMMUNITION, NON-AUTOFIRE, ONE-HANDED, STR MIN 6-14															
NAME	CALIBER	DMG	STUN	AcP	1	2	3	4	5-6	7-8	9-12	13-16	17-32	33-64	65-125
Caseless IPE (leaves no shell casings) STR Min 6-14	.22	1d6-1	1d6-1	15	3	3	3	3	3	4	4	4	18/5	21/6	24/7
	.32, .38	1d6	1d6-1	19	3	4	4	4	4	5	5	5	22/6	26/7	30/9
	.40, 9mm	1d6+1	1d6-1	25	4	5	5	5	6	6	7	7	30/9	35/10	40/11
	.357 M, .41 M, 10mm	1½d6	1d6-1	31	6	6	6	7	7	8	8	9	37/11	44/13	50/14
	.45 ACP, 11mm	2d6-1	1d6	40	7	8	8	9	9	10	11	11	47/13	54/15	61/17
	.44 M, .45 Win Mag	2d6	1d6	45	8	9	9	10	11	11	12	13	52/15	60/17	67/19
	.223, 5.56mmN	2d6	1d6	45	8	9	9	10	11	11	12	13	52/15	60/17	67/19
	.50 AE, 7.62mmN	2d6+1	1d6	52	9	10	11	11	12	13	14	15	61/17	70/20	79/23

DUPLEX AMMUNITION, NON-AUTOFIRE, ONE-HANDED, STR MIN 6-14															
NAME	CALIBER	DMG	STUN	AcP	1	2	3	4	5-6	7-8	9-12	13-16	17-32	33-64	65-125
Duplex RP, STR Min 6-14	.22	1d6	1d6-1	15	3	3	3	3	3	3	4	4	19/5	22/6	26/7
	.32, .38	1d6+1	1d6-1	20	3	4	4	4	4	5	5	5	25/7	30/8	35/9
	.40, 9mm	1½d6	1d6-1	25	4	5	5	5	5	6	6	7	31/8	37/10	44/12
	.357 M, .41 M, 10mm	2d6	1d6-1	30	5	6	6	6	7	7	7	8	37/10	45/12	52/14
	.45 ACP, 11mm	2d6	1d6	37	6	7	7	8	8	9	9	10	45/12	52/14	60/15
	.44 M, .45 Win Mag	2d6+1	1d6	44	8	8	9	9	10	10	11	12	52/14	61/16	70/19
	.223, 5.56mmN	2d6+1	1d6	44	8	8	9	9	10	10	11	12	52/14	61/16	70/19
	.50 AE, 7.62mmN	2½d6	1d6	50	9	9	10	10	11	12	12	13	60/16	70/19	80/21

Exotic Ammunition Tables (Continued)

ELECTRIC AMMUNITION, NON-AUTOFIRE, ONE-HANDED, STR MIN 6-14															
NAME	CALIBER	DMG	STUN	AcP	1	2	3	4	5-6	7-8	9-12	13-16	17-32	33-64	65-125
Electric EB 8d6, NND (defense is rED), Linked STR Min 6-14	.22	1d6-1	1d6-1	92	19	21	22	24	26	28	30	32	105/37	118/41	131/46
	.32, .38	1d6	1d6-1	95	20	22	23	24	26	29	31	33	109/38	122/42	136/47
	.40, 9mm	1d6+1	1d6-1	100	21	23	24	25	28	30	32	35	115/40	130/45	145/50
	.357 M, .41 M, 10mm	1½d6	1d6-1	105	21	24	25	26	29	31	34	36	121/42	137/47	154/53
	.45 ACP, 11mm	2d6-1	1d6	114	23	26	27	28	31	33	26	39	130/44	147/49	164/55
	.44 M, .45 Win Mag	2d6	1d6	117	24	26	28	29	32	34	37	40	135/46	152/51	170/57
	.223, 5.56mmN	2d6	1d6	117	24	26	28	29	32	34	37	40	135/46	152/51	170/57
	.50 AE, 7.62mmN	2d6+1	1d6	124	25	27	29	31	33	36	39	42	142/48	161/53	180/60

EXPLOSIVE AMMUNITION, NON-AUTOFIRE, ONE-HANDED, STR MIN 6-14															
NAME	CALIBER	DMG	STUN	AcP	1	2	3	4	5-6	7-8	9-12	13-16	17-32	33-64	65-125
Explosive STR Min 6-14	.22	1d6	1d6-1	15	3	3	3	3	3	4	4	4	19/5	22/6	26/7
	.32, .38	1d6+1	1d6-1	20	4	4	4	4	5	5	5	6	25/7	30/9	35/10
	.40, 9mm	1½d6	1d6-1	25	4	5	5	5	6	6	7	7	31/9	37/11	44/13
	.357 M, .41 M, 10mm	2d6	1d6-1	30	5	6	6	7	7	7	8	9	37/11	45/13	52/15
	.45 ACP, 11mm	2d6	1d6	37	7	7	8	8	9	9	10	11	45/13	52/15	60/17
	.44 M, .45 Win Mag	2d6+1	1d6	44	8	9	9	10	10	11	12	13	52/15	61/17	70/20
	.223, 5.56mmN	2d6+1	1d6	44	8	9	9	10	10	11	12	13	52/15	61/17	70/20
	.50 AE, 7.62mmN	2½d6	1d6	50	9	10	10	11	12	12	13	14	60/17	70/20	80/23

FIBERGLASS/PLASTIC AMMUNITION, NON-AUTOFIRE, ONE-HANDED, STR MIN 6-14															
NAME	CALIBER	DMG	STUN	AcP	1	2	3	4	5-6	7-8	9-12	13-16	17-32	33-64	65-125
Fiberglass/ Plastic IPE (-3 to Forensic Medi- cine rolls) STR Min 6-14	.22	1d6-1	1d6-1	15	3	3	3	3	3	4	4	4	18/5	21/6	24/7
	.32, .38	1d6	1d6-1	19	3	4	4	4	4	5	5	5	22/6	26/7	30/9
	.40, 9mm	1d6+1	1d6-1	25	4	5	5	5	6	6	7	7	30/9	35/10	40/11
	.357 M, .41 M, 10mm	1½d6	1d6-1	31	6	6	6	7	7	8	8	9	37/11	44/13	50/14
	.45 ACP, 11mm	2d6-1	1d6	40	7	8	8	9	9	10	11	11	47/13	54/15	61/17
	.44 M, .45 Win Mag	2d6	1d6	45	8	9	9	10	11	11	12	13	52/15	60/17	67/19
	.223, 5.56mmN	2d6	1d6	45	8	9	9	10	11	11	12	13	52/15	60/17	67/19
	.50 AE, 7.62mmN	2d6+1	1d6	52	9	10	11	11	12	13	14	15	61/17	70/20	79/23

FLECHETTE AMMUNITION, NON-AUTOFIRE, ONE-HANDED, STR MIN 6-14															
NAME	CALIBER	DMG	STUN	AcP	1	2	3	4	5-6	7-8	9-12	13-16	17-32	33-64	65-125
Flechette AP, IMR2, IPE (leaves no rifling marks on flechette) STR Min 6-14	.22	1d6	1d6-1	30	5	6	6	7	7	7	8	9	34/10	37/11	41/12
	.32, .38	1d6+1	1d6-1	40	7	8	8	9	9	10	11	11	45/13	50/14	55/16
	.40, 9mm	1½d6	1d6-1	50	9	10	10	11	12	12	13	14	56/16	62/18	69/20
	.357 M, .41 M, 10mm	2d6	1d6-1	60	11	12	13	13	14	15	16	17	67/18	75/21	82/23
	.45 ACP, 11mm	2d6	1d6	67	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	75/21	82/23	90/26
	.44 M, .45 Win Mag	2d6+1	1d6	79	14	16	17	17	19	20	21	23	87/25	96/27	105/30
	.223, 5.56mmN	2d6+1	1d6	79	14	16	17	17	19	20	21	23	87/25	96/27	105/30
	.50 AE, 7.62mmN	2½d6	1d6	90	16	18	19	20	21	22	24	26	100/29	110/	120/34

Exotic Ammunition Tables (Continued)

FRANGIBLE AMMUNITION, NON-AUTOFIRE, ONE-HANDED, STR MIN 6-14															
NAME	CALIBER	DMG	STUN	AcP	1	2	3	4	5-6	7-8	9-12	13-16	17-32	33-64	65-125
Frangible CBB, No Effect Through Barriers, RP, STR Min 6-14	.22	1d6+1	1d6-1	20	3	3	4	4	4	4	4	5	25/6	30/7	35/8
	.32, .38	1½d6	1d6-1	25	4	4	4	5	5	5	5	6	31/7	37/9	44/10
	.40, 9mm	2d6	1d6-1	30	5	5	5	6	6	6	7	7	37/9	45/11	52/12
	.357 M, .41 M, 10mm	2d6+1	1d6-1	35	6	6	6	7	7	7	8	8	44/10	52/12	61/14
	.45 ACP, 11mm	2d6+1	1d6	44	7	8	8	8	9	9	10	10	52/12	61/14	70/16
	.44 M, .45 Win Mag	2½d6	1d6	50	8	9	9	9	10	10	11	12	60/14	70/16	80/19
	.223, 5.56mmN	2½d6	1d6	50	8	9	9	9	10	10	11	12	60/14	70/16	80/19
	.50 AE, 7.62mmN	3d6	1d6	56	9	10	10	11	11	12	12	13	67/16	79/19	90/21

GYROJET AMMUNITION, NON-AUTOFIRE, ONE-HANDED, STR MIN 6-14															
NAME	CALIBER	DMG	STUN	AcP	1	2	3	4	5-6	7-8	9-12	13-16	17-32	33-64	65-125
Gyrojet IMR2, IPE (leaves no shell casings) STR Min 6-14	.22	1d6-1	1d6-1	18	3	4	4	4	4	4	5	5	21/6	24/7	27/8
	.32, .38	1d6	1d6-1	22	4	4	5	5	5	5	6	6	26/7	30/9	34/10
	.40, 9mm	1d6+1	1d6-1	30	5	6	6	7	7	7	8	9	35/10	40/11	45/13
	.357 M, .41 M, 10mm	1½d6	1d6-1	37	7	7	8	8	9	9	10	11	44/13	50/14	56/16
	.45 ACP, 11mm	2d6-1	1d6	47	8	9	10	10	11	12	12	13	54/15	61/17	67/19
	.44 M, .45 Win Mag	2d6	1d6	52	9	10	11	11	12	13	14	15	60/17	67/19	75/21
	.223, 5.56mmN	2d6	1d6	52	9	10	11	11	12	13	14	15	60/17	67/19	75/21
	.50 AE, 7.62mmN	2d6+1	1d6	61	11	12	13	13	14	15	16	17	70/20	79/23	87/25

HOLLOW POINT AMMUNITION, NON-AUTOFIRE, ONE-HANDED, STR MIN 6-14															
NAME	CALIBER	DMG	STUN	AcP	1	2	3	4	5-6	7-8	9-12	13-16	17-32	33-64	65-125
Hollow Point +1 STUN Multiplier STR Min 6-14	.22	1d6	1d6	19	3	4	4	4	4	5	5	5	22/6	26/7	30/9
	.32, .38	1d6+1	1d6	25	4	5	5	5	6	6	7	7	30/9	35/10	40/11
	.40, 9mm	1½d6	1d6	31	6	6	6	7	7	8	8	9	37/11	44/13	50/14
	.357 M, .41 M, 10mm	2d6	1d6	37	7	7	8	8	9	9	10	11	45/13	52/15	60/17
	.45 ACP, 11mm	2d6	1d6+1	45	8	9	9	10	11	11	12	13	52/15	60/17	67/19
	.44 M, .45 Win Mag	2d6+1	1d6+1	52	9	10	11	11	12	13	14	15	61/17	70/20	79/23
	.223, 5.56mmN	2d6+1	1d6+1	52	9	10	11	11	12	13	14	15	61/17	70/20	79/23
	.50 AE, 7.62mmN	2½d6	1d6+1	60	11	12	13	13	14	15	16	17	70/20	80/23	90/26

HYBRID FRANGIBLE/HP AMMUNITION, NON-AUTOFIRE, ONE-HANDED, STR MIN 6-14															
NAME	CALIBER	DMG	STUN	AcP	1	2	3	4	5-6	7-8	9-12	13-16	17-32	33-64	65-125
Hybrid Frangible/ Hollow Point +1 STUN Multiplier, Penetrating CBB, STR Min 6-14	.22	1d6+1	1d6	35	6	7	7	7	8	8	9	9	40/11	45/12	50/13
	.32, .38	1½d6	1d6	44	8	8	9	9	10	10	11	12	50/13	56/15	62/16
	.40, 9mm	2d6	1d6	52	9	10	10	11	11	12	13	14	60/16	67/18	75/20
	.357 M, .41 M, 10mm	2d6+1	1d6	61	11	12	12	13	13	14	15	16	70/19	79/21	87/23
	.45 ACP, 11mm	2d6+1	1d6+1	70	12	13	14	15	15	16	17	19	79/21	87/23	96/26
	.44 M, .45 Win Mag	2½d6	1d6+1	80	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	90/24	100/27	110/29
	.223, 5.56mmN	2½d6	1d6+1	80	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	90/24	100/27	110/29
	.50 AE, 7.62mmN	3d6	1d6+1	90	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	24	101/27	112/30	124/33

Exotic Ammunition Tables (Continued)

IMPROVED ARMOR PIERCING AMMUNITION, NON-AUTOFIRE, ONE-HANDED, STR MIN 6-14															
NAME	CALIBER	DMG	STUN	AcP	1	2	3	4	5-6	7-8	9-12	13-16	17-32	33-64	65-125
Improved Armor Piercing AP (x2) STR Min 6-14	.22	½d6	1d6-1	20	4	4	4	4	5	5	5	6	22/6	25/7	27/8
	.32, .38	½d6	1d6-1	20	4	4	4	4	5	5	5	6	22/6	25/7	27/8
	.40, 9mm	1d6-1	1d6-1	24	4	5	5	5	6	6	6	7	27/8	30/9	33/9
	.357 M, .41 M, 10mm	1d6-1	1d6-1	24	4	5	5	5	6	6	6	7	27/8	30/9	33/9
	.45 ACP, 11mm	1d6	1d6	34	6	7	7	7	8	8	9	10	37/11	41/12	45/13
	.44 M, .45 Win Mag	1d6	1d6	34	6	7	7	7	8	8	9	10	37/11	41/12	45/13
	.223, 5.56mmN	1½d6	1d6	56	10	11	12	12	13	14	15	16	62/18	69/20	75/21
	.50 AE, 7.62mmN	2d6-1	1d6	61	11	12	13	13	14	15	16	17	67/19	74/21	81/23

IMPROVED PROPELLANT AMMUNITION, NON-AUTOFIRE, ONE-HANDED, STR MIN 6-14															
NAME	CALIBER	DMG	STUN	AcP	1	2	3	4	5-6	7-8	9-12	13-16	17-32	33-64	65-125
Improved Propellant STR Min 6-14	.22	1d6+1	1d6-1	20	4	4	4	4	5	5	5	6	25/7	30/9	35/10
	.32, .38	1d6+1	1d6-1	20	4	4	4	4	5	5	5	6	25/7	30/9	35/10
	.40, 9mm	1½d6	1d6-1	25	4	5	5	5	6	6	7	7	31/9	37/11	44/13
	.357 M, .41 M, 10mm	2d6-1	1d6-1	27	5	5	6	6	6	7	7	8	34/10	40/11	47/13
	.45 ACP, 11mm	2d6	1d6	37	7	7	8	8	9	9	10	11	45/13	52/15	60/17
	.44 M, .45 Win Mag	2d6+1	1d6	44	8	9	9	10	10	11	12	13	52/15	61/17	70/20
	.223, 5.56mmN	2d6+1	1d6	44	8	9	9	10	10	11	12	13	52/15	61/17	70/20
	.50 AE, 7.62mmN	2½d6	1d6	50	9	10	10	11	12	12	13	14	60/17	70/20	80/23

INCENDIARY AMMUNITION, NON-AUTOFIRE, ONE-HANDED, STR MIN 6-14															
NAME	CALIBER	DMG	STUN	AcP	1	2	3	4	5-6	7-8	9-12	13-16	17-32	33-64	65-125
Incendiary Firestarting STR Min 6-14	.22	1d6-1	1d6-1	28	5	5	5	6	7	7	7	8	32/9	37/10	41/12
	.32, .38	1d6	1d6-1	31	6	6	6	6	7	8	8	9	36/10	40/11	66/13
	.40, 9mm	1d6+1	1d6-1	36	7	7	7	7	9	9	9	11	42/12	49/14	55/16
	.357 M, .41 M, 10mm	1½d6	1d6-1	41	7	8	7	8	10	10	11	12	48/14	56/16	64/19
	.45 ACP, 11mm	2d6-1	1d6	51	9	10	10	10	12	12	13	15	59/16	67/17	74/21
	.44 M, .45 Win Mag	2d6	1d6	54	10	10	11	11	13	13	14	16	64/18	72/20	80/23
	.223, 5.56mmN	2d6	1d6	54	10	10	11	11	13	13	14	16	64/18	72/20	80/23
	.50 AE, 7.62mmN	2d6+1	1d6	61	11	12	12	13	14	15	16	18	71/20	81/22	90/26

MATCH-GRADE AMMUNITION, NON-AUTOFIRE, ONE-HANDED, STR MIN 6-14															
NAME	CALIBER	DMG	STUN	AcP	1	2	3	4	5-6	7-8	9-12	13-16	17-32	33-64	65-125
Match-Grade +1 OCV STR Min 6-14	.22	1d6-1	1d6-1	17	4	4	4	5	5	5	5	5	20/6	23/7	26/8
	.32, .38	1d6	1d6-1	20	5	5	5	5	5	6	6	6	24/7	27/8	31/9
	.40, 9mm	1d6+1	1d6-1	25	6	6	6	6	7	7	7	8	30/9	35/11	40/12
	.357 M, .41 M, 10mm	1½d6	1d6-1	30	6	7	7	7	8	8	9	9	36/11	42/13	49/15
	.45 ACP, 11mm	2d6-1	1d6	39	8	9	9	9	10	10	11	12	45/13	52/15	59/17
	.44 M, .45 Win Mag	2d6	1d6	42	9	9	10	10	11	11	12	13	50/15	57/17	65/19
	.223, 5.56mmN	2d6	1d6	42	9	9	10	10	11	11	12	13	50/15	57/17	65/19
	.50 AE, 7.62mmN	2d6+1	1d6	49	10	11	11	12	12	13	14	15	57/17	66/19	75/22

Exotic Ammunition Tables (Continued)

STANDARD +P AMMUNITION, NON-AUTOFIRE, ONE-HANDED, STR MIN 6-14															
NAME	CALIBER	DMG	STUN	AcP	1	2	3	4	5-6	7-8	9-12	13-16	17-32	33-64	65-125
Standard +P STR Min 6-14	.22	1d6	1d6-1	15	3	3	3	3	3	4	4	4	19/5	22/6	26/7
	.32, .38	1d6+1	1d6-1	20	4	4	4	4	5	5	5	6	25/7	30/9	35/10
	.40, 9mm	1d6+2	1d6-1	23	4	5	5	5	5	6	6	7	29/8	34/10	40/11
	.357 M, .41 M, 10mm	1½+1	1d6-1	27	5	5	6	6	6	7	7	8	34/10	40/11	47/13
	.45 ACP, 11mm	2d6	1d6	37	7	7	8	8	9	9	10	11	45/13	52/15	60/17
	.44 M, .45 Win Mag	2d6+1	1d6	44	8	9	9	10	10	11	12	13	52/15	61/17	70/20
	.223, 5.56mmN	2d6+1	1d6	44	8	9	9	10	10	11	12	13	52/15	61/17	70/20
	.50 AE, 7.62mmN	2d6+2	1d6	47	8	9	10	10	11	12	12	13	57/16	66/19	76/22

PENETRATING FRANGIBLE AMMUNITION, NON-AUTOFIRE, ONE-HANDED, STR MIN 6-14															
NAME	CALIBER	DMG	STUN	AcP	1	2	3	4	5-6	7-8	9-12	13-16	17-32	33-64	65-125
Penetrating Frangible Penetrating STR Min 6-14	.22	1d6+1	1d6-1	30	5	6	6	7	7	7	8	9	35/	40/11	45/13
	.32, .38	1½d6	1d6-1	37	7	7	8	8	9	9	10	11	44/	50/14	56/16
	.40, 9mm	2d6	1d6-1	45	8	9	9	10	11	11	12	13	52/15	60/17	67/19
	.357 M, .41 M, 10mm	2d6+1	1d6-1	52	9	10	11	11	12	13	14	15	61/17	70/20	79/23
	.45 ACP, 11mm	2d6+1	1d6	61	11	12	13	13	14	15	16	17	70/20	79/23	87/25
	.44 M, .45 Win Mag	2½d6	1d6	70	13	14	15	15	16	17	19	20	80/	90/26	100/29
	.223, 5.56mmN	2½d6	1d6	70	13	14	15	15	16	17	19	20	80/	90/26	100/29
	.50 AE, 7.62mmN	3d6	1d6	79	14	16	17	17	19	20	21	23	90/	101/29	112/32

POISONED AMMUNITION, NON-AUTOFIRE, ONE-HANDED, STR MIN 6-14															
NAME	CALIBER	DMG	STUN	AcP	1	2	3	4	5-6	7-8	9-12	13-16	17-32	33-64	65-125
Poisoned Carries a poison STR Min 6-14	.22	1d6-1	1d6-1	12	2	2	2	3	3	3	3	3	15/4	18/5	21/6
	.32, .38	1d6	1d6-1	15	3	3	3	3	3	4	4	4	19/5	22/6	26/7
	.40, 9mm	1d6+1	1d6-1	20	4	4	4	4	5	5	5	6	25/7	30/9	35/10
	.357 M, .41 M, 10mm	1½d6	1d6-1	25	4	5	5	5	6	6	7	7	31/9	37/11	44/13
	.45 ACP, 11mm	2d6-1	1d6	34	6	7	7	7	8	8	9	10	40/11	47/13	54/15
	.44 M, .45 Win Mag	2d6	1d6	37	7	7	8	8	9	9	10	11	45/13	52/15	60/17
	.223, 5.56mmN	2d6	1d6	37	7	7	8	8	9	9	10	11	45/13	52/15	60/17
	.50 AE, 7.62mmN	2d6+1	1d6	44	8	9	9	10	10	11	12	13	52/15	61/17	70/20

REVERSED OGIVE AMMUNITION, NON-AUTOFIRE, ONE-HANDED, STR MIN 6-14															
NAME	CALIBER	DMG	STUN	AcP	1	2	3	4	5-6	7-8	9-12	13-16	17-32	33-64	65-125
Reversed Ogive AP, +1 STUN Multiplier STR Min 6-14	.22	1d6+1	1d6	35	6	7	7	8	8	9	9	10	40/11	45/13	50/14
	.32, .38	1½d6	1d6	44	8	9	9	10	10	11	12	13	50/14	56/16	62/18
	.40, 9mm	2d6	1d6	52	9	10	11	11	12	13	14	15	60/17	67/19	75/21
	.357 M, .41 M, 10mm	2d6+1	1d6	61	11	12	13	13	14	15	16	17	70/20	79/23	87/25
	.45 ACP, 11mm	2d6+1	1d6+1	70	13	14	15	15	16	17	19	20	79/23	87/25	96/27
	.44 M, .45 Win Mag	2½d6	1d6+1	80	14	16	17	18	19	20	21	23	90/26	100/29	110/31
	.223, 5.56mmN	2½d6	1d6+1	80	14	16	17	18	19	20	21	23	90/26	100/29	110/31
	.50 AE, 7.62mmN	3d6	1d6+1	90	16	18	19	20	21	22	24	26	101/29	112/32	124/35

Exotic Ammunition Tables (Continued)

RUBBER AMMUNITION, NON-AUTOFIRE, ONE-HANDED, STR MIN 6-14														
NAME	CALIBER	DMG	AcP	1	2	3	4	5-6	7-8	9-12	13-16	17-32	33-64	65-125
Rubber STR Min 6-14	.22	EB 2d6	10	2	2	2	2	2	2	3	3	12/3	15/4	17/5
	.32, .38	EB 3d6	15	3	3	3	3	3	4	4	4	19/5	22/6	26/7
	.40, 9mm	EB 4d6	20	4	4	4	4	5	5	5	6	25/7	30/9	35/10
	.357 M, .41 M, 10mm	EB 5d6	25	4	5	5	5	6	6	7	7	31/9	37/11	44/13
	.45 ACP, 11mm	EB 6d6	30	5	6	6	7	7	7	8	9	37/11	45/13	52/15
	.44 M, .45 Win Mag	EB 6d6	30	5	6	6	7	7	7	8	9	37/11	45/13	52/15
	.223, 5.56mmN	EB 6d6	30	5	6	6	7	7	7	8	9	37/11	45/13	52/15
	.50 AE, 7.62mmN	EB 7d6	35	6	7	7	8	8	9	9	10	44/13	52/15	61/17

SEMI-ARMOR PIERCING AMMUNITION, NON-AUTOFIRE, ONE-HANDED, STR MIN 6-14															
NAME	CALIBER	DMG	STUN	AcP	1	2	3	4	5-6	7-8	9-12	13-16	17-32	33-64	65-125
Semi-Armor Piercing Semi-AP STR Min 6-14	.22	1d6-1	1d6-1	15	3	3	3	3	3	4	4	4	18/5	21/6	24/7
	.32, .38	1d6	1d6-1	19	3	4	4	4	4	5	5	5	22/6	26/7	30/9
	.40, 9mm	1d6+1	1d6-1	25	4	5	5	5	6	6	7	7	30/9	35/10	40/11
	.357 M, .41 M, 10mm	1½d6	1d6-1	31	6	6	6	7	7	8	8	9	37/11	44/13	50/14
	.45 ACP, 11mm	2d6-1	1d6	40	7	8	8	9	9	10	11	11	47/13	54/15	61/17
	.44 M, .45 Win Mag	2d6	1d6	45	8	9	9	10	11	11	12	13	52/15	60/17	67/19
	.223, 5.56mmN	2d6	1d6	45	8	9	9	10	11	11	12	13	52/15	60/17	67/19
	.50 AE, 7.62mmN	2d6+1	1d6	52	9	10	11	11	12	13	14	15	61/17	70/20	79/23

SILENT AMMUNITION, NON-AUTOFIRE, ONE-HANDED, STR MIN 6-14															
NAME	CALIBER	DMG	STUN	AcP	1	2	3	4	5-6	7-8	9-12	13-16	17-32	33-64	65-125
Silent CE (-3 to Hear- ing Group PER Rolls and -1 to Sight Group PER Rolls) STR Min 6-14	.22	1d6-1	1d6-1	31	5	6	6	7	7	7	8	8	34/10	37/12	30/15
	.32, .38	1d6	1d6-1	34	6	7	7	7	7	8	9	9	38/11	41/13	45/16
	.40, 9mm	1d6+1	1d6-1	39	7	8	8	8	9	9	10	11	44/13	49/16	54/19
	.357 M, .41 M, 10mm	1½d6	1d6-1	44	7	9	9	9	10	10	12	12	50/15	56/18	63/22
	.45 ACP, 11mm	2d6-1	1d6	53	9	11	11	11	12	12	14	15	59/17	66/20	73/24
	.44 M, .45 Win Mag	2d6	1d6	56	10	11	12	12	13	13	15	16	64/19	71/22	79/26
	.223, 5.56mmN	2d6	1d6	56	10	11	12	12	13	13	15	16	64/19	71/22	79/26
	.50 AE, 7.62mmN	2d6+1	1d6	63	11	13	13	14	14	15	17	18	71/21	80/24	89/29

SPENT URANIUM AMMUNITION, NON-AUTOFIRE, ONE-HANDED, STR MIN 6-14															
NAME	CALIBER	DMG	STUN	AcP	1	2	3	4	5-6	7-8	9-12	13-16	17-32	33-64	65-125
Spent Uranium AP, +1 STUN Multiplier STR Min 6-14	.22	1d6-1	1d6	21	4	4	4	5	5	5	6	6	24/7	27/8	30/9
	.32, .38	1d6	1d6	26	5	5	5	6	6	6	7	7	30/9	34/10	37/11
	.40, 9mm	1d6+1	1d6	35	6	7	7	8	8	9	9	10	40/11	45/13	50/14
	.357 M, .41 M, 10mm	1½d6	1d6	44	8	9	9	10	10	11	12	13	50/14	56/16	62/18
	.45 ACP, 11mm	2d6-1	1d6+1	54	10	11	11	12	13	13	14	15	61/17	67/19	74/21
	.44 M, .45 Win Mag	2d6	1d6+1	60	11	12	13	13	14	15	16	17	67/19	75/21	82/23
	.223, 5.56mmN	2d6	1d6+1	60	11	12	13	13	14	15	16	17	67/19	75/21	82/23
	.50 AE, 7.62mmN	2d6+1	1d6+1	70	13	14	15	15	16	17	19	20	79/23	87/25	96/27

Exotic Ammunition Tables (Continued)

SUBSONIC AMMUNITION, NON-AUTOFIRE, ONE-HANDED, STR MIN 6-14															
NAME	CALIBER	DMG	STUN	AcP	1	2	3	4	5-6	7-8	9-12	13-16	17-32	33-64	65-125
Subsonic Moves below the speed of sound, and so creates no “crack” STR Min 6-14	.22	½d6	1d6-1	10	2	2	2	2	2	2	3	3	12/3	15/4	17/5
	.32, .38	1d6-1	1d6-1	12	2	2	2	3	3	3	3	3	15/4	18/5	21/6
	.40, 9mm	1d6	1d6-1	15	3	3	3	3	3	4	4	4	19/5	22/6	26/7
	.357 M, .41 M, 10mm	1d6+1	1d6-1	20	4	4	4	4	5	5	5	6	25/7	30/9	35/10
	.45 ACP, 11mm	1½d6	1d6	25	4	5	5	5	6	6	7	7	31/9	37/11	44/13
	.44 M, .45 Win Mag	2d6-1	1d6	27	5	5	6	6	6	7	7	8	34/10	40/11	47/13
	.223, 5.56mmN	2d6	1d6	30	5	6	6	7	7	7	8	9	37/11	45/13	52/15
.50 AE, 7.62mmN	2d6	1d6	30	5	6	6	7	7	7	8	9	37/11	45/13	52/15	

TRACER AMMUNITION, NON-AUTOFIRE, ONE-HANDED, STR MIN 6-14															
NAME	CALIBER	DMG	STUN	AcP	1	2	3	4	5-6	7-8	9-12	13-16	17-32	33-64	65-125
Tracer +1 OCV, Cannot Apply To First Shot Against A Target STR Min 6-14	.22	1d6-1	1d6-1	17	4	4	4	5	5	5	5	5	20/6	23/7	26/8
	.32, .38	1d6	1d6-1	20	5	5	5	5	5	6	6	6	24/7	27/8	31/9
	.40, 9mm	1d6+1	1d6-1	25	6	6	6	6	7	7	7	8	30/9	35/11	40/12
	.357 M, .41 M, 10mm	1½d6	1d6-1	30	6	7	7	7	8	8	9	9	36/11	42/13	49/15
	.45 ACP, 11mm	2d6-1	1d6	39	8	9	9	9	10	10	11	12	45/13	52/15	59/17
	.44 M, .45 Win Mag	2d6	1d6	42	9	9	10	10	11	11	12	13	50/15	57/17	65/19
	.223, 5.56mmN	2d6	1d6	42	9	9	10	10	11	11	12	13	50/15	57/17	65/19
.50 AE, 7.62mmN	2d6+1	1d6	49	10	11	11	12	12	13	14	15	57/17	66/19	75/22	

TUMBLER AMMUNITION, NON-AUTOFIRE, ONE-HANDED, STR MIN 6-14															
NAME	CALIBER	DMG	STUN	AcP	1	2	3	4	5-6	7-8	9-12	13-16	17-32	33-64	65-125
Tumbler RKA +1d6, Activation Roll 11-, base bullet must do BODY damage STR Min 6-14	.22	1d6-1	1d6-1	27	5	5	5	6	6	6	7	7	34/9	40/11	47/13
	.32, .38	1d6	1d6-1	30	6	6	6	6	6	7	8	8	38/10	44/12	52/14
	.40, 9mm	1d6+1	1d6-1	35	7	7	7	7	8	8	9	10	44/12	52/15	61/17
	.357 M, .41 M, 10mm	1½d6	1d6-1	40	7	8	8	8	9	9	11	11	50/14	59/17	70/20
	.45 ACP, 11mm	2d6-1	1d6	53	9	11	11	11	12	11	14	15	62/17	73/20	84/23
	.44 M, .45 Win Mag	2d6	1d6	56	10	11	12	12	13	12	15	16	67/19	78/22	90/25
	.223, 5.56mmN	2d6	1d6	56	10	11	12	12	13	12	15	16	67/19	78/22	90/25
.50 AE, 7.62mmN	2d6+1	1d6	63	11	13	13	14	14	14	17	18	74/21	87/24	100/28	

WADCUTTER AMMUNITION, NON-AUTOFIRE, ONE-HANDED, STR MIN 6-14															
NAME	CALIBER	DMG	STUN	AcP	1	2	3	4	5-6	7-8	9-12	13-16	17-32	33-64	65-125
Wadcutter STR Min 6-14	.22	1d6	1d6-1	15	3	3	3	3	3	4	4	4	19/5	22/6	26/7
	.32, .38	1d6+1	1d6-1	20	4	4	4	4	5	5	5	6	25/7	30/9	35/10
	.40, 9mm	1d6+2	1d6-1	23	4	5	5	5	5	6	6	7	29/8	34/10	40/11
	.357 M, .41 M, 10mm	1½+1	1d6-1	27	5	5	6	6	6	7	7	8	34/10	40/11	47/13
	.45 ACP, 11mm	2d6	1d6	37	7	7	8	8	9	9	10	11	45/13	52/15	60/17
	.44 M, .45 Win Mag	2d6+1	1d6	44	8	9	9	10	10	11	12	13	52/15	61/17	70/20
	.223, 5.56mmN	2d6+1	1d6	44	8	9	9	10	10	11	12	13	52/15	61/17	70/20
.50 AE, 7.62mmN	2d6+2	1d6	47	8	9	10	10	11	12	12	13	57/16	66/19	76/22	

STANDARD SHOTGUN TABLES

These tables are for shotguns loaded with Standard Shot or Standard Slugs.

SHOTGUNS, SHOT, NON-AUTOFIRE, TWO-HANDED, STR MIN 6-14															
NAME	GAUGE	DMG	STUN	AcP	1	2	3	4	5-6	7-8	9-12	13-16	17-32	33-64	65-125
Standard Shot AE1	.410	1½d6	1d6	44	7	7	8	8	8	9	9	10	50/11	56/12	62/14
	28, 24	2d6	1d6	52	8	9	9	9	10	10	11	11	60/13	67/15	75/17
LR(20"), RR, RP, STR Min 6-14, 2H	20, 16	2d6+1	1d6	61	9	10	11	11	12	12	13	13	70/15	79/17	87/19
	12	2½d6	1d6	70	11	12	12	13	13	14	15	15	80/19	90/20	100/22
	10	3d6	1d6	79	12	13	14	14	15	16	17	17	90/20	101/22	112/25
	4	3d6+1	1d6	87	13	14	15	16	17	17	18	19	100/22	112/25	125/28

SHOTGUNS, SLUGS, NON-AUTOFIRE, TWO-HANDED, STR MIN 6-14															
NAME	GAUGE	DMG	STUN	AcP	1	2	3	4	5-6	7-8	9-12	13-16	17-32	33-64	65-125
Standard Slugs	.410	1½d6	1d6	31	5	5	6	6	6	6	7	7	37/9	44/10	50/12
	28, 24	2d6	1d6	37	6	6	7	7	7	8	8	9	45/11	52/12	60/14
Beam, LR(50"), STR Min 6-14, 2H	20, 16	2d6+1	1d6	44	7	8	8	8	9	9	10	10	52/12	61/14	70/16
	12	2½d6	1d6	50	8	9	9	9	10	10	11	12	60/14	70/16	80/19
	10	3d6	1d6	56	9	10	10	11	11	12	12	13	67/16	79/19	90/21
	4	3d6+1	1d6	62	10	11	11	12	12	13	14	15	75/18	87/20	100/23

SHOTGUNS, SHOT, AUTOFIRE, TWO-HANDED, STR MIN 6-14										
NAME	GAUGE	DMG	STUN	AcP	9-12	13-16	17-32	33-64	65-125	126+
Standard Shot AE1, AF5	.410	1½d6	1d6	81	17	18	87/19	94/21	100/22	106/23
	28, 24	2d6	1d6	97	20	21	105/23	112/25	120/27	127/28
LR(20"), RR, RP, STR Min 6-14, 2H	20, 16	2d6+1	1d6	114	24	25	122/27	131/29	140/31	149/33
	12	2½d6	1d6	130	27	29	140/31	150/33	160/35	170/38
	10	3d6	1d6	146	31	32	157/35	169/37	180/40	191/42
	4	3d6+1	1d6	162	34	36	175/39	187/41	200/44	212/47

SHOTGUNS, SLUGS, AUTOFIRE, TWO-HANDED, STR MIN 6-14										
NAME	GAUGE	DMG	STUN	AcP	9-12	13-16	17-32	33-64	65-125	126+
Standard Slugs AF	.410	1½d6	1d6	44	10	10	50/12	56/13	62/15	69/16
	28, 24	2d6	1d6	52	11	12	60/14	67/16	75/18	82/19
Beam, LR(50"), STR Min 6-14, 2H	20, 16	2d6+1	1d6	61	13	14	70/16	79/19	87/20	96/23
	12	2½d6	1d6	70	15	16	80/19	90/21	100/23	110/26
	10	3d6	1d6	79	17	19	90/21	101/24	112/26	124/29
	4	3d6+1	1d6	87	19	20	100/23	112/26	125/29	137/32

EXOTIC SHOTGUN AMMUNITION TABLES

These tables are for shotguns loaded with exotic forms of ammunition, such as Air Bomb, Fireball, or Smoke. All are for two-handed, non-Autofire weapons with a STR Minimum of 6-14.

AIR BOMB SHELL, NON-AUTOFIRE, TWO-HANDED, STR MIN 6-14														
NAME	GAUGE	DMG	AcP	1	2	3	4	5-6	7-8	9-12	13-16	17-32	33-64	65-125
Air Bomb AE1, Sight and Hearing Group Flash 3d6	.410	EB 5d6	67	11	13	13	14	15	15	17	18	74/21	80/23	86/27
	28, 24	EB 6d6	75	12	14	15	16	16	17	19	20	82/23	90/26	97/30
	20, 16	EB 7d6	82	14	15	16	17	18	18	20	22	91/25	100/28	109/33
LR(20"), STR Min 6-14, 2H	12	EB 8d6	90	15	17	17	19	20	20	22	24	100/27	110/31	120/35
	10	EB 9d6	97	16	18	19	20	21	22	24	26	109/30	120/33	131/38
	4	EB 10d6	105	17	20	20	22	23	24	26	28	117/32	130/36	142/41

ARMOR PIERCING SLUGS, NON-AUTOFIRE, TWO-HANDED, STR MIN 6-14															
NAME	GAUGE	DMG	STUN	AcP	1	2	3	4	5-6	7-8	9-12	13-16	17-32	33-64	65-125
Armor Piercing Slugs AP	.410	1d6+1	1d6	35	6	6	6	7	7	7	8	8	40/9	45/11	50/12
	28, 24	2d6-1	1d6	47	7	8	8	9	9	10	10	11	54/13	61/14	67/16
	20, 16	2d6	1d6	52	8	9	9	10	10	11	11	12	60/14	67/16	75/18
Beam, LR(50"), STR Min 6-14, 2H	12	2d6+1	1d6	61	10	11	11	12	12	13	13	14	70/16	79/19	87/20
	10	2½d6	1d6	70	11	12	13	13	14	15	15	16	80/19	90/21	100/23
	4	3d6	1d6	79	13	14	14	15	16	17	17	19	90/21	101/24	112/26

BATON/BEANBAG SHELL, NON-AUTOFIRE, TWO-HANDED, STR MIN 6-14														
NAME	GAUGE	DMG	AcP	1	2	3	4	5-6	7-8	9-12	13-16	17-32	33-64	65-125
Baton/ Beanbag Beam, LR(20"), STR Min 6-14, 2H	.410	EB 5d6	25	4	4	4	5	5	5	5	6	31/7	37/9	44/10
	28, 24	EB 6d6	30	5	5	5	6	6	6	7	7	37/9	45/11	52/12
	20, 16	EB 7d6	35	6	6	6	7	7	7	8	8	44/10	52/12	61/14
	12	EB 8d6	40	6	7	7	8	8	8	9	9	50/12	60/14	70/16
	10	EB 9d6	45	7	8	8	9	9	9	10	10	56/13	67/16	79/19
	4	EB 10d6	50	8	9	9	9	10	10	11	11	62/15	75/18	87/20

BRI SLUGS, NON-AUTOFIRE, TWO-HANDED, STR MIN 6-14															
NAME	GAUGE	DMG	STUN	AcP	1	2	3	4	5-6	7-8	9-12	13-16	17-32	33-64	65-125
BRI Slugs Beam, STR Min 6-14, 2H	.410	1½d6	1d6	31	5	6	6	6	6	7	7	8	37/9	44/11	50/12
	28, 24	2d6	1d6	37	6	7	7	7	8	8	9	9	45/11	52/13	60/15
	20, 16	2d6+1	1d6	44	7	8	8	9	9	10	10	11	52/13	61/15	70/17
	12	2½d6	1d6	50	8	9	9	10	10	11	12	12	60/15	70/17	80/20
	10	3d6	1d6	56	9	10	11	11	12	12	13	14	67/17	79/20	90/22
	4	3d6+1	1d6	62	10	11	12	12	13	14	15	15	75/19	87/22	100/25

BUFFERED SHOT SHELLS, NON-AUTOFIRE, TWO-HANDED, STR MIN 6-14															
NAME	GAUGE	DMG	STUN	AcP	1	2	3	4	5-6	7-8	9-12	13-16	17-32	33-64	65-125
Buffered Shot LR(30"), RR, RP, STR Min 6-14, 2H	.410	2d6-1	1d6	34	5	6	6	6	6	7	7	7	40/9	47/10	54/12
	28, 24	2d6+1	1d6	44	7	7	8	8	8	9	9	10	52/11	61/13	70/15
	20, 16	2½d6	1d6	50	8	8	9	9	9	10	10	11	60/13	70/15	80/18
	12	3d6-1	1d6	52	8	9	9	9	10	10	11	11	63/14	73/16	84/19
	10	3d6+1	1d6	62	9	10	11	11	12	12	13	14	75/17	87/19	100/22
	4	3½d6	1d6	69	11	11	12	12	13	14	14	15	82/18	96/21	110/24

Exotic Shotgun Ammunition Tables (Continued)

CUBIC SHOT SHELLS, NON-AUTOFIRE, TWO-HANDED, STR MIN 6-14															
NAME	GAUGE	DMG	STUN	AcP	1	2	3	4	5-6	7-8	9-12	13-16	17-32	33-64	65-125
Cubic Shot AE: Cone	.410	1½d6	1d6	56	8	9	9	10	10	11	11	12	62/13	69/14	75/16
	28, 24	2d6	1d6	67	10	11	11	12	12	13	13	14	75/16	82/17	90/19
NR, RR, RP, STR Min 6-14, 2H	20, 16	2d6+1	1d6	79	12	13	13	14	14	15	16	17	87/18	96/20	105/22
	12	2½d6	1d6	90	13	14	15	16	16	17	18	19	100/21	110/23	120/25
	10	3d6	1d6	101	15	16	17	18	18	19	20	21	112/24	124/26	135/28
	4	3d6+1	1d6	112	17	18	19	19	20	21	22	24	125/26	137/29	150/32

EXPLOSIVE SLUGS, NON-AUTOFIRE, TWO-HANDED, STR MIN 6-14															
NAME	GAUGE	DMG	STUN	AcP	1	2	3	4	5-6	7-8	9-12	13-16	17-32	33-64	65-125
Explosive Slugs Explosion	.410	1½d6	1d6	44	7	8	8	9	9	10	10	11	50/12	56/14	62/15
	28, 24	2d6	1d6	52	9	9	10	10	11	11	12	13	60/15	67/17	75/19
	20, 16	2d6+1	1d6	61	10	11	12	12	13	13	14	15	70/17	79/20	87/22
LR(50"), STR Min 6-14, 2H	12	2½d6	1d6	70	12	13	13	14	15	15	16	17	80/20	90/22	100/25
	10	3d6	1d6	79	13	14	15	16	17	17	19	20	90/22	101/25	112/28
	4	3d6+1	1d6	87	14	16	17	17	18	19	20	22	100/25	112/28	125/31

FIREBALL SHELLS, NON-AUTOFIRE, TWO-HANDED, STR MIN 6-14															
NAME	GAUGE	DMG	STUN	AcP	1	2	3	4	5-6	7-8	9-12	13-16	17-32	33-64	65-125
Fireball Shells AE1, firestart- ing	.410	1½d6	1d6	60	10	10	11	11	12	13	13	15	66/16	72/17	78/20
	28, 24	2d6	1d6	68	11	12	12	12	14	14	15	16	76/18	83/20	91/23
	20, 16	2d6+1	1d6	77	12	13	14	14	16	16	17	18	86/20	95/22	103/25
LR(20"), RR, RP, STR Min 6-14, 2H	12	2½d6	1d6	86	14	15	15	16	17	18	19	20	96/24	106/25	116/28
	10	3d6	1d6	95	15	16	17	17	19	20	21	22	106/25	117/27	128/31
	4	3d6+1	1d6	103	16	17	18	19	21	21	22	24	116/27	128/30	141/34

FLARE SHELLS, NON-AUTOFIRE, TWO-HANDED, STR MIN 6-14															
NAME	GAUGE	DMG	STUN	AcP	1	2	3	4	5-6	7-8	9-12	13-16	17-32	33-64	65-125
Flare Shells Explosion	.410	Sight Flash 5d6		37	6	7	7	7	8	8	9	9	44/11	50/12	56/14
	28, 24	Sight Flash 6d6		45	7	8	9	9	9	10	11	11	52/13	60/15	67/17
	20, 16	Sight Flash 7d6		52	9	9	10	10	11	11	12	13	61/15	70/17	79/20
LR(20"), STR Min 6-14, 2H	12	Sight Flash 8d6		60	10	11	11	12	13	13	14	15	70/17	80/20	90/22
	10	Sight Flash 9d6		67	11	12	13	13	14	15	16	17	79/20	90/22	101/25
	4	Sight Flash 10d6		70	12	13	13	14	15	15	16	17	87/22	100/25	110/27

FLECHETTE SHELLS, NON-AUTOFIRE, TWO-HANDED, STR MIN 6-14															
NAME	GAUGE	DMG	STUN	AcP	1	2	3	4	5-6	7-8	9-12	13-16	17-32	33-64	65-125
Flechette Shell AE1, AP	.410	2d6-1	1d6	61	9	10	11	11	12	12	13	13	67/15	74/16	81/18
	28, 24	2d6+1	1d6	79	12	13	14	14	15	16	17	17	87/19	96/21	105/23
	20, 16	2½d6	1d6	90	14	15	16	16	17	18	19	20	100/22	110/24	120/27
LR(50"), RR, RP, STR Min 6-14, 2H	12	3d6-1	1d6	94	14	16	16	17	18	19	20	21	105/23	115/25	126/28
	10	3d6+1	1d6	112	17	19	19	20	21	22	24	25	125/28	137/30	150/33
	4	3½d6	1d6	124	19	21	22	22	24	25	26	27	137/30	151/33	165/37

Exotic Shotgun Ammunition Tables (Continued)

ICE SHELLS, NON-AUTOFIRE, TWO-HANDED, STR MIN 6-14															
NAME	GAUGE	DMG	STUN	AcP	1	2	3	4	5-6	7-8	9-12	13-16	17-32	33-64	65-125
Ice Shells AE1, IPE (hide cause of death)	.410	1½d6	1d6	50	8	8	9	9	9	10	10	11	56/12	62/14	69/15
	28, 24	2d6	1d6	60	9	10	10	11	11	12	13	13	67/15	75/17	82/18
	20, 16	2d6+1	1d6	70	11	12	12	13	13	14	15	15	79/17	87/19	96/21
LR(20"), RR, RP, STR Min 6-14, 2H	12	2½d6	1d6	80	12	13	14	14	15	16	17	18	90/20	100/22	110/24
	10	3d6	1d6	90	14	15	16	16	17	18	19	20	101/22	112/25	124/27
	4	3d6+1	1d6	100	15	17	17	18	19	20	21	22	112/25	125/28	137/30

LINKED SHOT SHELLS, NON-AUTOFIRE, TWO-HANDED, STR MIN 6-14															
NAME	GAUGE	DMG	STUN	AcP	1	2	3	4	5-6	7-8	9-12	13-16	17-32	33-64	65-125
Linked Shot LR(30"), RR, RP, STR Min 6-14, 2H	.410	1d6+1	1d6	25	4	4	4	4	5	5	5	5	30/7	35/8	40/9
	28, 24	2d6-1	1d6	34	5	6	6	6	6	7	7	7	40/9	47/10	54/12
	20, 16	2d6	1d6	37	6	6	6	7	7	7	8	8	45/10	52/11	60/13
	12	2d6+1	1d6	44	7	7	8	8	8	9	9	10	52/11	61/13	70/15
	10	2½d6	1d6	50	8	8	9	9	9	10	10	11	60/13	70/15	80/18
4	3d6	1d6	56	9	9	10	10	11	11	12	12	67/15	79/17	90/20	

LOCKBREAKER SHOT SHELLS, NON-AUTOFIRE, TWO-HANDED, STR MIN 6-14															
NAME	GAUGE	DMG	STUN	AcP	1	2	3	4	5-6	7-8	9-12	13-16	17-32	33-64	65-125
Lockbreaker Shot AE1 Half Effect vs. Non-Doors, LR(20"), RR, RP, 2H	.410	1½d6	1d6	44	6	7	7	7	8	8	8	9	50/10	56/11	62/12
	28, 24	2d6	1d6	52	7	8	8	9	9	9	10	10	60/12	67/13	75/15
	20, 16	2d6+1	1d6	61	9	9	10	10	11	11	12	12	70/14	79/16	87/17
	12	2½d6	1d6	70	10	11	11	12	12	13	13	14	80/16	90/18	100/20
	10	3d6	1d6	79	11	12	13	13	14	14	15	16	90/18	101/20	112/22
4	3d6+1	1d6	87	12	13	14	14	15	16	16	17	100/20	112/22	125/25	

RUBBER SHOT SHELL, NON-AUTOFIRE, TWO-HANDED, STR MIN 6-14															
NAME	GAUGE	DMG	STUN	AcP	1	2	3	4	5-6	7-8	9-12	13-16	17-32	33-64	65-125
Rubber Shot AE1	.410	EB 5d6		37	6	6	6	7	7	7	8	8	44/10	50/12	56/12
	28, 24	EB 6d6		45	7	7	8	8	9	9	9	10	52/11	60/13	67/15
	20, 16	EB 7d6		52	8	9	9	9	10	10	11	11	61/13	70/15	79/17
LR(20"), RR, RP, STR Min 6-14, 2H	12	EB 8d6		60	9	10	10	11	11	12	13	13	70/15	80/18	90/20
	10	EB 9d6		67	10	11	12	12	13	13	14	15	79/17	90/20	101/22
	4	EB 10d6		75	11	12	13	14	14	15	16	17	87/19	100/	112/25

SABOTED SLUGS, NON-AUTOFIRE, TWO-HANDED, STR MIN 6-14															
NAME	GAUGE	DMG	STUN	AcP	1	2	3	4	5-6	7-8	9-12	13-16	17-32	33-64	65-125
Saboted Slugs Piercing1	.410	1½d6	1d6	35	6	6	6	7	7	7	8	8	37/9	44/10	50/12
	28, 24	2d6	1d6	41	7	7	7	8	8	9	9	10	45/11	52/12	60/14
	20, 16	2d6+1	1d6	47	7	8	8	9	9	9	10	11	52/12	61/14	70/16
Beam, LR(50"), STR Min 6-14, 2H	12	2½d6	1d6	54	9	9	10	10	11	11	12	13	60/14	70/16	80/19
	10	3d6	1d6	60	10	10	11	11	12	13	13	14	67/16	79/19	90/21
	4	3d6+1	1d6	66	11	11	12	13	13	14	15	15	75/18	87/20	100/23

FIREARMS ACCESSORIES

There are many accessories *Dark Champions* characters might wish to buy for their guns. Some are defined as Advantages for the gun's RKA, others as separate Powers. A table at the end of this section gives the Character Point costs for various accessories.

Some accessories are built to attach to any firearm, or any of a group of firearms. Others attach to the integral mounting rails built into many modern firearms, such as the standardized P-rail used on NATO firearms. Some manufacturers make P-rails that attach to guns which don't have integral ones.

Standard Firearm Accessories

The following types of accessories are available for standard firearms. (At the GM's option, characters can mount some of them, such as flashlights and some sights, on shotguns as well.)

BRASS CATCHER

A character who doesn't want to leave the shells ejected from an automatic and semi-automatic firearm lying around as evidence can attach a *brass catcher* to the side of his gun. This is a small box or bag that catches and holds the now-empty casings. In game terms this is bought as a naked Advantage, *Invisible Power Effects* (leaves no shell casings; +¼) with OAF (-1), Real Weapon (-¼), and Side Effects (increases weapon's PER Mod by +1, always occurs; -½). (See the Firearms Accessories Table for costs, if necessary; if the table doesn't list the Active Point cost of a character's gun, either use the next highest Active Point total listed or recalculate the cost on your own.)

CAMERAS

Some of the latest assault rifles are designed (or are being designed) to include cameras mounted on the weapon. The camera transmits a picture back to a lens worn over the user's eye. The shooter uses the camera to see around corners without having to expose any part of his body — he simply pokes the gun around the corner so he can see what the camera sees. The camera can also transmit pictures back to a commander or database so that rear-echelon leaders can see what the field soldiers see.

In game terms, a rifle-mounted camera is No Range Clairvoyance (Sight Group) with a battery (Continuing Fuel Charge) that offers about three hours of performance.

FLASHLIGHTS AND SPOTLIGHTS

This device is a small, high-powered flashlight that attaches to the gun (usually underneath the front of the barrel, or to the front of the trigger guard). In game terms, it's bought this way: Sight Group Images 1" radius, +4 to PER Rolls (22 Active Points); OAF (-1), Limited Range (10"; -¼), Only To Create Light (-1), Real Weapon (-¼), 1 Continu-

ing Fuel Charge (batteries; easily replaced; 1 Hour; -0) (total cost: 6 points).

Rifles, assault rifles, and other large weapons can potentially carry much larger spotlights if necessary; these mount to the top of the weapon. For these, extend the length of the Limited Range. Some spotlights generate infrared or ultraviolet light, but characters need special equipment (such as night-sight goggles) to see such beams. For these, change the *Only To Create Light* (-1) Limitation to *Only To Create IR (or UV) Light* (-1¼) (total cost: 6 points).

FLASH SUPPRESSORS

Flash suppressors hide the muzzle flash of a gun from normal sight. They're usually found only on rifles, but for *Dark Champions* purposes it's assumed characters could make or buy flash suppressors for handguns if they wished. Flash suppressors can be combined with silencers, but not with recoil compensators.

In game terms, a flash suppressor is bought as Invisible to Normal Sight (+¼) for firearms of various Active Points with the Limitations OAF (-1) and Real Weapon (-¼). (See the Firearms Accessories Table for costs, if necessary; if the table doesn't list the Active Point cost of a character's gun, either use the next highest Active Point total listed or recalculate the cost on your own.) The Invisible Power Effects only covers the muzzle flash; the character firing the gun has to use Stealth or other means to conceal the gun itself.

Rifle Grenade Launcher

Most modern flash suppressors also act as rifle grenade launchers. Rifle grenades are 22mm grenades fired from the end of a rifle using special blank cartridges (or ordinary ball ammunition if the grenade is equipped with a "bullet trap"). Characters who want their flash suppressors to have this capability can, with the GM's permission, buy them as Multipowers (one slot with the naked *Invisible Power Effects* Advantage, one with STR only for throwing grenades, as in the table on page 250). Alternately, the GM can simply allow all flash suppressors to function this way at no cost.

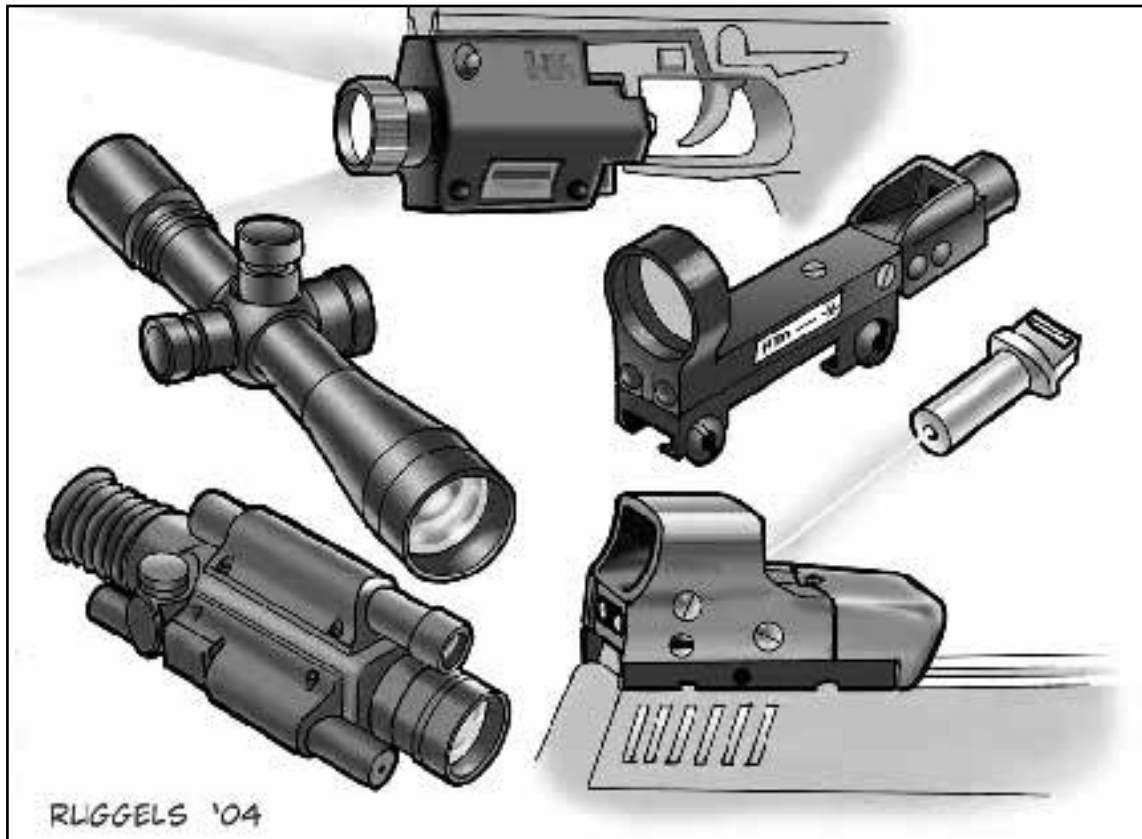
LANYARDS

A lanyard is a cord attached to a gun (usually on the bottom of the grip for a revolver or other guns with solid grips, other places for any gun that inserts the magazine into the grip). When looped around the shooter's wrist, a lanyard makes it impossible for the character to drop his gun (or be disarmed), unless the cord somehow breaks.

In game terms, a lanyard is defined as follows: Telekinesis (4 STR), Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½) (9 Active Points); OAF (-1), No Range (-1), Only To Hold Onto/Recover One Gun (-2), Real Weapon (-¼) (total cost: 2 points). The character can use the Telekinesis as a Zero-Phase Action to "reel the gun in" when he's Disarmed or has to let it go for some reason.

RANGEFINDERS

These small but handy devices use a laser to measure the exact distance to the target. They're



bought as Absolute Range Sense, OAF (-1), Real Weapon (-¼), Only When Shooter Braces And/Or Sets (-1).

RECOIL COMPENSATORS

As discussed on page 194, guns have recoil when fired, and this recoil can throw off a character's aim. *Recoil compensators*, also known as muzzle brakes, help to reduce recoil by channeling some of the explosive force of a gun's discharge upward at the end of the barrel. They're most often found on automatic weapons (*i.e.*, weapons with the *Autofire* Advantage), but there are recoil compensators for some handguns.

Recoil compensators come in two types. The first attaches to a gun's muzzle, thus extending the length of the barrel by an inch or two (usually this has no game effect, but the GM might increase the gun's PER Mod by 1 if appropriate). The second involves cutting or drilling holes into the barrel itself, and thus adds no length... but the permanent alteration to the barrel means the gun can never use a silencer or flash suppressor.

In game terms, recoil compensators are bought as Recoil Skill Levels — Penalty Skill Levels that diminish or negate the recoil penalty. They have the Limitations *OAF* (-1) and *Real Weapon* (-¼), and *Side Effects* (+1 to firearm's Hearing PER modifier, always occurs; -½) (see the Firearms Accessories Table for costs, if necessary). Because they're PSLs, the device doesn't improve the character's OCV until after his first shot against a single target — all it can do is counteract some or all of the OCV penalty for recoil. The device only works when a character uses *Autofire*, *Multifire*, or *Rapid Fire* against a single target; it

has no effect on *Autofire* or *Rapid Fire* penalties when the character attacks multiple targets.

Handguns should not buy recoil compensators that provide more than +1 OCV. Other types of firearms can buy any type of recoil compensator, unless the GM rules otherwise.

Characters cannot use recoil compensators together with a silencer and/or a flash suppressor. In fact, a recoil compensator makes a gun louder.

SIGHTS AND SCOPES

Characters can buy sights and scopes for almost any kind of gun. They range from simple iron sights to telescopic scopes to laser-based sights. These devices help the shooter to aim better, and thus are bought as *Combat* (and/or *Range*) Skill Levels with the *OAF* (-1) and *Real Weapon* (-¼) Limitations (and possibly other Limitations, often including that they do not work unless the shooter uses the *Brace* and/or *Set* *Combat Maneuvers* (-1)). All guns come with standard iron sights (+0 OCV, +0 RMod) for free.

Some sights and scopes also include, or are combined with, a *Rangefinder* (see above). Typically a character only has one type of sight or scope on a gun, but it's possible to install more than one on some firearms. In that case, the GM should require the character to choose which one he's using for any given shot; characters can't combine the effects of two sights unless the text indicates otherwise or the GM specifically permits it.

Collimating And Reflex Sights

Collimating and reflex sights (*a.k.a.* red dot sights) have a lens on which the device electronically generates a dot (or other marker) that shows

FIREARMS ACCESSORIES TABLE

Standard Firearms Accessories

Name	A/R Cost	OCV	RMod	Notes
Brass Catcher				
10 Active Point gun	2/1	—	—	IPE (leaves no shell casings) (+¼)
20 Active Point gun	5/2	—	—	IPE (leaves no shell casings) (+¼)
30 Active Point gun	7/2	—	—	IPE (leaves no shell casings) (+¼)
40 Active Point gun	10/4	—	—	IPE (leaves no shell casings) (+¼)
50 Active Point gun	12/4	—	—	IPE (leaves no shell casings) (+¼)
60 Active Point gun	15/5	—	—	IPE (leaves no shell casings) (+¼)
70 Active Point gun	17/6	—	—	IPE (leaves no shell casings) (+¼)
80 Active Point gun	20/7	—	—	IPE (leaves no shell casings) (+¼)
90 Active Point gun	22/8	—	—	IPE (leaves no shell casings) (+¼)
100 Active Point gun	25/9	—	—	IPE (leaves no shell casings) (+¼)
Camera	25/10	—	—	Clairsentience (Sight Group), NR
Flashlight	22/6	—	—	+4 Sight Group PER in darkness, LR (10" or more)
Flash Suppressor				
10 Active Point gun	2/1	—	—	Invisible to Normal Sight (+¼)
20 Active Point gun	5/2	—	—	Invisible to Normal Sight (+¼)
30 Active Point gun	7/3	—	—	Invisible to Normal Sight (+¼)
40 Active Point gun	10/4	—	—	Invisible to Normal Sight (+¼)
50 Active Point gun	12/5	—	—	Invisible to Normal Sight (+¼)
60 Active Point gun	15/7	—	—	Invisible to Normal Sight (+¼)
70 Active Point gun	17/7	—	—	Invisible to Normal Sight (+¼)
80 Active Point gun	20/9	—	—	Invisible to Normal Sight (+¼)
90 Active Point gun	22/10	—	—	Invisible to Normal Sight (+¼)
100 Active Point gun	25/11	—	—	Invisible to Normal Sight (+¼)
Lanyard	9/2	—	—	Telekinesis (4 STR), Only On One Gun
Rangefinder	3/1	—	—	Absolute Range Sense, OBS
Recoil Compensator				
Type 1	3/1	+1	—	SE (+1 Hearing PER Rolls), Only Versus Recoil Penalties
Type 2	6/2	+2	—	SE (+1 Hearing PER Rolls), Only Versus Recoil Penalties
Type 3	9/3	+3	—	SE (+1 Hearing PER Rolls), Only Versus Recoil Penalties
Sights and Scopes				
Collimating/Reflex	46/14	+2	+10	LR (125"), OBS; also provides +2 PER versus darkness
Laser Sight				
Standard, Small	34/13	+2	+8	LR (64"), Not In Adverse Conditions
Infrared, Small	34/14	+2	+8	LR (64"), User Must Be Able To Perceive IR Light
Standard, Long Arm	52/21	+2	+14	Not In Adverse Conditions
Infrared, Long Arm	52/23	+2	+14	User Must Be Able To Perceive IR Light
Micrometer Sight	42/14	—	+14	OBS, Extra Phase to aim and shoot
Nightsight Scope				
Type I	9/2	—	—	+2 PER versus darkness, Detect Infrared Light, OBS
Type II	12/3	—	—	+3 PER versus darkness, Detect Infrared Light, OBS
Type III	15/3	—	—	+4 PER versus darkness, Detect Infrared Light, OBS
Telescopic Sight				
x2	20/7	—	+3	+3 vs. RMod for Sight Group, +1 PER vs. darkness, OBS
x3	26/9	—	+4	+4 vs. RMod for Sight Group, +1 PER vs. darkness, OBS
x4	38/11	—	+6	+6 vs. RMod for Sight Group, +1 PER vs. darkness, OBS
x6	56/17	—	+9	+9 vs. RMod for Sight Group, +1 PER vs. darkness, OBS
x8	74/23	—	+12	+12 vs. RMod for Sight Group, +1 PER vs. darkness, OBS
x10	92/29	—	+15	+15 vs. RMod for Sight Group, +1 PER vs. darkness, OBS

Firearms Accessories Table (Continued)

Name	A/R Cost	OCV	RMod	Notes
Thermal Sight	5/1	—	—	Infrared Perception (Sight Group), OBS
Targeting Computer	70/20	+2	+10	Type III Nightsight, x3 Telescopic Sight, Rangefinder, OBS
Silencer, Cinematic				
10 Active Point gun	2/1	—	—	Invisible to Hearing Group (+¼)
20 Active Point gun	5/2	—	—	Invisible to Hearing Group (+¼)
30 Active Point gun	7/3	—	—	Invisible to Hearing Group (+¼)
40 Active Point gun	10/4	—	—	Invisible to Hearing Group (+¼)
50 Active Point gun	12/5	—	—	Invisible to Hearing Group (+¼)
60 Active Point gun	15/7	—	—	Invisible to Hearing Group (+¼)
70 Active Point gun	17/7	—	—	Invisible to Hearing Group (+¼)
80 Active Point gun	20/9	—	—	Invisible to Hearing Group (+¼)
90 Active Point gun	22/10	—	—	Invisible to Hearing Group (+¼)
100 Active Point gun	25/11	—	—	Invisible to Hearing Group (+¼)
Silencer, Realistic				
Small, Poor Quality	5/1	—	—	CE (-1 Hearing PER Rolls), Reduces/Eliminates Firing Noise
Small, Average Quality	8/2	—	—	CE (-2 Hearing PER Rolls), Reduces/Eliminates Firing Noise
Small, High Quality	11/3	—	—	CE (-3 Hearing PER Rolls), Reduces/Eliminates Firing Noise
Large, Poor Quality	11/3	—	—	CE (-3 Hearing PER Rolls), Reduces/Eliminates Firing Noise
Large, Average Quality	14/4	—	—	CE (-4 Hearing PER Rolls), Reduces/Eliminates Firing Noise
Large, High Quality	17/5	—	—	CE (-5 Hearing PER Rolls), Reduces/Eliminates Firing Noise
Slide-Stop	7/2	—	—	CE (-1 Hearing PER Rolls), Cancels Out Action's Noise
Shotguns Accessories				
Name	A/R Cost	OCV	RMod	Notes
Ropethrower	10/3	—	—	Swinging 10", Extra Time (Extra Phase), Uses 1 Shotgun Charge
Shell Adapter	-/1	—	—	Lets shotgun fire one type of bullet, 1 Minute to switch
Shotgun Barrel Flattening	var/var	—	—	Increase to AE1 Doubled
Shot Spreader	var/var	—	—	Changes shotgun to AEC and NR

KEY/NOTES

All devices have the Limitations *OAF* (-1) and *Real Weapon* (-¼)

A/R Cost: The Active Point/Real Point cost of the accessory.

OCV: The OCV modifier the accessory provides, if any. See page 200-01 for information on how this is bought, though the *Two-Handed* (-½) Limitation is not applied since these devices might be attached to handguns or the like.

RMod: The Range Modifier modifier the accessory provides, if any. See page 200-01 for information on how this is bought, though the *Two-Handed* (-½) Limitation is not applied since these devices might be attached to handguns or the like.

Notes: Pertinent notes and information about the accessory.

AEC: Area Of Effect (Cone)

CE: Change Environment

IPE: Invisible Power Effects

LR: Limited Range

NR: No Range

OBS: Only When Shooter Braces And/Or Sets (-1)

SE: Side Effects

the weapon's point of aim. All the shooter has to do is adjust where the weapon's pointing until the dot overlays the target. Unlike with a laser sight, only the shooter can see the "aiming dot." These devices let the shooter keep both eyes open, and also improve his ability to acquire the target in low-light conditions.

Collimating and reflex sights have a range of about 250 meters (125").

Laser Sights

Also known as *targeting lasers*, laser sights work by placing a "dot" of laser light on the point where the gun is aimed, thus showing the shooter where his shot will hit. Unlike most sights, they don't require the shooter to Brace and/or Set. (Realistically, the GM might consider imposing that restriction, but dramatically they don't seem to require that sort of aiming.)

Laser sights that use standard light do not work well in smoke, mist, or similar conditions, or against brightly-colored backgrounds (and smoke or mist may make the entire beam visible, showing the enemy exactly where the character is). A $-1/4$ Limitation, *Does Not Work In Adverse Conditions*, reflects these restrictions. Furthermore, standard laser sights are only useful out to 64" (a $-1/4$ Limitation). But because the target can see the dot of laser light on him (and thus knows exactly where he'll get hit by the shot), a standard laser sight can improve some Presence Attacks (see page 60).

Some laser sights use infrared lasers. These also only work out to a range of 64", but don't suffer from the other restrictions of standard laser sights. However, the shooter must have some means of perceiving IR light to use them (a -0 Limitation).

The 64" range restriction for either type of laser assumes a smaller, pistol-mounted laser sight. Larger models — about the size of a conventional flashlight — are available for long arms. These have a range of about 8,000 meters (4,000", or five miles)... though of course that doesn't mean the weapon can fire that far. To simulate these, remove the *Limited Range* ($-1/4$) Limitation.

In game terms, laser sights provide +2 OCV. Small ones also provide +8 versus the Range Modifier (enough to cancel the Range Modifier at their maximum range of 64"); larger ones increase that to +14. At the GM's option, only half of the Range Skill Levels apply unless the character Braces and/or Sets.

Some devices combine a flashlight (or spotlight) and a laser sight.

Micrometer Sights

A micrometer sight is a precisely-calibrated sight that can be adjusted in micrometer increments for accurate distance shooting. In game terms it provides a significant number of Range Skill Levels, but requires Extra Time to prepare for use (a Full Phase, so all told aiming and shooting with a micrometer sight requires an Extra Phase). The character must take the Full Phase to adjust the sight before every shot, unless the last target he shot at is the same distance away from him as his current target.

Nightsight Scopes

Nightsight scopes (sometimes referred to as "starlight scopes") provide passive light enhancement — rather than generating any light on their own, they amplify the ambient light, thus theoretically "turning night into day" for the person looking through them (though the world seen through the scope appears in a monochrome green, not color). They also allow the user to see infrared light. They don't function in total darkness (since then there's no light for them to amplify), and they emit ultrasonic sound (which animals, and characters with proper equipment, can hear).

In game terms, a nightsight scope provides a PER Roll bonus to overcome darkness modifiers — +2 to +4, depending on the sophistication of the device. The Limitations on this are OAF (-1), Real Weapon ($-1/4$), Only To Counteract Darkness Penalties ($-1/2$), Only When Shooter Braces And/Or Sets (-1), Requires Ambient Light (it won't work in total darkness; $-1/4$), and Side Effect (character suffers a 2 x Effect Vulnerability to Sight Group Flashes based on bright light while looking through the scope, and may experience a minor Sight Group Flash from looking at a bright light, always occurs; $-1/2$). The device also provides Detect Infrared Light (Sight Group) with most of these same Limitations.

Telescopic Sights

Telescopic sights, or *scopes*, are telescope-like devices that mount on top of a firearm. They're rated by how much they magnify the target. For example, a x2.0 scope makes the target seem twice as large, effectively halving the range to it in terms of shooting accuracy when the shooter takes the time to aim. Additionally, telescopic sights amplify ambient light slightly, and usually have illuminated reticles, making it a little easier for the user to see at night.

In game terms, telescopic sights are bought as both Range Skill Levels and the *Telescopic Sense* Modifier for the Sight Group, all with the Limitations OAF (-1), Real Weapon ($-1/4$), and Only When Shooter Braces And/Or Sets (-1). They also provide a minor Sight Group PER Roll bonus that only counteracts the darkness penalty.

Thermal Sights

Thermal sights (also referred to as a thermal-imaging weapon sights, or TWS) are passive infrared sensors — they perceive patterns of heat, such as the body heat given off by a person or animal, or the heat of a vehicle's engine. They can "see" through light obstacles, such as most foliage, but not heavy ones like walls. They require two minutes to "warm up" when activated, and have a battery life of about four to five hours.

In game terms, thermal sights are Infrared Perception (Sight Group) with OAF (-1), Extra Time (2 Minutes to activate; $-3/4$), Real Weapon ($-1/4$), Only When Shooter Braces And/Or Sets (-1), 1 Continuing Fuel Charge lasting 5 Hours (-0).

Targeting Computer

The latest advances in sighting and aiming technology are targeting computers, which can

only be built into long arms such as assault rifles (though in more cinematic campaigns the GM could waive that restriction if desired). Using its built-in rangefinder, advanced nightsight device, video imager (equivalent to a telescopic sight), other sensors, and a dedicated ballistics computer, a targeting computer can accurately track the range to a target, improving the shooter's chance of hitting the target or placing a launched grenade just where he wants it to be when it explodes. Its battery has about three hours of power.

In game terms, a targeting computer provides various OCV Levels and Range Skill Levels with OAF (-1), Real Weapon (-¼), Only When Shooter Braces And/Or Sets (-1), and 1 Continuing Fuel Charge lasting 3 Hours (-0). Additionally it incorporates a Rangefinder, Type III Nightsight Scope, and a video imaging system that's equivalent to a x3 Telescopic Sight. The cost listed on the Firearms Accessories Table includes all of these devices (the listed RMod bonus includes both the computer's bonus and the bonus from its "x3 Telescopic Sight").

SILENCERS

Firearms make a lot of noise when fired. The expanding gases that propel a bullet create a loud "boom" as they leave the barrel, and the bullet itself makes a "crack" as it breaks the sound barrier. The accompanying table lists the standard Hearing PER Roll modifiers to hear various types of guns being fired.

Silencers, more accurately known as sound suppressors, trap the exploding gases given off when a gun is fired, thus muffling the sound of the explosion which propels the bullet forward. Silencers use baffles and/or absorbent materials to prevent the gases from escaping.

Silencers come in two types: integral and attached. An integral silencer is built into the gun and can't be detached. An attached silencer can be put on or taken off a gun as desired, but the muzzle of the gun has to be specially threaded to accept a silencer. Attaching or detaching this type of silencer takes a Full Phase (or a Half Phase if a character succeeds with a Fast Draw (Small Arms) roll). An attached silencer increases a gun's PER Mod (+1 for handguns, +2 or more for submachine guns and larger arms).

Most guns can be silenced, though submachine guns, rifles, and any gun capable of automatic fire need a silencer larger than those required for semi-automatic handguns (in other words, silencers aren't universally compatible; treat them as appropriate only for a single type of firearm). Revolvers cannot be silenced, because their open cylinder allow so much gas to escape. Shotguns cannot be silenced through conventional means, though Silent shells are available (see page 212).

Silencers tend to wear out — as more shots are taken, they allow more and more noise to leak through until they're effectively useless. For game purposes most GMs don't worry about this, but GMs in some high-"realism" games might want to give silencers Charges. Most modern silencers per-

FIREARMS NOISE

Type Of Firearm	Bonus To Hearing PER Rolls
Assault Rifle	+5
Handgun	+3
Rifle	+5
Shotgun	+5
Submachine Gun	+4

Other Situations	Bonus To Hearing PER Rolls
Cycling of the action	+1
Pulling back a gun's hammer	+1
Pumping a pump-action shotgun	+2
Reloading a clip	+1
Working a bolt action	+2

form reasonably well for several hundred (or even thousand) shots.

In game terms, you can build silencers one of two ways. To create a "cinematic" silencer — one that functions with the efficiency of silencers in movies — apply Invisible to Hearing Group (+¼) to the firearm as a naked Advantage, with the Limitations *OAF* (-1) and *Real Weapon* (-¼).

More "realistic" silencers are built with Change Environment to diminish — but not necessarily entirely eliminate — the Hearing PER Roll modifier for various firearms. The Firearms Accessories Table lists the costs and qualities of various types of "realistic" silencers. Of course, even if a silencer completely negates a gun's Hearing PER Roll modifier, that doesn't mean a character can't hear the gun — just that he gets no bonus to do so.

Some silencers also act as flash suppressors; characters could combine both accessories into one device if the GM allows. Silencers are incompatible with recoil compensators.

Characters can make crude homemade silencers if they have appropriate materials and succeed with a Weaponsmith (Firearms) roll at -2. These function as Poor quality silencers, and only work for one shot. A lot of objects can function as "one-time silencers"; for example, firing through a pillow, towel, or similar object can effectively silence a bullet.

Other Firearm Sounds

Silencers only muffle the sound of the explosion that launches a bullet; they do not affect the sounds of the gun's parts operating or the "crack" made by bullets as they break the sound barrier.

To eliminate the supersonic crack, a gun has to fire Subsonic ammunition (see page 209). Alternately, some silencers are drilled with small holes to allow enough of the propellant gases to escape so that the bullet does not travel fast enough to break the sound barrier. Other silencers use "wipes" (a type of baffle) to slow the bullet down to subsonic speeds; these wear out quickly (in game terms, give them 20-32 Charges) and prevent the shooter from using any ammunition that expands on contact with the target (such as Hollow Point or Frangible rounds). This "slowing" effect reduces the damage caused by the bullet to about 75% of normal; use the damage figures for an equivalent Subsonic cartridge. In game terms, you can build these "slowing silencers" by applying a *Side Effects* Limitation

(silencer makes gun do 75% of its regular damage, always occurs; -½).

To eliminate the sound of the action cycling, a gun needs a slide-stop (see below).

To eliminate the sound of the trigger being pulled and the hammer falling, a gun needs an electronic trigger, which means it has to use Caseless ammunition (see page 204).

SLIDE-STOP

Silencers cannot affect the mechanical action of a gun as the action cycles, which makes a distinct noise (+1 to Hearing PER Rolls to perceive). Semi-automatic firearms can be fitted with a *slide-stop* (also called a slide-lock) to prevent the action from cycling. The only mechanical sounds made by guns with this attachment are the trigger being pulled and the hammer falling. However, guns with slide-stops can only fire a single shot at a time; characters cannot use Autofire, Multifire, or Rapid Fire with them. Furthermore, the shooter has to cycle the action manually between shots (this requires a Half Phase Action).

In game terms, a slide-stop is typically bought as follows: Change Environment 1" radius, -1 to Hearing PER Rolls, Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½) (7 Active Points); OAF (-1), No Range (-½), Real Weapon (-¼), Self Only (only counteracts the noise caused by the gun's action cycling; -½), Side Effects (prevents multiple shots, always occurs, see text; -½) (total cost: 2 points). (For a more cinematic slide-stop, buy the device as Invisible to Hearing Group, using the same cost as for cinematic silencers.)

Shotgun Accessories

The following accessories are specific to shotguns.

ROPETHROWER

Ropethrowers are an attachment to the barrel of a shotgun that uses the force of a fired shell to shoot a rope and grapnel. In game terms, characters can buy this as follows: Swinging 10" (10 Active Points); OAF (-1), Extra Time (Extra Phase; -¾), Uses 1 Charge From A Shotgun RKA (-¼), Real Weapon (-¼) (total cost: 3 points).

SHELL ADAPTER

A shell adapter allows a shotgun to fire normal bullets. The caliber of bullet is dictated by the size and type of shell adapter, but regardless of bullet type, using a shell adapter imposes a -1 OCV penalty on the shot. Inserting or removing a shell adapter takes 1 Minute.

In game terms, the best way to build this device is to have it convert a shotgun into a Multi-power — one slot for shotgun rounds, one slot for the standard bullet the character could fire with the adapter, and Extra Time (1 Minute) on the Reserve to represent the time it would take to switch slots. Characters can build their own individual weapons that way if desired (or if the GM prefers), but building a shell adapter as a "generic" shotgun accessory

that way would be needlessly complex. Therefore, the Firearms Accessories Chart simply indicates a cost of 1 Character Point (the GM can change this if necessary).

SHOTGUN BARREL FLATTENING

A character can increase the spread pattern of his shotgun by flattening the barrel slightly. This is bought as an additional +¼ Advantage to expand the shotgun's normal Area Of Effect (One Hex) into Area Of Effect (One Hex Doubled).

SHOT SPREADER

A shot spreader is essentially the opposite of a choke: it's a device to increase the spread pattern of a shot as it emerges from the shotgun's muzzle. This allows the shooter to hit a lot of close targets with devastating effectiveness, but significantly decreases a shotgun's deadliness at greater ranges. In game terms, a shot spreader changes a shotgun's Area Of Effect (One Hex) to an Area Of Effect (Cone), and its Limited Range (20"; -¼) to No Range (-½). A character should recalculate the cost of his shotgun with these alterations.

FIREARMS MODIFICATIONS AND CUSTOMIZATION

Characters can modify, customize, or improve their guns in many different ways. Listed below are several examples, for which you can find the costs in the accompanying table (most take the Limitations *OAF* (-1) and *Real Weapon* (-¼)). See *Weaponsmith*, page 83, for information about the time and skills needed to make these modifications.

Because the *HERO System* Attack Roll rules make each +1 OCV very effective, many of the listed modifications provide less than that — a +0.5 OCV modifier. To gain any benefit from these, a character has to install two different modifications that each provide +0.5 OCV (for a total of +1). For these purposes, a +0.5 OCV bonus costs 2 Character Points.

Some of the modifications are listed as costing no points. To discourage PCs from always taking them, the GM may want to change that to 1 Character Point.

Ambidextrous Conversion: Most guns are made to be shot by right-handed persons. This modification makes the gun easily usable by persons of either handedness.

Barrel Coating: A special microscopic coating applied to the inside of the barrel. This smooths the barrel, reduces fouling, and increases the gun's accuracy and the speed with which it can be fired.

Barrel Fluting: Fluting involves cutting radiused grooves down the length of a rifle's barrel. This allows the barrel to cool more quickly, thus extending its lifespan. In game terms, this has no effect, but reduces a rifle's weight by about 560-700 grams.

Clear Grips/Magazine: Semi-automatic guns can be equipped with clear plastic grips and/or magazines

so that the shooter can see how much ammunition is left at any time (checking ammo status is a Zero-Phase Action).

Cryotreatment: Exposing a gun to controlled temperatures of -300 degrees Fahrenheit strengthens the steel in it. This decreases barrel warpage from the heat of shooting and thus improves accuracy.

Custom Grips/Stock: A custom grips or stock, specially molded to fit the user’s hand and arm, can improve accuracy. This provides a +0.5 OCV bonus, but imposes a -1 OCV penalty whenever anyone else tries to use the gun.

Electronic Trigger: It’s possible to replace the mechanical trigger in some guns with an electronic trigger, which is noiseless because it has no mechanical action — firing the gun is more like pressing a button than pulling a trigger. However, this only works for guns that fire Caseless ammunition, since an electronic charge cannot activate Standard ammunition. This modification does not work in conjunction with Improved Trigger or Hair Trigger.

Enlarged Magazine: Using the Firearms Cost/Upgrade Tables (pages 214-31), you can increase the size of a semi-automatic or automatic firearm’s magazine. Some modern designs, such as the cylindrical magazine of the Calico M-950 or the C-Mag drum magazine for various assault rifles, pack a surprisingly large number of rounds into a small space — some don’t even change the weapon’s PER Mod.

Fine Tuning: General improvements by a gunsmith can make a gun more accurate (+.5 or +1 OCV).

Hair Trigger: A hair trigger fires the gun with only the slightest pressure (most triggers require several pounds of pressure). This makes the gun quicker to fire, which can be useful in a gunfight... but can also increase the chance of an accidental firing. If a character’s Unluck activates or he rolls a fumble (page 187), an accidental shooting is a definite possibility. This modification does not work in conjunction with Improved Trigger or Electronic Trigger.

Improved Bedding: Rifle barrels are “bedded” to prevent excessive barrel movement, which negatively affects aim. An improved bedding makes the barrel even steadier, improving aim beyond that of ordinary rifles. Only rifles can benefit from this modification.

Improved Firing Pin: One of the factors affecting accuracy is *locktime* — the amount of time between when the trigger is squeezed and the bullet is fired. In this interval, even if it’s measured in microseconds, a shooter’s aim can wander. An Improved Firing Pin, usually made of titanium, strengthens the spring. This decreases locktime and increases accuracy without adding to the weight of the gun.

Improved Range: A gunsmith can fine-tune a gun to improve its accuracy over long distances. Although this is most commonly done with rifles, the procedure also works with handguns.

FIREARMS MODIFICATIONS AND CUSTOMIZATION TABLE

Name	A/R Cost	OCV	RMod	Notes
Ambidextrous Conversion	0	—	—	
Barrel Coating	2/1	+5	+0	
Barrel Fluting	0	—	—	Reduces gun’s weight
Clear Grips/Magazine	0	—	—	Shows how much ammunition is left
Cryotreatment	2/1	+5	+0	
Custom Grips/Stock	2/1	+5	+0	-1 OCV for other users
Electronic Trigger	7/2	—	—	CE (-1 Hearing PER Rolls), cancels out trigger’s noise, requires Caseless ammo
Fine Tuning I	2/1	+5	+0	
Fine Tuning II	5/2	+1	—	
Hair Trigger	1/1	—	—	+1 Lightning Reflexes for shooting the gun
Improved Bedding	2/1	+5	+1	
Improved Firing Pin	2/1	+5	+0	
Improved Range I	3/1	+0	+1	+1 PER Mod
Improved Range II	6/2	+0	+2	+2 PER Mod
Improved Trigger	2/1	+5	+0	
Personalization	0	—	—	Makes gun a Personal Focus
Pistol Stock	3/1	—	+1	+2 PER Mod
Polygonal Rifling	var/var	—	—	+1 point RKA
Sawed-Off Shotgun	var/var	—	—	Changes shotgun to Area Of Effect (Cone) and No Range
Size Reduction I	0	—	—	-1 PER Mod
Size Reduction II	0	—	-1	-2 PER Mod
Streamlining	2/1	—	—	+1 to Fast Draw (Small Arms)
Watertight	0	—	—	Makes gun watertight
Weight Reduction	0	—	—	Makes gun weigh up to 25% less

Improved Trigger: Modifications to the trigger to make it easier and smoother to use, thus improving accuracy. This modification does not work in conjunction with Electronic Trigger or Hair Trigger.

Personalization: Some “smart” guns only work for their owners, thus making it impossible for an attacker to take the gun away and use it against its owner. A smart gun has devices in its grip which read the signal from a ring worn by the owner and only fire if the hand holding the gun is wearing the ring. (More technologically-advanced versions might have fingerprint or DNA readers built into the grip, or the like.) In *HERO System* terms, smart guns are Personal Foci instead of Universal Foci.

Pistol Stock: Some handguns have detachable, rifle-like stocks that the shooter can attach to stabilize the gun for long-distance shots. Attaching or detaching the stock requires a Half Phase Action (or a Zero-Phase Action if the character succeeds with a Fast Draw (Small Arms) roll).

Polygonal Rifling: Guns with polygonal rifling have a better gas seal, which creates the maximum “push” possible on the bullet and decreases barrel friction. This causes the bullet to travel faster and do more damage (RKA +1 point).

Sawed-Off Shotgun: A sawed-off shotgun is one that’s had most of its barrel cut off for either or both of two purposes: to make it easier to conceal or to cause the shot to spread more quickly. In game terms, sawing off a shotgun’s barrel changes the shotgun’s Area Of Effect (One Hex) to an Area Of Effect (Cone), and its Limited Range (20”; -¼) to No Range (-½). The character should recalculate the cost of his shotgun with these alterations. Additionally, the shotgun’s PER Mod drops from the usual +4 to +6 for most shotguns to +2 to +3.

Characters can only convert double-barreled shotguns into sawed-off shotgun. Sawing off a pump-action shotgun would involve sawing off the magazine and pump as well.

Size Reduction: Removing or trimming away unnecessary metal and parts of a gun can reduce its size (*i.e.*, PER Mod) without significantly affect-

ing its accuracy. In game terms, this changes the weapon’s PER Mod.

Streamlining: By trimming and smoothing the edges of a gun, a gunsmith can make it easier to draw because it’s less likely to snag on holster material or clothing.

Watertight: A gunsmith can create and seal a gun so that it’s watertight.

Weight Reduction: By trimming away unnecessary metal and replacing some parts of the gun with lighter-weight equivalents, a character can make his gun weigh up to 25% less.

Disguised Weapons And Gadgets

The Concealment rules from pages 450-51 of the *HERO System 5th Edition, Revised* rulebook presume a character’s concealing Obvious, Accessible Foci. Examples include a stilleto worn in an arm sheath under a character’s sleeve, a small handgun tucked into the back of his pants underneath his sports jacket, or a straight razor hidden in a boot.

But many of the firearms and other weapons built for *Dark Champions* characters aren’t just hidden, they’re *disguised* — in other words, designed not to look like guns. Ever since guns were invented, people have tried to think up clever ways to hide them so they’re available for surprise attacks. In *HERO System* terms, a disguised gun is an Inobvious Accessible Focus. The Inobvious part of the *Focus* Limitation corresponds to a Concealment “Skill” of 13- (11- base roll, +2 for the fact that the weapon is built into an object); extremely well made concealed weapons may merit higher Concealment “Skills.” (If a character’s building a disguised weapon with Character Points, he has to pay for this using the *Skill* Power; otherwise the GM can simply assign the appropriate modifiers.) When a character tries to spot a disguised object, he makes a PER Roll against the object’s Concealment roll in a Skill Versus Skill Contest. A successful roll only reveals that there’s something unusual in the construction of the item; the perceiving character has to perform a hands-on search in another PER Roll Versus Concealment Roll Contest to open the weapon up or determine what it does.

Naturally, once a character actually uses a disguised weapon, it’s no longer Inobvious. When a character starts firing bullets from his cigarette case, its true function becomes apparent.

Unless the GM rules otherwise, all disguised guns should have a minimum -1 OCV penalty (and no Range Skill Levels) to reflect the relative difficulty of aiming them.

See the Disguised Guns Table for some guidelines regarding the capacity of disguised guns built into various objects.

DISGUISED GUNS TABLE

Object	Ammunition Capacity
Belt Buckle	1
Beverage Can	3-8
Book	6+
Briefcase	6+
Calculator	2-3
Camera/Videorecorder	3+
Cane/Crutch/Umbrella	10
Cast (for broken arm)	8
Cigarette	1
Cigarette case	2-6
Flashlight	10
Gloves	1
Knife Handle	1-3
Lighter	1-2
Lipstick	1
Pen	1

FIREARMS TABLES



The accompanying tables list many guns and other weapons that *Dark Champions* characters might use. The weapons are listed alphabetically by category, in these categories:

- Revolvers
- Semi-Automatic Pistols
- Submachine Guns
- Rifles
- Assault Rifles
- Machine Guns
- Shotguns
- Grenades
- Heavy Weapons

Several categories of information are given for these weapons. Some information (caliber, number of shots, weight) derives from real-world data, while some (OCV, damage) depends on the application of the *HERO System* rules and can be changed to suit individual campaigns and tastes.

The weapons listed were chosen for a variety of reasons: commonality (either in real life or in action-adventure movies and stories); interesting technology; intriguing appearance; and the like. If you don't find the gun you're looking for listed here, you can easily use the listed guns (as well as the Firearms Cost/Upgrades Tables on pages 214-31) as guidelines for creating the one you want.

Name: The name of the weapon. This may include a manufacturer and/or model number.

Cal: The weapon's caliber (for shotguns, this becomes "Ga," for Gauge). This is given in fractions of an inch or in millimeters (mm).

Many models of guns comes in multiple calibers, not just the one listed (this is particularly true for semi-automatic handguns), and a gunsmith can often rechamber a weapon to accept a different size cartridge. So if you like the look of a gun but not the caliber, feel free to change it to fire the type of bullet you want. Upgrading a gun to a larger caliber may diminish the number of rounds it can hold in a magazine, while downgrading to a smaller caliber may increase the weapon's ammo capacity.

OCV: The weapon's OCV modifier, bought as described on page 200-01.

RMod: The weapon's Range Modifier, bought as described on page 200-01.

Dam: The damage the weapon does (usually derived from the size of the bullet; see the Ammunition Damage Table on page 203). All figures are Killing Damage unless contained within parentheses (which indicates Normal Damage).

STUNx: The STUN Modifier for the weapon. 1d6-1 is a normal STUN Modifier roll; 1d6 means the weapon has a +1 Increased STUN Modifier, 1d6+1 a +2 Modifier, and so forth.

Shots: The number of shots in the gun's cylinder or magazine (in game terms, how many Charges the gun has). Each gun comes with one "clip" of ammunition unless noted otherwise. If a gun can use more than one size clip, the largest or most common clip is listed. Guns with a "clip" of 1 shot are single-shot guns (often for target shooting) that the user must reload after each shot.

The listed number of Charges for semi-automatic firearms does not include having one round "in the pipe" (*i.e.*, chambering one round, then removing the magazine and replacing that round, so that the gun carries +1 round).

STR Min: The STR Min necessary to use the weapon effectively. See page 478 of the *HERO System 5th Edition, Revised* rulebook for more information. Guns have the *STR Min Does Not Add/Subtract Damage* modifier, so a character without sufficient STR to fire a gun doesn't do any less damage, but does suffer the specified OCV penalty.

PER Mod: The PER Roll modifier to perceive the gun when it's concealed. See page 450 of the *HERO System 5th Edition, Revised* rulebook for more information.

A/R Cost: The Active Point/Real Point Cost of the weapon, in Character Points. These costs use the expanded Killing Attack costs on page 95, and include the standard Power Modifiers for various types of firearms (as described on pages 200 and 210).

Mass: The weight of the gun, in kilograms. Typically this is the unloaded weight; inserting a clip of ammunition adds a few grams.

Notes: Any notes about the weapon. All notes and abbreviations are explained at the end of the tables.

REVOLVERS

Name	Cal	OCV	RMod	Dam	STUNx	Shots	STR Min	PER Mod	A/R Cost	Mass	Notes
ADC Derringer	10mm	-1	-2	1½d6	1d6-1	2	6	+0	25/4	0.45	
Casull Fieldgrade	.454	+1	+0	2d6+1	1d6	5	12	+3	49/12	1.46	
Colt Anaconda	.44 M	+0	+0	2d6	1d6	6	11	+3	37/9	1.67	
Colt Detective	.38	+0	+0	1d6	1d6-1	6	9	+1	15/3	0.59	
Colt King Cobra	.357 M	+0	+0	1½d6	1d6-1	6	10	+2	25/6	1.30	
Colt Police Positive	.38	+0	+0	1d6	1d6-1	6	9	+1	15/3	0.45	
Colt Python	.357 M	+1	+0	1½d6	1d6-1	6	10	+2	30/8	1.36	
Derringer	.38	-2	-2	1d6	1d6-1	2	4	+0	15/3	0.45	
Freedom Arms M83	.50 AE	+0	+0	2d6+1	1d6	6	10	+2	44/10	1.53	
Korth Stainless	9mm	+1	+0	1d6+1	1d6-1	6	9	+3	25/7	1.24	
Linebaugh 475	.475	+0	+0	2d6+1	1d6	5	10	+2	44/10	1.12	
Llama Comanche	.38	+0	+0	1d6	1d6-1	6	9	+2	15/3	1.03	
Llama Super Comanche	.44 M	-1	+0	2d6	1d6	6	12	+3	37/8	1.42	
Remington XP-100R	.350	+1	+2	1½d6	1d6-1	4	11	+4	36/10	2.00	
Rossi M851	.38	+0	+0	1d6	1d6-1	6	8	+2	15/3	0.85	
Ruger Redhawk	.44 M	+0	+0	2d6	1d6	6	11	+3	37/9	1.49	
Ruger Security Six	.357 M	+0	+0	1½d6	1d6-1	6	10	+2	25/6	0.95	
S&W Model 10	.38	+0	+0	1d6	1d6-1	6	7	+2	15/3	0.86	
S&W Model 19	.357 M	+0	+0	1½d6	1d6-1	6	9	+1	25/6	0.86	
S&W Model 27	.357 M	+0	+0	1½d6	1d6-1	6	10	+2	25/6	1.29	
S&W 29 Silhouette	.44 M	+0	+0	2d6	1d6	6	10	+3	37/9	1.53	
S&W Model 36	.38	+0	+0	1d6	1d6-1	5	7	+1	15/3	0.69	
S&W Model 57	.41 M	+0	+0	1½d6	1d6-1	6	10	+3	25/6	1.36	
S&W .500 Magnum	.50 S&W M	+0	+0	2d6+1	1d6	5	13	+3	44/10	2.06	
S&W 586/686	.357 M	+0	+0	1½d6	1d6-1	6	10	+2	25/6	1.39	
S&W 625	.45 ACP	+0	+0	2d6-1	1d6	6	10	+2	34/8	1.28	
S&W Model 640-1	.357 M	+0	+0	1½d6	1d6-1	6	10	+1	25/6	0.59	
Taurus 454	.454	+1	+0	2d6+1	1d6	5	12	+3	49/12	1.65	
Taurus 669/669VR	.357 M	+0	+0	1½d6	1d6-1	6	10	+3	25/6	1.05	
Weatherby Mark V	.308	+1	+2	2d6+1	1d6	1	13	+4	55/13	2.00	
Wesson Supermag	.357 M	+0	+0	1½d6	1d6-1	5	12	+3	25/6	1.84	

SEMI-AUTOMATIC PISTOLS

Name	Cal	OCV	RMod	Dam	STUNx	Shots	STR Min	PER Mod	A/R Cost	Mass	Notes
AA Arms AP9	9mm	+0	+0	1d6+1	1d6-1	20	11	+3	25/7	1.59	
Accu-Tek HC-380	.380	+0	+0	1d6	1d6-1	10	7	+1	15/4	0.74	
American C.O.P.	.357 M	-2	-2	1½d6	1d6-1	4	6	+0	25/5	0.79	
AMT Automag IV	.45 Win Mag	+0	+1	2d6	1d6	7	10	+3	40/10	1.30	
AMT Automag V	.50 AE	+1	+0	2d6+1	1d6	7	13	+3	49/13	1.30	
AMT Backup	.380	+1	-1	1d6	1d6-1	5	10	+1	20/5	0.51	
AMT Javelina	10mm	+0	+1	1½d6	1d6-1	8	12	+3	28/7	1.10	
Australian SAP	.223	+1	+1	2d6	1d6	30	10	+5	53/16	1.80	
.44 Automag	.44 M	+0	+0	2d6	1d6	7	14	+4	37/9	1.50	
Beretta Model 84F	.380	+0	+0	1d6	1d6-1	13	10	+2	15/4	0.69	
Beretta Model 92/92FS	9x19mm	+0	+0	1d6+1	1d6-1	15	9	+2	20/6	1.00	
Beretta Model 8000	9x19mm	+1	+0	1d6+1	1d6-1	15	9	+1	25/8	0.95	
Bren Ten	10mm	+1	+0	1½d6	1d6-1	11	9	+1	30/9	0.94	
Browning BDA 9C	9x19mm	+1	+0	1d6+1	1d6-1	14	10	+2	25/8	0.91	
Browning Hi Power	9x19mm	+0	+0	1d6+1	1d6-1	20	7	+2	25/7	0.93	
Calico M-110	.22 LR	+1	+0	1d6	1d6-1	100	11	+3	29/9	1.70	RC1
Calico M-950/Liberty III	9x19mm	+1	+0	1d6+1	1d6-1	100	12	+3	43/13	2.10	RC1
Claridge Hi-Tec	9x19mm	+1	+1	1d6+1	1d6-1	30	10	+3	33/10	1.70	
Colt 2000	9x19mm	+1	+1	1d6+1	1d6-1	15	10	+2	28/9	0.81	

Semi-Automatic Pistols (Continued)

Name	Cal	OCV	RMod	Dam	STUNx	Shots	STR Min	PER Mod	A/R Cost	Mass	Notes
Colt Double Eagle	10mm	+1	+0	1½d6	1d6-1	8	10	+2	30/8	1.09	
Colt Govt. Mk. IV	9x19mm	+1	+0	1d6+1	1d6-1	9	9	+2	28/8	1.16	RC1
Colt M1911/M1911A1	.45 ACP	+1	+0	2d6-1	1d6	7	9	+2	39/10	1.10	
CZ 75/CZ 85	9x19mm	+0	+0	1d6+1	1d6-1	15	9	+2	20/6	0.98	
CZ100	.40	+1	+1	1d6+1	1d6-1	10	9	+3	28/8	0.64	
Desert Eagle .41	.41 M	+1	+0	1½d6	1d6-1	9	13	+3	30/9	1.90	
Desert Eagle .50	.50 AE	+1	+0	2d6+1	1d6	9	13	+3	49/14	1.90	
D Max Model 100P	10mm	+1	+1	1½d6	1d6-1	30	11	+4	39/12	2.00	
FN Five SevenN	5.7x28mm	+1	+0	1d6	1d6-1	20	8	+2	24/7	0.62	
Glock 17L	9x19mm	+1	+1	1d6+2	1d6-1	19	9	+2	39/12	0.66	PR
Glock 20	10mm	+0	+0	2d6-1	1d6-1	15	9	+1	30/8	0.64	PR
Glock 21	.45 ACP	+0	+0	2d6	1d6	13	9	+1	39/11	0.83	PR
Glock 27	.40	+1	+0	1d6+2	1d6-1	9	9	+2	30/8	0.62	PR
Göncz GA-9	9x19mm	+1	+2	1d6+1	1d6-1	30	11	+4	36/12	1.80	
Grendel P-12	.380	+0	+0	1d6	1d6-1	11	10	+1	15/4	0.71	
Grendel P-31	.22	+0	+0	1d6-1	1d6-1	30	10	+1	15/4	1.50	
Gyrza P-9/SR-1 Vektor	9x21mm	+0	+0	1d6+1	1d6-1	18	10	+2	25/7	1.18	
Hammerli 232	.22	+1	+1	1d6	1d6-1	6	9	+3	65/23	1.15	Micr, RC1
Hammerli 280/SP20	.32	+1	+2	1d6	1d6-1	6	9	+2	7½3	1.20	Micr, RC1
H&K HK4	.32 ACP	+1	+1	1d6	1d6-1	8	8	+2	23/7	0.48	
H&K MK 23 SOCOM	.458	+1	+1	2d6-1	1d6	12	10	+2	114/39	1.20	Sil (-3), FS, Laser, PR, 1
H&K P7K3	.380	+1	+0	1d6+1	1d6-1	13	9	+2	25/7	0.75	PR
H&K P7M13	9x19mm	+1	+0	1d6+2	1d6-1	13	9	+2	30/9	0.80	PR
H&K P9/P9S	9x19mm	+1	-1	1d6+2	1d6-1	9	9	+2	30/8	0.88	PR
H&K P-11	7.62x36mm Fle	+0	+0	1½d6	1d6-1	5	8	+2	68/17	1.20	AP, IMR2, IPE, LR(15"), Sil(-3), Watertight, 2
H&K USP Compact	.45	+1	+0	2d6	1d6	8	10	+2	44/11	0.79	PR
High Standard Trophy	.22 LR	+1	+1	1d6-1	1d6-1	10	6	+2	20/6	1.25	
Jericho 941	.41	+1	+1	1½d6	1d6-1	11	10	+2	33/10	1.00	
Kahr K9	9x19mm	+1	+0	1d6+1	1d6-1	7	8	+2	25/7	0.71	



Semi-Automatic Pistols (Continued)

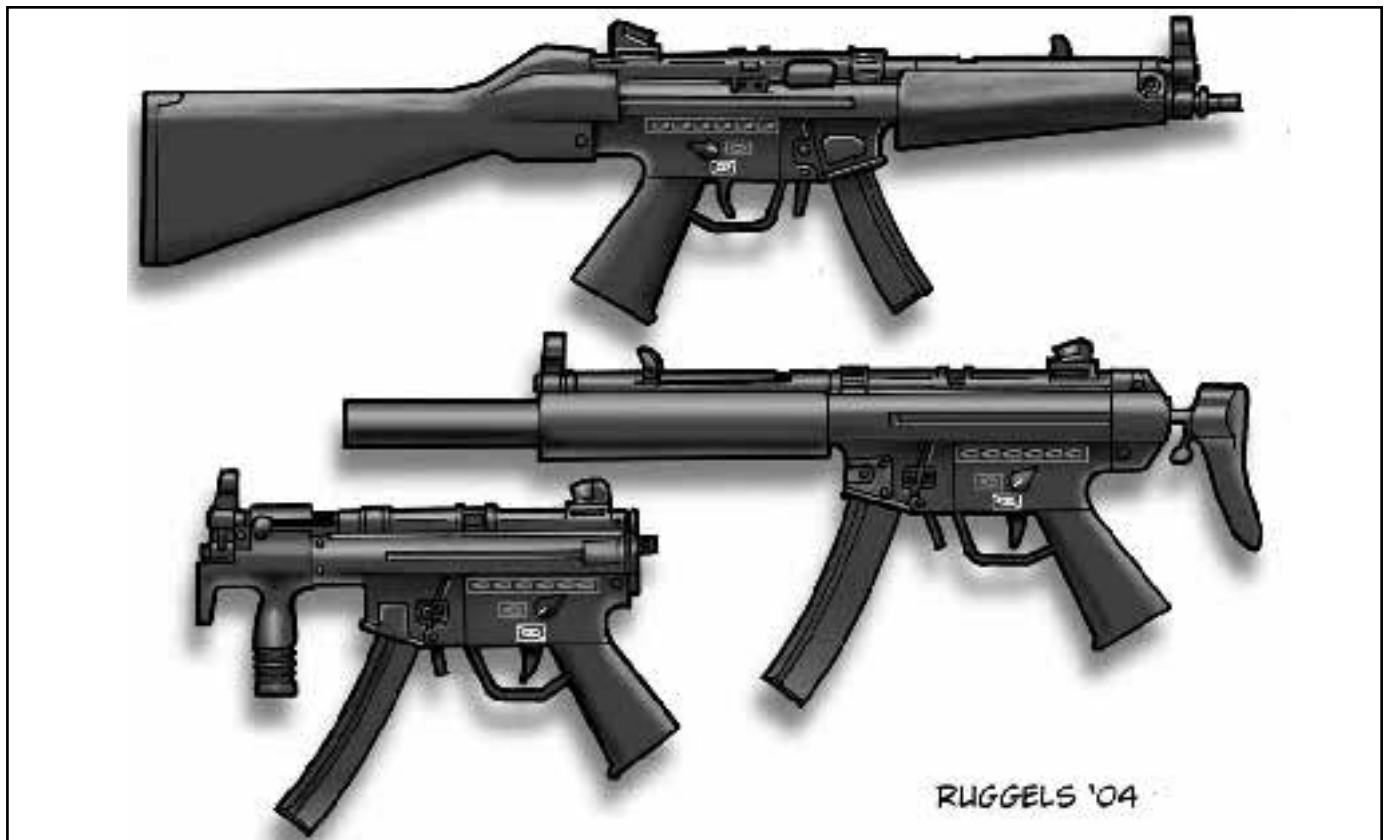
Name	Cal	OCV	RMod	Dam	STUNx	Shots	STR Min	PER Mod	A/R Cost	Mass	Notes
L.A.R. Grizzly .45	.45 Win Mag	+1	+0	2d6	1d6	7	13	+3	42/11	1.49	
L.A.R. Grizzly 10mm	10mm	+1	+0	1½d6	1d6	7	12	+3	30/8	1.49	
Lorcin L-25	.25 ACP	+0	+0	1d6	1d6-1	7	8	+2	15/4	0.41	
Luger P-08	.30	+1	+0	1d6+1	1d6-1	32	8	+2	30/9	0.87	
MBA Gyrojet Pistol	13x36mm Gy	+2	+1	2d6-1	1d6-1	6	5	+2	53/14	0.50	IMR2, IPE
Makarov P6	9x18mm R	+0	+0	1d6+1	1d6-1	8	10	+3	28/7	0.70	Sil (-2)
Makarov PM	9x18mm R	+0	-1	1d6+1	1d6-1	8	6	+1	20/4	0.68	
Norinco Model 77B	9x19mm	+0	+0	1d6+1	1d6-1	9	9	+2	20/5	1.00	
O'Dwyer VLe	9x19mm Ca	+1	+1	1d6+1	1d6-1	24	8	+3	51/16	0.75	NP, AF3, 3
Para-Ordinance P13/P14	.45 ACP	+1	+0	2d6-1	1d6	13	10	+2	39/12	1.07	
Pardini/Fiocchi S&W	.32	+1	+1	1d6	1d6-1	5	10	+3	65/20	1.10	Micr
Pardini/Fiocchi SPE	.22 LR	+1	+2	1d6	1d6-1	5	10	+3	23/8	1.05	Micr
Ruger Mark II	.22 LR	+1	+1	1d6	1d6-1	10	10	+3	62/20	2.1	Micr
Ruger Model P90DC	.45 ACP	+1	+0	2d6-1	1d6	7	10	+2	39/10	0.90	
Ruger P94	9x19mm	+0	+0	1d6+1	1d6-1	15	8	+2	54/19	0.93	Laser
SIG P210-6	7.65x17mm	+1	-1	1d6	1d6-1	8	7	+2	20/5	0.98	
SIG/SAUER P226	9x19mm	+1	+0	1d6+1	1d6-1	15	8	+2	25/11	0.70	
SIG/SAUER P229	.40	+0	-1	1d6+1	1d6-1	12	8	+2	20/5	0.83	
S&W ASP	9x19mm	+1	+0	1d6+1	1d6-1	7	10	+2	25/7	0.62	Clear grips/magazine
S&W Mark 22 Model 0	9x19mm	+0	+0	1d6+1	1d6-1	8	10	+3	28/7	0.74	Sil (-2), 4
S&W Model 41	.22 LR	+1	+2	1d6	1d6-1	10	8	+3	23/8	1.20	
S&W Model 1006	10mm	+1	+0	1½d6	1d6-1	9	8	+3	30/9	0.80	
S&W Model 4506	.45 ACP	+1	+0	2d6-1	1d6	8	8	+3	39/10	1.15	
S&W Model 5904/5906	9x19mm	+1	+0	1d6+1	1d6-1	15	8	+3	25/8	1.06	
S&W SIGMA	.40	+1	+1	1d6+1	1d6-1	15	10	+3	28/9	0.74	
Sphinx AT-2000	.40	+1	+1	1d6+1	1d6-1	10	9	+3	28/8	1.03	
Sphinx 3000	9x19mm	+1	+1	1d6+1	1d6-1	16	10	+3	28/9	1.04	
Steyr GB	9x19mm	+1	+0	1d6+1	1d6-1	18	9	+3	30/9	0.84	
Steyr M40	.40	+1	+0	1d6+1	1d6-1	10	9	+2	25/7	0.78	
Steyr SPP	9x19mm	+1	+1	1d6+1	1d6-1	30	11	+3	33/10	1.30	
Tokarev TT-33	7.62x26mm R	+0	+0	1d6+1	1d6-1	8	9	+2	20/5	0.80	
Walther OSP/GSP	.32	+1	+1	1d6	1d6-1	5	10	+3	23/6	1.20	
Walther P5/P38	9x19mm	+0	+0	1d6+1	1d6-1	8	8	+2	20/5	0.80	
Walther P99	9x19mm	+1	+0	1d6+1	1d6-1	16	10	+2	25/8	0.72	
Walther PPK/S	.380 Auto	+1	-1	1d6	1d6-1	7	6	+1	20/5	0.59	
Willey Magnum	.45 Win Mag	+0	+0	2d6	1d6	7	13	+3	37/9	1.98	

SUBMACHINE GUNS

Name	Cal	OCV	RMod	Dam	STUNx	Shots	STR Min	PER Mod	A/R Cost	Mass	Notes
Agram 2000	9x19mm	+0	-1	1d6+1	1d6-1	32	12	+4	35/9	1.90	AF5
Ares FMG	9x19mm	+0	+0	1d6+1	1d6-1	32	10	+2/+3	35/9	2.25	AF5, ET(FP), 5
Baretta Model 93R	9x19mm	+0	+0	1d6+1	1d6-1	20	11	+2	33/10	1.12	AF3, RC1
Beretta M12/PM-12S	9x19mm	+1	+0	1d6+1	1d6-1	40	10	+5	45/13	3.00	AF5
Bison	9x18mm R	+0	+0	1d6+1	1d6-1	64	11	+4	40/11	2.10	AF5, clear magazine
Bushman IDW	.41	+1	+1	1½d6	1d6-1	32	10	+4	44/13	3.46	AF5
Bushmaster	.223	+1	+1	2d6	1d6	30	12	+4	68/20	2.38	AF5
BXP	9x19mm	+1	+0	1d6+1	1d6-1	32	10	+5	40/12	2.50	AF5
Calico 960A	9x19mm	+0	+0	1d6+1	1d6-1	100	10	+4	45/13	2.17	AF5
Colt CAR-15	9x19mm	+0	+0	1d6+1	1d6-1	30	12	+5	45/14	2.78	AF5, FS
Colt M733 Commando	5.56x45mm N	+1	+0	2d6	1d6	30	12	+4	82/26	3.20	AF5, FS
Colt M635 Commando	9x19mm	+1	+0	1d6+1	1d6-1	32	12	+5	50/26	2.59	AF5, FS
CZ Model 61 Skorpion	.32 Cz	+1	-1	1d6	1d6-1	20	8	+2	31/8	1.59	AF5
FN P90	5.7x28mm	+1	+0	2d6	1d6-1	50	10	+4	65/16	2.50	AF5, Tum, clear magazine
Glock 18C	9x19mm	+1	+1	1d6+2	1d6-1	19	9	+2	47/15	0.59	AF3, PR, RC1
H&K MP5 or 54	9x19mm	+1	+0	1d6+1	1d6-1	30	12	+4	40/12	2.60	AF5

Submachine Guns (Continued)

Name	Cal	OCV	RMod	Dam	STUNx	Shots	STR Min	PER Mod	A/R Cost	Mass	Notes
H&K MP5/10A3	10mm	+1	+0	1½d6	1d6-1	30	12	+4	49/15	2.67	AF5, clear magazine
H&K MP53	5.56x45mm N	+1	+0	2d6	1d6	25	12	+4	65/19	3.05	AF5
H&K MP5K/SP89	9x19mm	+1	+0	1d6+1	1d6-1	30	12	+4	40/12	2.00	AF5
H&K MP5K-PDW	9x19mm	+1	+0	1d6+1	1d6-1	15	12	+4	35/11	2.79	AF5
H&K MP5SD3	9x19mm	+1	+0	1d6	1d6-1	30	12	+5	52/16	2.52	AF5, FS, Sil (-4)
H&K MP7	4.6x30mm	+1	+1	2d6	1d6-1	40	12	+4	75/22	1.20	AF5
H&K MP2000	9x19mm	+1	+1	1d6+1	1d6-1	30	10	+4	60/18	2.78	AF5, Sil (-5)
H&K UMP	.45 ACP	+1	+1	2d6-1	1d6	25	11	+6	62/18	2.08	AF5
H&K VP70 Z	9x19mm	+0	+0	1d6+1	1d6-1	18	9	+2	36/11	0.82	AF3, RC2
Ilarco 180 SR/SB	.22 M	+1	+2	1d6	1d6-1	165	12	+6	56/17	2.60	AF8
Ingram MAC-10	.45 ACP	+1	+0	2d6-1	1d6	32	12	+3	59/17	2.84	AF5
Ingram MAC-11	.380 Auto	+1	+0	1d6	1d6-1	32	12	+3	31/9	1.59	AF5
Intratec TEC-9	9x19mm	+0	-1	1d6+1	1d6-1	32	12	+4	35/9	1.40	AF5
Intratec TEC-22	.22 LR	+0	+0	1d6	1d6-1	30	12	+4	21/6	1.50	AF5
JATI MATIC	9x19mm	+0	+0	1d6+1	1d6-1	40	10	+5	40/11	1.65	AF5
KFAMP Assault MP	9x19mm	+1	+0	1d6+1	1d6-1	108	12	+4	50/15	2.65	AF5
M3A1 "Grease Gun"	.45 ACP	+0	+0	2d6-1	1d6	30	12	+4	54/15	3.47	AF5 Only
Parker-Hale PDW	9x19mm	+1	+0	1d6+1	1d6-1	32	10	+4	38/12	2.10	AF3, RC1, 6
PPsh-41	7.62x25mm R	+1	-1	1d6+1	1d6-1	35	8	+6	45/12	3.60	AF5
Ruger MP9	9x19mm	+1	+0	1d6+1	1d6-1	32	12	+4	40/12	3.00	AF5
Sidewinder SS-1	9x19mm	+1	+0	1d6+1	1d6-1	45	12	+4	45/13	2.49	AF5
SITES Spectre M4	9x19mm	+1	+1	1d6+1	1d6-1	50	13	+5	48/14	2.90	AF5, 7
S&W M-76	9x19mm	+0	+1	1d6+1	1d6-1	36	12	+4	43/12	3.29	AF5
Stechkin APS	9x18mm R	+1	+0	1d6+1	1d6-1	20	12	+3	40/12	0.76	AF5
STEN Mark II	9x19mm	+1	+1	1d6+1	1d6-1	32	12	+4	43/13	2.80	AF5
Sterling L2A3	9x19mm	+2	+0	1d6+1	1d6-1	34	13	+4	50/15	2.72	AF5, 8
Sterling L34A1	9x19mm	+2	-1	1d6	1d6-1	34	10	+4	61/17	3.50	AF5, Sil (-3)
Steyr MPi69/MPi81	9x19mm	+0	+0	1d6+1	1d6-1	32	10	+4	35/10	3.10	AF5
Steyr TMP	.41	+1	+0	1½d6	1d6-1	30	10	+4	49/15	1.30	AF5
Thompson M1-A1	.45 ACP	+0	+0	2d6-1	1d6	50	13	+6	61/17	4.70	AF5



Submachine Guns (Continued)

Name	Cal	OCV	RMod	Dam	STUNx	Shots	STR Min	PER Mod	A/R Cost	Mass	Notes
Thompson M-1928	.45 ACP	+0	+0	2d6-1	1d6	50	14	+6	61/17	4.90	AF5, 9
Uzi	9x19mm	+1	+0	1d6+1	1d6-1	40	12	+4	45/13	3.60	AF5
Mini-Uzi	9x19mm	+0	+0	1d6+1	1d6-1	20	12	+3	35/10	2.65	AF5
Micro-Uzi	9x19mm	+0	-1	1d6+1	1d6-1	15	12	+2	30/7	1.95	AF5
Viking	9x19mm	+1	+0	1d6+1	1d6-1	36	12	+3	45/13	2.72	AF5
Walther MPK/MPL	9x19mm	+1	+1	1d6+1	1d6-1	32	12	+4	43/13	2.80	AF5
Weaver PKS9 Ultralite	9x19mm	+1	+1	1d6+1	1d6-1	42	13	+5	48/14	2.77	AF5

RIFLES

Name	Cal	OCV	RMod	Dam	STUNx	Shots	STR Min	PER Mod	A/R Cost	Mass	Notes
AA Beowulf	.50	+1	+2	3d6	1d6	7	15	+5	67/16	4.00	2H, RC1
Anschutz Model 1913	.22 LR	+1	+2	1d6	1d6-1	1	10	+5	23/6	7.00	2H
Armalite AR-50	.50 B	+1	+2	3d6	1d6	1	16	+7	73/15	15.45	2H, RC2
Barrett Model 82A1	.50 B	+1	+4	3d6	1d6	11	15	+8	79/20	12.9	2H, RC2
Barrett M468	6.8x43mm	+1	+2	2d6	1d6	28	12	+5	62/17	3.31	2H, RC2
Barrett M99-1	.50 B	+1	+3	3d6	1d6	1	14	+7	76/16	9.54	2H, RC2
Calico M-105	.22 LR	+1	+1	1d6	1d6-1	100	12	+6	29/8	2.59	2H
Calico M951 Carbine	9x19mm	+1	+1	1d6+1	1d6-1	100	12	+6	46/13	2.16	2H, RC1
Colt Sporter HBAR	.223	+1	+2	2d6	1d6	30	12	+7	56/15	3.40	2H
Daewoo DR 200	.223	+1	+1	2d6	1d6	20	13	+6	53/14	4.10	2H
D Max Carbine	10mm	+1	+0	1½d6	1d6-1	30	11	+6	36/10	3.00	2H
DPMS Panther	.308 Win	+1	+0	2d6+1	1d6	10	14	+6	49/12	5.45	2H
FN Model 30-11	7.62x51mm N	+1	+2	2d6+1	1d6	10	14	+5	55/14	4.85	2H
Galil Sniper	7.62x51mm N	+1	+1	2d6+1	1d6	25	13	+5	60/16	6.40	2H
Galil SASR	.308	+1	+1	2d6	1d6	25	13	+6	53/14	6.40	2H
Grendel S-16	7.62x36mm	+1	+2	2d6-1	1d6	20	14	+5	73/20	4.80	2H, Sil (-5)
H&H African	.450 M	+0	+2	2½d6	1d6	2	16	+5	56/11	4.60	2H
H&K G3SG/1	7.62x51mm N	+1	+1	2d6+1	1d6	20	10	+5	75/23	5.54	2H, FS



Rifles (Continued)

Name	Cal	OCV	RMod	Dam	STUNx	Shots	STR Min	PER Mod	A/R Cost	Mass	Notes
H&K HK94SG1	9x19mm	+1	+1	1d6+1	1d6-1	30	14	+5	33/9	3.26	2H
H&K PSG-1	7.62x51mm N	+1	+2	2d6+1	1d6	20	15	+6	63/16	8.10	2H
H&K SR-9	.308	+1	+1	2d6+1	1d6	5	13	+6	52/12	4.95	2H
L96A1	.300 Win Mag	+1	+2	2½d6	1d6	10	15	+6	61/15	6.00	2H
M-1 Garand	.30-06	+0	+1	2d6+1	1d6	8	15	+7	47/10	4.40	2H
M21 Sniper	7.62x51mm N	+1	+2	2d6+1	1d6	20	15	+6	63/16	5.04	2H
M40A3	7.62x51mm N	+1	+2	2d6+1	1d6	5	15	+6	55/13	4.10	2H
MBA Gyrojet Carbine	13mm Gy	+1	+2	2d6-1	1d6-1	6	8	+4	51/12	2.50	2H, IMR2, IPE
McMillan M-87	.50 B	+1	+3	3d6	1d6	5	17	+8	70/16	9.52	2H
McMillan M-89	.308	+1	+3	2d6+1	1d6	20	13	+6	69/18	7.00	2H, Sil (-5)
McMillan M-93	12.7x99mm	+1	+3	3d6	1d6	20	15	+8	87/23	9.52	2H, RC2
RAI Model 500	12.7x99mm	+1	+3	3d6	1d6	1	15	+7	70/14	15.15	2H
Remington M24	7.62x51mm N	+1	+2	2d6+1	1d6	10	13	+6	55/14	4.00	2H
Remington M700	7.62x51mm N	+1	+2	2d6+1	1d6	5	10	+6	55/13	3.41	2H
Ruger Mini-14	5.56x45mm N	+1	+1	2d6	1d6	30	10	+5	53/14	3.10	2H
SAR-4800	.308	+1	+1	2d6+1	1d6	20	12	+6	60/16	4.30	2H
SSG 3000	7.62x51mm N	+1	+2	2d6+1	1d6	5	14	+7	70/19	5.40	2H, FS, RC1
SKS Carbine	7.62x54mm R	+1	+2	2d6+1	1d6	10	10	+7	55/14	3.90	2H
Springfield M1903	.30-06	+1	+1	2d6+1	1d6	5	13	+5	52/12	3.94	2H
Springfield SAR-8	.308 Win	+1	+0	2d6+1	1d6	20	14	+5	57/15	4.00	2H
Steyr AMR IWS 2000	15.2mm Fle	+1	+3	3½d6	1d6	5	20	+8	141/30	18.00	2H, AP, IMR2, IPE, RC1
Steyr SSG-69/69 PII	7.62x51mm N	+1	+3	2d6+1	1d6	10	15	+6	58/15	4.37	2H
SVD Dragunov	7.62x54mm R	+1	+2	2d6+1	1d6	10	15	+8	67/19	4.30	2H, FS
Technika Destroyer	14.5x114mm R	+1	+2	3d6+1	1d6	5	16	+8	73/16	26.00	2H
VSS Silent Sniper	9x39mm R	+1	+1	1d6+1	1d6-1	20	13	+6	57/16	2.60	2H, AP, Sil (-4)
Walther WA-2000	7.62x66mm	+1	+4	2½d6	1d6	6	13	+6	88/24	7.91	2H, FS, RC3
Winchester Model 70	.300 Win Mag	+1	+2	2½d6	1d6	3	12	+6	61/13	3.90	2H

ASSAULT RIFLES

Name	Cal	OCV	RMod	Dam	STUNx	Shots	STR Min	PER Mod	A/R Cost	Mass	Notes
AIWS	5x54mm	+1	+0	2d6	1d6-1	60	13	+6	72/19	3.14	2H, AF5, NP
AK-47/AKM-47	7.62x39mm R	+1	+1	2d6	1d6	30	14	+6	68/18	4.30	2H, AF5
AK-74/AKS-74	5.45x39.5mm R	+1	+1	2d6	1d6	30	14	+6	71/19	3.60	2H, AF5, RC1
AR-18	5.56x45m N	+0	+0	2d6	1d6	40	10	+6	84/24	3.17	2H, AF5, FS
Beretta AR 70/223	5.56x45mm N	+0	+0	2d6	1d6	30	13	+5	75/22	3.54	2H, AF5, FS
CETME C3	7.62x51mm N	+1	+0	2d6+1	1d6	20	12	+5	75/19	4.20	2H, AF5
Colt M4/M4A1 Carbine	5.56x45mm N	+1	+1	2d6	1d6	30	12	+5	71/19	2.54	2H, AF5, FS
Colt M16/M16A1	5.56x45mm N	+1	+1	2d6	1d6	30	13	+6	71/19	3.18	2H, AF5, FS
Colt M16A2/A4	5.56x45mm N	+2	+1	2d6	1d6	30	13	+6	88/27	5.78	2H, AF5, FS
Enfield L85A1/SA80	5.56x45mm N	+1	+0	2d6	1d6	30	13	+7	68/18	4.60	2H, AF5, FS
FA-MAS	5.56x45mm N	+1	+2	2d6	1d6	25	10	+6	74/20	3.70	2H, AF5, FS
FN-CAL	5.56x45mm N	+1	+1	2d6	1d6	30	15	+6	83/24	3.00	2H, AF5, FS
FN-F2000	5.56x45mm N	+1	+2	2d6	1d6	30	15	+6	86/25	3.60	2H, AF5, FS
FN-FAL	7.62x51mm N	+1	+2	2d6+1	1d6	20	16	+7	98/27	4.25	2H, AF5, FS
FN-FNC	5.56x45mm N	+1	+1	2d6	1d6	30	15	+6	80/23	3.80	2H, AF5, FS
Galil MAR	5.56x45mm N	+1	+1	2d6	1d6	35	13	+4	92/27	2.98	2H, AF5, FS
Galil SAR	7.62x51mm N	+1	+2	2d6+1	1d6	25	13	+5	98/28	4.30	2H, AF5, FS
H&K 33A2	5.56x45mm N	+1	+1	2d6	1d6	40	15	+5	92/27	3.65	2H, AF5, FS
H&K G3	7.62x51mm N	+1	+3	2d6+1	1d6	30	15	+5	84/21	4.25	2H, AF5
H&K G11	4.73x33mm Ca	+2	+1	2d6	1d6-1	50	15	+5	71/19	3.65	2H, AF5, IPE, RC2, NP, 10
H&K G33E/G41E	5.56x45mm N	+1	+2	2d6	1d6	25	15	+5	86/25	3.65	2H, AF5, FS
H&K G36	5.56x45mm N	+1	+1	2d6	1d6	30	15	+5	83/24	3.43	2H, AF5, FS
M-2 Carbine	.30	+0	+1	1½d6	1d6-1	30	14	+6	47/12	2.36	2H, AF5
M-14/M-14A1	7.62x51mm N	+1	+2	2d6+1	1d6	20	12	+7	8½1	4.12	2H, AF5

Assault Rifles (Continued)

Name	Cal	OCV	RMod	Dam	STUNx	Shots	STR Min	PER Mod	A/R Cost	Mass	Notes
M-19 SPIW	Fle	+1	+0	1½d6	1d6-1	50	11	+5	80/21	2.68	2H, AF5, AP, IMR2, IPE, NP
OICW (M29)	5.56x45mm N	+3	+11	2d6	1d6	30	15	+6	198/64	5.50	2H, AF5, FS, NP, 11
Ruger AC556F	5.56x45mm N	+1	+1	2d6	1d6	30	12	+5	83/25	3.15	2H, AF5, FS
SATS-G3	7.62x51mm N	+1	+1	2d6+1	1d6	20	15	+6	78/19	3.63	2H, AF5
SIG 550/551	5.56x45mm N	+1	+1	2d6	1d6	30	13	+6	83/25	4.10	2H, AF5, FS, clear magazine
SR88A	5.56x45mm N	+1	+1	2d6	1d6	30	13	+5	83/25	3.66	2H, AF5, FS
Stoner M22 or M23	5.56x45mm N	+1	+1	2d6	1d6	30	12	+5	68/18	3.70	2H, AF5
Steyr ACR	Fle	+1	+2	1½d6	1d6-1	30	12	+5	80/21	3.23	2H, AF5, AP, IMR2, IPE, NP
Steyr AUG	5.56x45mm N	+1	+2	2d6	1d6	30	12	+5	86/25	3.60	2H, AF5, FS, 12
Valmet 90	7.62x51mm N	+1	+1	2d6+1	1d6	20	14	+5	95/27	3.90	2H, AF5, FS
Vektor CR-21	5.56x45mm N	+3	+11	2d6	1d6	30	12	+5	129/39	3.80	2H, AF5, FS, Coll

MACHINE GUNS

Name	Cal	OCV	RMod	Dam	STUNx	Shots	STR Min	PER Mod	A/R Cost	Mass	Notes
Light Machine Guns	13										
Ares 5.56 LMG	5.56x45mm N	+1	+1	2d6	1d6	200	14	+6	90/21	4.91	AF5, Bulky
H&K Model 13	5.56x45mm N	+1	+1	2d6	1d6	100	14	+6	95/22	5.40	AF5, Bulky
H&K Model 21	7.62x51mm N	+1	+2	2d6+1	1d6	250	15	+7	125/28	7.30	AF10, Bulky
IMI Negev	5.56x45mm N	+1	+1	2d6	1d6	250	14	+5	105/24	7.60	AF10, Bulky
L7A2	7.62x51mm N	+1	+2	2d6+1	1d6	250	15	+6	125/28	10.90	AF10, Bulky
M60	7.62x51mm N	+1	+1	2d6+1	1d6	250	16	+7	152/40	10.51	AF10, Bulky, FS
M60E3	7.62x51mm N	+1	+2	2d6+1	1d6	250	16	+7	155/41	8.60	AF10, Bulky, FS
M249 SAW/FN Minimi	5.56x45mm N	+1	+1	2d6	1d6	200	15	+7	105/23	6.85	AF10, Bulky
PK	7.62x39mm R	+1	+2	2d6	1d6	250	14	+7	108/25	10.00	AF10, Bulky
RPD	7.62x39mm R	+1	+2	2d6	1d6	100	14	+7	10¼4	7.10	AF10, Bulky



Machine Guns (Continued)

Name	Cal	OCV	RMod	Dam	STUNx	Shots	STR Min	PER Mod	A/R Cost	Mass	Notes
Stoner M207/Mk 23	5.56x45mm N	+1	+1	2d6	1d6	250	14	+7	105/24	5.65	AF10, Bulky
Ultimax 100 Mk III	5.56x45mm N	+1	+1	2d6	1d6	100	14	+6	103/29	5.50	AF5, Bulky, FS
Heavy Machine Guns		13									
EX-34 Chain Gun	7.62x51mm N	+1	+1	2d6+1	1d6	1500	18	+7	122/24	13.70	AF10, Bulky, Crew3
FN-MAG/MAG-58	7.62x51mm N	+1	+1	2d6+1	1d6	250	16	+6	122/25	11.00	AF10, Bulky, Crew3
GAU 19/A	.50 B	+1	+1	3d6	1d6	1000	20	+7	154/29	33.60	AF10, Bulky, Crew3
KPV	14.5x114mm	+1	+4	3d6+1	1d6	1000	23	+8	179/35	49.25	AF10, Bulky, Crew3
M2HB Heavy Barrel	.50 B	+1	+4	3d6	1d6	110	20	+7	163/32	38.00	AF10, Bulky, Crew3
M134 Minigun	7.62x51mm N	+1	+4	2d6+1	1d6	1500	18	+8	148/30	16.30	AF20, Bulky, Crew3
XM-214 Six-Pac Minigun	5.56x45mm N	+1	+4	2d6	1d6	1000	20	+7	139/26	15.00	AF20, Bulky, Crew3

SHOTGUNS

Name	Gauge	OCV	RMod	Dam	STUNx	Shots	STR Min	PER Mod	A/R Cost	Mass	Notes
Generic Shotguns											
.410 Shot	.410	+0	+0	1½d6	1d6	5	8	+5	44/8	3.00	2H, AE1, LR(20"), RR, RP
.410 Shot, DB	.410	+0	+0	1½d6	1d6	2	8	+5	75/12	3.00	2H, AE1, AF2, LR(20"), RR, RP
.410 Shot, Sawed-Off	.410	+0	+0	1½d6	1d6	2	8	+3	94/15	2.25	2H, AEC, AF2, NR, RR, RP
.410 Slug	.410	+0	+0	1½d6	1d6	5	8	+5	31/6	3.00	2H, LR(50")
28, 24 Shot	28, 24	+0	+0	2d6	1d6	5	10	+5	52/10	3.00	2H, AE1, LR(20"), RR, RP
28, 24 Shot, DB	28, 24	+0	+0	2d6	1d6	2	10	+5	90/15	3.00	2H, AE1, AF2, LR(20"), RR, RP
28, 24 Shot, Sawed-Off	28, 24	+0	+0	2d6	1d6	2	10	+3	105/17	2.25	2H, AEC, AF2, NR, RR, RP
28, 24 Slug	28, 24	+0	+0	2d6	1d6	5	10	+5	37/6	3.00	2H, LR(50")
20, 16 Shot	20, 16	+0	+0	2d6+1	1d6	5	11	+5	61/12	3.00	2H, AE1, LR(20"), RR, RP
20, 16 Shot, DB	20, 16	+0	+0	2d6+1	1d6	2	11	+5	105/17	3.00	2H, AE1, AF2, LR(20"), RR, RP
20, 16 Shot, Sawed-Off	20, 16	+0	+0	2d6+1	1d6	2	11	+3	122/19	2.25	2H, AEC, AF2, NR, RR, RP
20, 16 Slug	20, 16	+0	+0	2d6+1	1d6	5	11	+5	44/9	3.00	2H, LR(50")
12 Shot	12	+0	+0	2½d6	1d6	5	12	+5	70/13	3.00	2H, AE1, LR(20"), RR, RP
12 Shot, DB	12	+0	+0	2½d6	1d6	2	12	+5	120/20	3.00	2H, AE1, AF2, LR(20"), RR, RP
12 Shot, Sawed-Off	12	+0	+0	2½d6	1d6	2	12	+3	140/22	2.25	2H, AEC, AF2, NR, RR, RP
12 Slug	12	+0	+0	2½d6	1d6	5	12	+5	50/10	3.00	2H, LR(50")
10 Shot	10	+0	+0	3d6	1d6	5	12	+5	79/15	3.00	2H, AE1, LR(20"), RR, RP
10 Shot, DB	10	+0	+0	3d6	1d6	2	12	+5	135/22	3.00	2H, AE1, AF2, LR(20"), RR, RP
10 Shot, Sawed-Off	10	+0	+0	3d6	1d6	2	12	+3	157/25	2.25	2H, AEC, AF2, NR, +RR, RP
10 Slug	10	+0	+0	3d6	1d6	5	12	+5	56/11	3.00	2H, LR(50")
4 Shot	4	+0	+0	3d6+1	1d6	5	13	+5	87/17	3.00	2H, AE1, LR(20"), RR, RP
4 Shot, DB	4	+0	+0	3d6+1	1d6	2	13	+5	150/25	3.00	2H, AE1, AF2, LR(20"), RR, RP
4 Shot, Sawed-Off	4	+0	+0	3d6+1	1d6	2	13	+3	175/28	2.25	2H, AEC, AF2, NR, RR, RP

Shotguns (Continued)

Name	Gauge	OCV	RMod	Dam	STUNx	Shots	STR Min	PER Mod	A/R Cost	Mass	Notes
4 Slug	4	+0	+0	3d6+1	1d6	5	13	+5	62/12	3.00	2H, LR(50")
Specific Shotguns											
AAI CAWS	Fle	+1	+0	3d6	1d6	12	12	+5	154/34	4.08	2H, AE1, AF3, IPE, LR(50"), NP, RC1
Atchisson Assault	12	+0	+0	2½d6	1d6	20	13	+6	140/31	5.20	2H, AF5, LR(50")
Benelli 121-M1	12	+1	+0	2½d6	1d6	8	12	+4	70/14	3.30	2H, AE1, LR(20"), RR, RP
Benelli M4/M1014	12	+1	+0	2½d6	1d6	6	12	+4	75/15	3.80	2H, AE1, LR(20"), RR, RP
Bernardelli B4	12	+0	+0	2½d6	1d6	8	12	+5	70/14	3.45	2H, AE1, LR(20"), RR, RP
Daewoo USAS-12	12	+0	+0	2½d6	1d6	28	13	+6	80/19	5.50	2H, AF5, LR(50")
Entry Team Striker	12	+0	+0	2½d6	1d6	12	10	+5	120/24	4.20	2H, AE1, AF3, LR(20"), RR, RP
Franchi PA3/215	12	+0	+0	2½d6	1d6	3	12	+3	50/9	2.27	2H, LR(50")
Franchi SPAS-12	12	+0	+0	2½d6	1d6	8	12	+5	70/14	4.35	2H, AE1, LR(20"), RR, RP
Franchi SPAS-15	12	+0	+0	2½d6	1d6	6	12	+5	70/13	3.80	2H, AE1, LR(20"), RR, RP, 14
Ithaca MAG-10	10	+0	+0	3d6	1d6	2	12	+4	56/10	4.87	2H, LR(50")
Ithaca Stakeout	20	+1	+0	2d6+1	1d6	4	11	+4	66/13	1.59	2H, AE1, LR(20"), RR, RP
Jackhammer Mk 3A-2	12	+0	+0	2½d6	1d6	10	13	+5	106/48	4.57	2H, AF5, LR(50"), NP, 15
KS-23M	4	+0	+0	3d6+1	1d6	3	14	+5	87/15	3.20	2H, AE1, LR(20"), RR, RP
Mossberg M500 ATP8	12	+0	+0	2½d6	1d6	8	12	+4	70/14	3.10	2H, AE1, LR(20"), RR, RP
Mossberg 590	12	+0	+0	2½d6	1d6	9	12	+5	70/15	3.10	2H, AE1, LR(20"), RR, RP
Olin/H&K CAWS	12	+1	+0	2½d6	1d6	10	12	+5	65/15	4.32	2H, AF3, LR(50"), NP
Remington 870 P	12	+0	+0	2½d6	1d6	8	12	+3	70/14	3.40	2H, AE1, LR(20"), RR, RP
Winchester 1300	12	+0	+0	2½d6	1d6	7	12	+5	70/14	3.10	2H, AE1, LR(20"), RR, RP

GRENADES

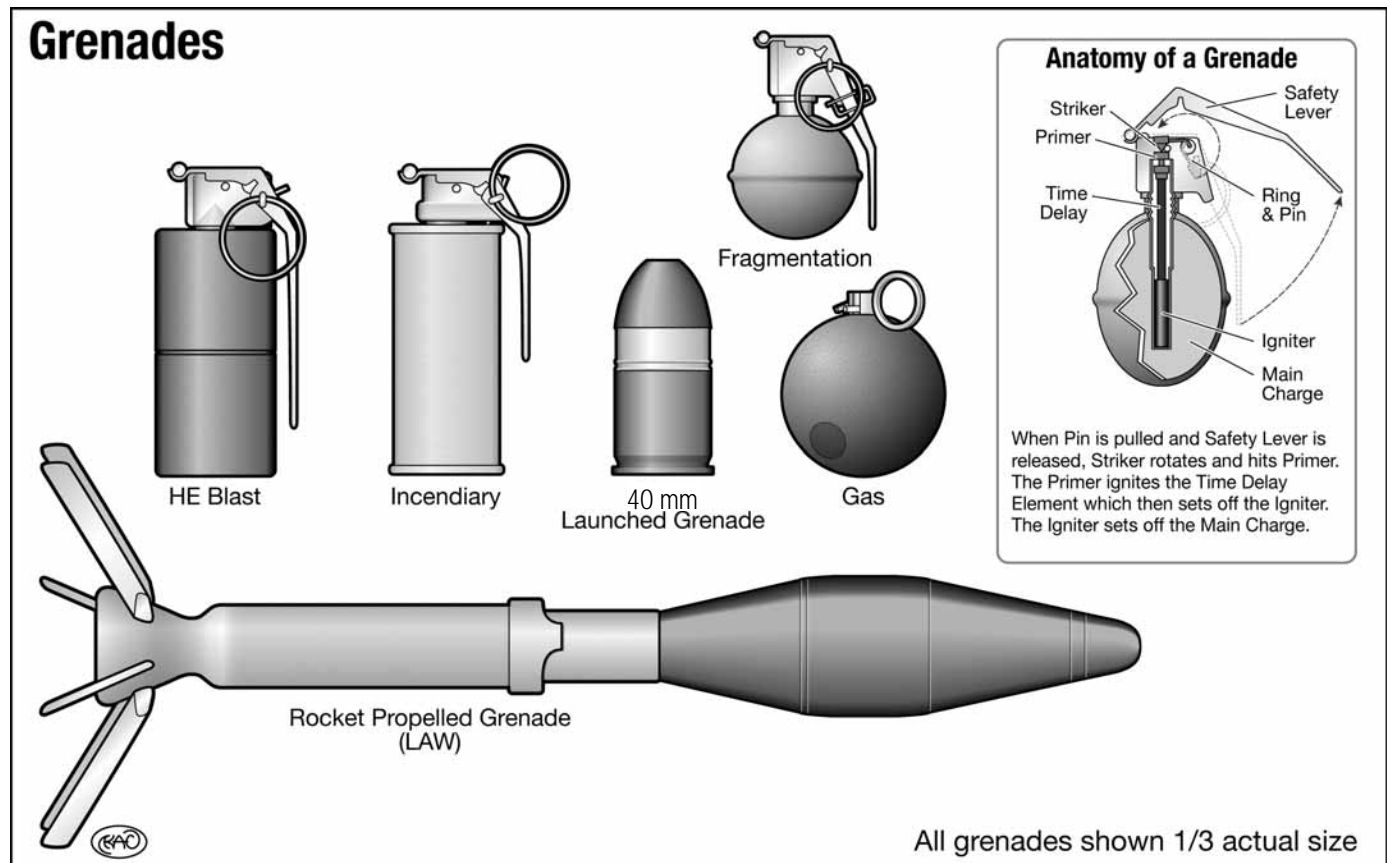
Name	Cal	OCV	RMod	Dam	STUNx	Shots	STR Min	PER Mod	A/R Cost	Mass	Notes
Grenade Launchers											
Armstrong Multishot GL	40mm	+0	+1	130 STR	6	12		+7	133/20	5.30	MR(10")
Arwen 37	37mm	+1	+1	(8d6)	—	5	10	+6	48/10	3.10	LR(30"), 17
BG15	40mm	+0	+0	110 STR	1	8		+6	110/14	0.90	MR(15"), underslung
H&K 69A1/79	40mm	+0	+0	110 STR	1	8		+6	110/13	1.80	MR(7")
Mk 19 Model 3	40mm	+1	+1	2½d6X	1d6	100	13	+8	168/38	32.90	AF5, MGL
M79	40mm	+0	+1	100 STR	1	8		+5	103/13	2.70	MR(10")
M203/PIM203	40mm	+0	+1	110 STR	1	8		+6	113/14	1.40	MR(15"), underslung
MM-1	40mm	+0	+0	(8d6X)	—	12	10	+6	60/13	6.00	MR(6")
Talon	40mm	+0	+1	110 STR	1	8		+6	113/14	1.40	MR(15")
Grenade Rounds											
20/22mm Fragmentation	20 or 22mm	—	—	1½d6X	1d6	1	—	+2	44/10	0.40	
24mm Fragmentation	24mm	—	—	2d6X	1d6	1	—	+2	52/12	0.40	
30mm Fragmentation	30mm	—	—	2d6+1X	1d6	1	—	+2	61/14	0.40	
40mm Fragmentation	40mm	—	—	2½d6X	1d6	1	—	+2	70/16	0.40	
52mm Fragmentation	52mm	—	—	3d6X	1d6	1	—	+2	79/19	0.40	

Grenades (Continued)

Name	Cal	OCV	RMod	Dam	STUNx	Shots	STR Min	PER Mod	A/R Cost	Mass	Notes
20/22mm Concussive	20 or 22mm	—	—	(5d6X)	—	1	—	+2	37/9	0.40	
24mm Concussive	24mm	—	—	(6d6X)	—	1	—	+2	45/11	0.40	
30mm Concussive	30mm	—	—	(7d6X)	—	1	—	+2	52/12	0.40	
40mm Concussive	40mm	—	—	(8d6X)	—	1	—	+2	60/14	0.40	
52mm Concussive	52mm	—	—	(9d6X)	—	1	—	+2	67/16	0.40	
FERRET	40mm	—	—	Tear gas	—	1	—	+2	210/56	0.40	Indirect, 18
M397A1 Airburst	40mm	—	—	3d6X	1d6	1	—	+2	79/19	0.40	19
M433 HEDP	40mm	—	—	2½d6X	1d6	1	—	+2	90/21	0.40	AP
Rubber Impact	40mm	—	—	(8d6)	—	1	—	+2	40/9	0.40	

Hand Grenades

Fragmentation	—	+0	+0	1d6X	1d6-1	1	RBS	+2	22/5	0.40	
Fragmentation	—	+0	+0	1d6+1X	1d6-1	1	RBS	+2	30/7	0.40	
Fragmentation	—	+0	+0	1½d6X	1d6-1	1	RBS	+2	37/8	0.40	
Fragmentation	—	+0	+0	2d6X	1d6-1	1	RBS	+2	45/10	0.40	
Concussive	—	+0	+0	(5d6X)	—	1	RBS	+2	22/5	0.40	
Concussive	—	+0	+0	(6d6X)	—	1	RBS	+2	30/7	0.40	
Concussive	—	+0	+0	(7d6X)	—	1	RBS	+2	37/8	0.40	
Concussive	—	+0	+0	(8d6X)	—	1	RBS	+2	45/10	0.40	
Smoke	—	+0	+0	CE 4"	—	1	RBS	+2	21/6	0.25	-3 Sight PER for 3 Turns, 20
Stun Grenade	—	+0	+0	See text	—	1	RBS	+2	67/14	0.40	21
Tear Gas	—	+0	+0	Tear gas	—	1	RBS	+2	200/53	0.25	22
M460/M465	—	+0	+0	(6d6)	—	1	—	+2	45/9	0.40	AE1, NR, 23



All grenades shown 1/3 actual size

HEAVY WEAPONS

Name	Cal	OCV	RMod	Dam	STUNx	Shots	STR Min	PER Mod	A/R Cost	Mass	Notes
Armbrust 300	67mm	+0	+0	6½d6	1d6	1	12	+6	275/30	6.30	2H, AE2, AP, ET(1T), IPE, SFW, 24, 25
ASP 30mm	30mm	+1	+1	3d6+1	1d6	100	14	+8	170/37	47.6	2H, AF5, AP, Crew2
FIM-92A Stinger SAM	—	+2	+0	5d6X	1d6	1	12	+6	197/23	15.7	2H, Crew2, ET(1T), IMR5, NRM, SFW, 24
Flamethrower	—	+0	+0	See text		10	—	+9	191/67	22.7	AE Line or Cone (see text), 26
Kovrov RPG-7V	85mm	+0	+0	7d6+1X	1d6	1	12	+6	192/21	9.25	2H, ET(EP), MR(5"), SFW
M18 Recoilless Rifle	57mm	-1	+3	6d6+1	1d6	1	15	+8	18½9	21.0	2H, AP, Crew2, 27
M47 Dragon	140mm	-1	+0	9d6	1d6	1	12	+5	236/22	17.0	2H, AP, Crew2, ET(1T), MR(35"), SFW
M67 Recoilless Rifle	90mm	+0	+1	7d6+1	1d6	1	15	+7	195/22	15.9	AP, Crew2, 27
M72A3 LAW Rocket	66mm	+0	+1	6½d6X	1d6	1	12	+5	228/26	2.13	2H, AP, ET(EP), SFW
M202A1 Flash	66mm	+0	+0	6½d6X	1d6	4	13	+6	229/41	12.1	2H, ET(1T), SFW, 28
MDHC Mk 153 SMAW	83mm	+0	+0	7d6+1X	1d6	1	12	+6	247/25	16.6	2H, AP, Crew2, ET(1T), SFW
Metal Storm Cannon	7.62mm	+1	+1	2d6+1	1d6	540	12	+10	174/35	50.0	AF40, AP, Crew5, NP, 29
SA-7B Grail	70mm	+1	+0	7d6X	1d6	1	12	+6	267/29	4.71	ET(1T), IMR2, MR(250"), NRM, SFW, 24
Wire Guided Missile	—	+0	+0	8d6X	1d6	1	12	+6	420/56	64.0	AP (x2), Crew4, ET(1T), IRM5, NRM

Key

AE1: Area Of Effect (One Hex)
 AE2: Area Of Effect (One Hex Doubled)
 AEC: Area Of Effect (Cone)
 AF: Autofire; the number after the letters indicates the maximum number of shots
 ACP: Automatic Colt Pistol
 AP: Armor Piercing
 Auto: Automatic
 B: Browning
 Ca: Caseless
 CAWS: Close Assault Weapon System
 Coll: Collimating/reflex site
 Crew: Crew-Served (number indicates standard size of crew)
 Cz: Czech
 DB: Double-barrelled
 ET: Extra Time (1T means 1 Turn; EP means Extra Phase, FP means Full Phase)
 Fle: Flechette
 FS: Flash Suppressor
 Gy: Gyrojet
 FS: Flash Suppressor
 H&K: Heckler & Koch, a German gun manufacturer
 IMR: Increased Maximum Range (the number indicates the multiplier)
 IPE: Invisible Power Effects
 Laser: weapon has a laser sight
 LAW: Light Anti-tank Weapon
 LR: Long Rifle
 LR(X"): Limited Range (number indicates range)
 M: Magnum
 MGL: Mounted Grenade Launcher. These must be mounted on a tripod or vehicle to be fired, and two or three men of ordinary strength are needed to lift them (*i.e.*, they're Bulky).

micr: micrometer sights
 mm: millimeter
 MR: Minimum Range (a -¼ Limitation indicating the weapon can't affect targets nearer than the indicated distance; see page 100)
 N: NATO round
 NP: Not produced (a weapon that was or is experimental, was cancelled before it entered production, or the like)
 NR: No Range
 NRM: No Range Modifier
 Only: Autofire only, no single shots (a -0 Limitation; see page 100)
 PR: Polygonal rifling (the effect of this is already listed in the table's damage figure)
 R: Russian
 RBS: Range Based On STR
 RC: Recoil Compensator (1, 2, or 3 indicates type)
 RL: Russian Long
 RP: Reduced Penetration
 RR: Reduced By Range
 SAM: Surface-to-Air Missile
 SFW: Shoulder-fired weapon (characters need WF: Shoulder-Fired Weapons to use one of these properly, and they typically have the *Bulky* and *Extra Time* Limitations)
 Sil: Silenced (number in parentheses indicates penalty to Hearing PER Rolls)
 S&W: Smith & Wesson (an American gun manufacturer)
 Tum: Tumbler (bullets have the tumbling effect; see page 208; the extra die of damage is already listed on the chart)
 Underslung: A grenade launcher meant to be attached underneath the barrel of an assault rifle or like weapon; it can't be used if not so attached.
 WinMag: Winchester Magnum
 X: Explosion

NOTES

1) The H&K MK23 SOCOM (more formally, the Mark 23 Mod 0) was developed by the U.S. Special Operations Command for the American special forces soldiers. It comes with a Small, High-Quality silencer that also functions as a flash suppressor, and an underbarrel laser sight. It typically fires Subsonic ammunition (this is accounted for in its damage).

2) The H&K P-11 is a five-shot pistol designed specifically for underwater firing. It fires a silent, caseless dart (for which you can use the Flechette and Silent round rules). The rounds come pre-loaded in a cylinder that can only be reloaded at the factory. It has an electronic trigger and is waterproofed. Above water its effective range is about thirty meters (15"); its effective range underwater is about half that.

3) The O'Dwyer Smartgun is an experimental (as of 2004) creation of the MetalStorm company. (Most attributes of the pistol are speculative.) It uses MetalStorm's patented technology, which fits multiple bullets into a barrel and fires them one at a time with an electrical charge. Since it fires electronically, it has few moving parts, which minimizes recoil and increases accuracy. (In game terms, it has the equivalent of a Type 2 recoil compensator and an electronic trigger.) Additionally, the gun only works for its owner (who wears a special ring); others cannot fire it (*i.e.*, it's a Personal Focus).

The Smartgun has four barrels arranged in a square pattern, each holding six 9mm bullets. Alternately, the user can fill some barrels with other rounds (typically non-lethal ones), then select which barrel to use with a selector switch. (In game terms, you could build this as a Multipower; the gun in the weapon list is assumed to fire Standard ammunition only.) It can fire up to three bullets with a single pull of the trigger, propelling them so fast that they all leave the barrel before the recoil has time to throw off the shooter's aim. Thus, all three bullets strike the target in nearly the same spot.

4) The S&W Mark 22 Model 0 "Hush Puppy" is the standard suppressed pistol for U.S. Navy SEAL teams. With special plugs, the user can carry it underwater without damaging it (in game terms, it's bought as Waterproofed).

5) The Ares FMG is a folding submachine gun. The weapon folds up into a 26.2 x 8.4 x 3.5 cm box, and the user can unfold and fire it in less than two seconds (in game terms, it has the $-\frac{1}{4}$ Limitation *Extra Time* (Full Phase to activate). When it's folded, use the smaller PER Modifier.

6) The Parker-Hale PDW is built with a low cyclic rate and other features that help to minimize "climb" and make the gun easy to control. In game terms, this makes it function as if equipped with a Type 1 recoil compensator.

7) The Spectre M-4 commonly comes with a four-column clip "file system," thus allowing the firer to carry 200 rounds of ammunition. This counts as a "rapid reloading" device (see page 194).

8) There is special "compact" version of the Sterling L2A3 known as the Sterling Mark 7. In game terms, it's the same as the L2A3, but has a +3 PER Modifier.

9) The Thompson M1928 is heavy, can jam easily when it gets dirty, and can be noisy when carried. In game terms, reduce all Activation Rolls for Malfunction by 1.

10) The H&K G11 is an experimental rifle using Caseless ammunition and many other advances that keep weight and recoil to a minimum. Its magazines has clips on the sides so the user can carry two extra magazines attached to the one in the rifle (this counts as a "rapid reloading" device; see page 194). Although it attracted great interest in many quarters, the reunification of Germany resulted in its never being manufactured; only about 100 were produced. A squad automatic weapon (SAW) version with 300 rounds was in design when the program was cancelled.

11) The OICW (Objective Individual Combat Weapon) is a weapons system being developed by the U.S. Army to replace the current M16A2/M203 assault rifle/grenade launcher weapon issued to American soldiers. As of 2004, the Army designates this weapon the M29, and expects to place an initial order of approximately 45,000 units (costing \$10,000-12,000 each, plus \$25-\$30 each for the 20mm grenades) to be fielded by special units by 2008-09.

The OICW incorporates a 5.56mm assault rifle with an under-mounted launcher for 20mm "smart" grenades. Its enhancements and electronics include a targeting computer, infrared/laser aiming device, laser range finder/digital compass/GPS tracking device, and a thermal weapon sight. The targeting computer uses the rangefinder and other electronics to "program" the smart grenades to explode at a pre-designated range, significantly increasing the chance of killing the target even if there's no direct hit. The grenades have a minimum range of about 50m (25") and a maximum range of about 1000m (500").

Cost Power

- | | |
|----|---|
| 15 | <i>OICW</i> : Multipower, 60-point reserve; all OAF (-1), STR Minimum (15; STR Minimum Cannot Add/Subtract Damage; $-1\frac{1}{4}$), Real Weapon ($-\frac{1}{4}$), Two-Handed ($-\frac{1}{2}$) |
| 1u | 1) <i>5.56x45mm Rounds</i> : RKA 2d6, +1 Auto-fire (5 shots; $+\frac{1}{2}$), Increased STUN Multiplier ($+\frac{1}{4}$), 30 Charges ($+\frac{1}{4}$) (60 Active Points); OAF (-1), STR Minimum (15; STR Minimum Cannot Add/Subtract Damage; $-1\frac{1}{4}$), Beam ($-\frac{1}{4}$), Real Weapon ($-\frac{1}{4}$), Two-Handed ($-\frac{1}{2}$) |
| 1u | 2) <i>20mm "Smart" Grenade Launcher</i> : RKA 1½d6, Explosion ($+\frac{1}{2}$), Increased Maximum Range (500"; $+\frac{1}{4}$) (50 Active Points); OAF (-1), Minimum Range (25"; $-\frac{1}{4}$), STR Minimum (15; STR Minimum Cannot Add/Subtract Damage; $-1\frac{1}{4}$), Real Weapon ($-\frac{1}{4}$), Two-Handed ($-\frac{1}{2}$), 6 Charges ($-\frac{3}{4}$) |
| 2 | <i>Inherent Accuracy</i> : +1 OCV (5 Active Points); OAF (-1), Real Weapon ($-\frac{1}{4}$), Two-Handed ($-\frac{1}{2}$) |

- 1 *Inherent Accuracy*: +1 versus Range Modifier (3 Active Points); OAF (-1), Real Weapon (-¼), Two-Handed (-½)
- 20 *Targeting Computer*: See page 236
- 7 *Flash Suppressor*: Invisible to Normal Sight (+¼) for up to a 60 Active Point firearm (15 Active Points); OAF (-1), Real Weapon (-¼)
- 10 *Camera*: Clairsentience (Sight Group), 1 Continuing Fuel Charge (easily recharged, 3 Hours; +¼) (25 Active Points); OAF (-1), No Range (-½)
- 1 *Thermal Sight*: Infrared Perception (Sight Group) (5 Active Points); OAF (-1), Extra Time (2 Minutes to activate; -¾), Real Weapon (-¼), Only When Shooter Braces And/Or Sets (-1), 1 Continuing Fuel Charge lasting 5 Hours (-0)
- 5 *GPS Tracker*: Detect Exact Position On Earth 16- (Radio Group) (10 Active Points); OAF (-1)
- 1 *Compass*: Bump Of Direction (3 Active Points); OAF (-1)

Total cost: 64

12) The Steyr AUG can convert into a carbine, rifle, or light machine gun by switching barrels and other attachments. If desired, characters could build this weapon as a Multipower with the Limitation *Extra Time* (Full Phase to change slots; -½) on the reserve.

13) Machine guns fall into two categories, Light and Heavy. Light machine guns (LMGs) realistically usually have a two-man firing team, but they don't necessarily have to, so they don't get the *Crew-Served* Limitation. They do, however, qualify as Bulky Foci. Heavy machine guns (HMGs) take the *Crew-Served* (3 men; -½) Limitation in addition to Bulky; they have to be mounted on a tripod or vehicle. Most machine guns are belt-fed, though some LMGs can mount small boxes of about 30 rounds if necessary.

14) The Franchi SPAS-15 is a semi-automatic military shotgun that fires an especially powerful 12-gauge shell. These shells are too powerful for most shotguns (they will not allow the breech to close if used in them).

15) The Jackhammer Mark 3A-2, an experimental weapon designed (but never manufactured) by Pancor, has a casing made primarily of fiberglass and plastic, though the inner workings are still steel. It uses a cylindrical magazine that holds 10 shells (in this example, it's filled with slugs). If necessary, the user can detach the magazine and use it as a landmine! The magazine casing is designed to withstand the blast so it can be reused. A special silencer, with a life of 10 shots, can be attached to the Jackhammer.

Cost Power

- 42 *Pancor Jackhammer Mark 3A-2*: Multipower, 106 Active Points; all OAF (-1), Real Weapon (-¼), 10 Charges for entire Multipower (-¼)
- 2u 1) *Shotgun with Slugs*: RKA 2½d6, Autofire (5 shots; +½), +1 Increased STUN Multiplier; OAF (-1), Beam (-¼), Limited Range (50";

-¼), STR Minimum (13; STR Minimum Cannot Add/Subtract Damage; -1), Real Weapon (-¼), Two-Handed (-½)

- 4u 2) *Magazine As Landmine*: RKA 5½d6, Trigger (putting sufficient pressure on it; +¼); OAF (-1), No Range (character must place landmine; -½), Real Weapon (-¼), Requires Multiple Charges (1 Charge for base 2½d6 damage, +1 DC per additional Charge; -0)

Total cost: 48 points.

16) Grenade launchers are devices used to launch grenade rounds. In game terms, most are bought as STR with the Limitations *OAF* (-1), *Real Weapon* (-¼), and *Only To Make Standing Or Prone Throws Of Grenades* (-2). Charges applies as an Advantage or Limitation, as appropriate. The STR does *not* add to the character's STR for throwing purposes, it substitutes for his STR. A launcher may also provide a RMod bonus or penalty. Some of the multi-shot grenade launchers are described as standard weapons, with one type of grenade chosen as a default, for ease of presentation.

Grenade rounds are the grenades fired from a grenade launcher. They can't be thrown like hand grenades.

Hand grenades are hand-thrown explosive weapons; they can't be launched from grenade launchers. The character pulls the pin and throws the grenade, which detonates after a short amount of time. In game terms, it's usually easiest to assume that grenades explode in the Phase in which they're thrown; in campaigns emphasizing realism, the GM may want to delay the explosion by 1-3 Segments.

17) The Arwen 37 is a British grenade launcher that fires different types of 37mm grenades (for game purposes, these have the same effect as 40mm grenades). The one in the table is loaded with "impact" rounds, but any other grenade type could be substituted.

18) The FERRET grenade round is a tear gas grenade, built as follows. It has an armor-piercing capability that allows it to penetrate walls and barriers before releasing the tear gas.

Sight Group Flash 8d6, Area Of Effect (4"; +1), Continuous (+1), Delayed Recovery (+2), Indirect (can penetrate walls and similar barriers within 30" of shooter; +¼) (210 Active Points); OAF (-1), Limited Range (50"; -¼), Real Weapon (-¼), 1 Continuing Charge lasting 1 Turn (-1¼). Total cost: 56 points.

19) The M397A1 is an "airburst" grenade. It contains a miniature fuse that "bounces" the grenade into the air when it hits the ground, causing it to explode at head level rather than at ground level. When it's used against a standing opponent, all shots with this grenade should be considered High Shots and the Hit Location rolled accordingly.

20) The smoke grenade is built as follows:

Change Environment 4" radius, -3 to Sight Group PER Rolls (21 Active Points); OAF (-1),

Range Based On STR (-¼), Real Weapon (-¼), 1 Continuing Charge lasting 3 Turns (-1). Total cost: 6 points.

21) This is a generic stun grenade, built as follows:

*Energy Blast 3d6, NND (defense is any rPD; +1), Explosion (+½) (37 Active Points); OAF (-1), Range Based On STR (-¼), Real Weapon (-¼), 1 Charge (-2) (total cost: 8 points) **plus** Sight and Hearing Group Flash 3d6, Explosion (+½) (30 Active Points); OAF (-1), Linked (-½), Range Based On STR (-¼), Real Weapon (-¼), 1 Charge (-2) (total cost: 6 points). Total cost: 14 points.*

22) Here's the effect of the tear gas hand grenade:

Sight Group Flash 8d6, Area Of Effect (6"; +1), Continuous (+1), Delayed Recovery (+2) (200 Active Points); OAF (-1), Range Based On STR (-¼), Real Weapon (-¼), 1 Continuing Charge lasting 1 Turn (-¼). Total cost: 53 points.

23) The M460 is known as a "Thunderstrip." It's 30.5 x 7.6 x 2.5 cm and is made to slip underneath doors or through open windows. The M465 is the "Thunder Rod," a cylinder 35.5 cm long with a 1.7 cm diameter designed to slip through holes made by a 12-gauge shotgun slug.

24) These are one-shot weapons — the rocket tube is discarded after the rocket is fired. This is bought as Charges which Never Recover (an additional -2 Limitation).

25) The Armbrust 300 is a one-shot rocket launcher designed to destroy tanks. It is smokeless, flashless, virtually noiseless, and uses a counterweight system to eliminate most of the recoil and backblast. This is bought as Invisible Power Effects (the special effects of the power, but not its source, are undetectable; +¼). The blast covers a 2" radius.

26) Flamethrowers are devices for projecting flame. They consist of a bulky, heavy backpack which holds the fuel (either ordinary liquid fuel, thickened fuel, or various incendiary chemicals). Thickened fuels (such as napalm) tend to burn the best and have the greatest range.

In *HERO System* terms, flamethrowers are bought as Multipowers. Each slot is a Killing Attack. The first slot creates a Line of fire, the second a Cone. Both are Continuous (since the user can simply hold down the trigger and keep filling the area with flame) and Mobile (since the character can "wave" the area of flame back and forth slowly). However, both of these slots also have a -0 Side Effect: if the flamethrower is fired at a target which is too close (closer than 3") or is fired into the wind, there's an 11- chance that fuel will splash on the firer, inflicting 1½d6 Killing Damage.

Some flamethrowers have a third slot — an Area of Effect (Any Shape) that simulates the flamethrower's capacity to make "cold shots." A cold shot involves spraying unlit fuel onto an area, then lighting it.

A flamethrower has an overall number of Charges indicating how many seconds' worth of

fuel it has. However, the fires set by the flamethrower may continue to burn long after the user is out of fuel, and flammable objects that come into contact with them may also catch fire (if the GM prefers, he can charge Character Points for this, using the same effect as for Incendiary Ammunition on page 206).

Some sample flamethrowers include: the M2A1 and M9A1-7, American models with ten seconds' worth of fuel; the LPO-50, a Soviet flamethrower with nine seconds' worth of fuel; and the HAFLA-35L, a one-shot German flamethrower "pistol" with enough fuel to ignite an 8"x2" area. The one in the list, and described below, is typical of the American flamethrowers.

Cost Powers

- 55 *Flamethrower*: Multipower, 191-point base; all OAF Bulky (-1½), Real Weapon (-¼), Two-Handed (-½), 10 Charges for entire Multipower (-¼)
- 5u 1) *Firebolt*: RKA 3d6, Area of Effect (27" Line; +1), Armor Piercing (+½), Continuous (+1), Mobile (character can move Line 6" per Phase, but starting hex of Line must always remain in the hex immediately in front of him; +¾) (191 Active Points); OAF Bulky (-1½), No Range (-½), Real Weapon (-¼), Side Effect (see text; -0), Two-Handed (-½)
- 5u 2) *Wide-Angle Firebolt*: RKA 3d6, Area of Effect (15" Cone; +1), Armor Piercing (+½), Continuous (+1), Mobile (character can move Line 6" per Phase, but starting hex of Line must always remain in the hex immediately in front of him; +¾) (191 Active Points); OAF Bulky (-1½), No Range (-½), Real Weapon (-¼), Side Effect (see text; -0), Two-Handed (-½)
- 2u 3) *Cold Shot*: RKA 3d6, Area of Effect (5" Any Area; +1), Armor Piercing (+½) (112 Active Points); OAF Bulky (-1½), Extra Time (a minimum of an Extra Phase between spraying the fuel and lighting it; -¾), No Range (-½), Real Weapon (-¼), Two-Handed (-½)

Total cost: 67 points.

27) The M18 57mm and M67 90mm Recoilless Rifles are single-shot, reloadable weapons fired from the shoulder or from a tripod (they use WF: Shoulder-Fired Weapons). The typical ammunition is an AP round, but high explosive and others are available. They are Bulky Foci, and have the same "backblast" Side Effect as the M202A1.

28) The M202A1 Flash is a four-shot napalm rocket launcher firing the M74 napalm rocket. It's built as follows:

*RKA 6½d6, Explosion (-1 DC/2"; +¾), +1 Increased STUN Multiplier (+¼) (200 Active Points); OAF Bulky (-1½), Extra Time (1 Turn; -1¼), Real Weapon (-¼), Side Effect (has a backblast of an RKA 1d6, Area Of Effect (4" Cone) behind it, always occurs; -0), Two-Handed (-½), 4 Charges (-1) (total cost: 36 points) **plus** RKA 1 point, Area Of Effect (equal to size of Explosion;*

+2½), *Continuous* (+1), *Reduced Endurance* (0 END to enable *Uncontrolled* effect; +½), *Sticky* (only affects *flammables*; +¼), *Uncontrolled* (effect ends when it runs out of fuel or oxygen, or someone extinguishes the flames; +½) (29 Active Points); *OAF Bulky* (-1½), *Activation Roll 13-* (-¾), *Linked* (-½), *Real Weapon* (-¼), *Two-Handed* (-½), *4 Charges* (-1) (total cost: 5 points). Total cost: 41 points.

29) The MetalStorm Cannon is a putative heavy weapon that would take full advantage of the MetalStorm firing technology described above for the O'Dwyer VLe "smart gun." In theory the MetalStorm system of stacking bullets in the barrel of a gun and then firing the bullets electronically could allow for a cyclic rate of fire (i.e., an ideal, theoretical maximum assuming no need to reload or other problems) of a million rounds per minute, given a gun with about 36 barrels.

OTHER WEAPONS



Guns aren't the only weapons *Dark Champions* characters use (or have used against them). They'll come into contact with many other implements of destruction during their adventuring careers.

eliminate this penalty by buying the *WF Thrown Standard Knives*).

The accompanying table lists several bladed weapons common to the modern-day action-adventure genre, and their Active and Real Point costs.

HAND-TO-HAND COMBAT WEAPONS

Sometimes characters can't fight their enemies at range with guns — they have to get in close and use their fists and any weapons designed for such fighting.

CLUBS

A "club" is any object a character can use to do Normal Damage to another character in combat. Clubs that characters pay Character Points (or Resource Points) for are built with the Power *Hand-To-Hand Attack* and usually have the Advantage *Reduced Endurance* (0 END; +½) and the Limitations *OAF* (-1), *Real Weapon* (-¼), and *Hand-To-Hand Attack* (-½). The accompanying table lists several, ranging from actual weapons to "weapons of opportunity" characters might lay their hands on during a fight. Characters can also throw some of these objects, doing the maximum of their STR damage or the object's DEF+BODY, whichever is less.

KNIVES

Knives and similar bladed weapons — prison "shanks," bayonets, perhaps even the occasional sword — are common in *Dark Champions* games. They're built as HKAs with the Advantage *Reduced Endurance* (0 END; +½) and the Limitations *OAF* (-1) and *Real Weapon* (-¼).

Some knives are made to be thrown. These have the Advantage *Range Based On STR* (+¼) (or, more elaborately, are built as a Multipower, with one HKA slot, and one slot with HKA, *Range Based On STR*, 1 Recoverable Charge, and Lockout). At the GM's option, characters can throw knives without RBS, but at a -2 OCV penalty (characters can

EXPLOSIVES

An explosive is a substance which rapidly creates tremendous heat and pressure when properly activated. Explosives are generally divided into "low" and "high" types, as explained below. In the *HERO System*, working with explosives is a function of the Skill *Demolitions*.

The accompanying table lists suggested damage ratings for explosives. However, because determining a particular bomb's power depends upon how it's constructed and other variables, these figures should be considered guidelines the GM can alter or adapt as he sees fit.

LOW EXPLOSIVES

Low explosives, also known as deflagrating explosives, do not really explode — they burn very, very quickly. They create relatively low pressure and more of an effect of "heaving" than of shattering (or "brisance"). However, using a sufficient quantity of low explosive causes a detonating effect similar to high explosives (see below).

The low explosive most commonly used today is black powder (and its modern improvement, smokeless powder), a mixture of carbon (charcoal, 15%), sulfur (10%), and potassium nitrate (saltpetre, 75%). It's basically insensitive to impact and friction, requiring a flame and/or heat to initiate the explosion. For bullets, an impact-sensitive explosive charge ignites the powder; for pipe bombs and other improvised munitions, a fuse of some sort is required. Working with black powder is easy; the GM should add +1 to +3 to a character's *Demolitions* roll in appropriate circumstances.

HIGH EXPLOSIVES

High, or detonating, explosives have such a rapid chemical reaction when activated that they

produce immense pressure and shattering force (brisance). Detonation waves from high explosives often exceed 20,000 feet per second.

High explosives can be further divided into two types. The first is *primary or initiating explosives*. Fire/heat, impact, or friction can readily detonate these substances. Because of this sensitivity, they're rarely used for actual demolitions — instead, they're used in initiating devices (such as blasting caps) to set off safer explosives. Primary explosives include diazodinitrophenol (DDNP), fulminate-chlorate mixtures, lead azide, lead styphnate, mercury fulminate, silver azide, and silver fulminate.

The second type of high explosive is the *secondary (or noninitiating) explosive*. These are mixed

together to produce the right combination of sensitivity, brisance, and stability for particular jobs. The most important secondary explosives include ammonium picrate, cyclonite (RDX and HMX), dynamite, and TNT.

DETONATION METHODS

There are five main types of fuses, or methods of detonating the primer charge that sets off a bomb:

- flame fuses
- chemical fuses
- electric fuses (including radio-controlled fuses)

DARK CHAMPIONS HAND-TO-HAND WEAPONS TABLE

Weapon	OCV	Damage	STUNx	STR Min	BODY	DEF	Mass	A/R Cost	Notes
Clubs									
Blackjack	0	2d6 N	—	5	2	3	0.50	15/5	
Bottle	0	1d6 N	—	3	1	1	1.0	N/A	After the first hit, a bottle no longer functions as an HA, but rather as an HKA ½d6.
Brass Knuckles	0	2d6 N	—	5	2	3	0.5	15/5	
Brick	0	2d6 N	—	8	2	5	2.0	N/A	
Chain	0	3d6 N	—	8	3-4	5	2.0	N/A	
Chair/stool	0	2-4d6 N	—	10	3-5	3-5	5.0	N/A	
Claw hammer	0	3d6 N	—	5	2	3	0.9	N/A	The hammer's claw is an HKA 1 point.
Lead Pipe	0	3d6 N	—	8	2	5	0.5	N/A	
Nightstick/Billy club	0	3d6 N	—	8	3	3	0.9	22/8	
Pistol butt	0	2d6 N	—	8	2	3	Var	15/5	
Rifle butt	0	3d6 N	—	10	3	3	Var	22/8	
Roll of coins in fist	0	1d6 N	—	3	1	2	0.02	N/A	
Shot gloves	0	2d6 N	—	8	2	3	1.50	15/5	Gloves with pockets on the outside of the fingers filled with lead shot. They impose a -2 penalty on all DEX Rolls and Agility Skill Rolls involving the hands, and a -2 OCV penalty on attacks which require the hand to grip or use a weapon (a Side Effect [-½]).
Tire iron	0	3d6 N	—	8	3	5		N/A	
Tonfa	0	3d6 N	—	8	3	3		22/8	
Two-by-Four	0	3d6 N	—	8	2	3		N/A	
Knives And Bladed Weapons									
Bayonet	0	1d6-1	0	6	3	5	0.8	18/8	
Combat knife#	0	1d6-1	0	6	3	5	0.8	21/8	Can Be Thrown
Fiberglass knife*	0	½d6	0	4	2	5	0.4	20/9	Can Be Thrown, IPE (metal detectors)
Machete	0	1d6	0	10	5	5	1.1	22/8	
Punch dagger	0	½d6	0	4	2	5	0.3	15/7	
Shank, shiv#	0	½d6	0	4	2	5	0.4	17/7	Can Be Thrown
Stiletto&	0	½d6 AP	0	5	3	5	0.7	22/9	Can Be Thrown
Survival knife#	0	1d6-1	0	6	3	5	0.8	21/8	Can Be Thrown
Switchblade#	0	½d6	0	4	2	5	0.3	17/7	Can Be Thrown
Trenchknife#	0	1d6/2d6 N	0	6	3	5	1.0	21/10	HKA Can Be Thrown

Adding Damage:

- #: Add +1 DC of damage per full +6.25 points of STR used above the STR Minimum.
- *: Add +1 DC of damage per full +7.5 points of STR used above the STR Minimum.
- &: Add +1 DC of damage per full +8.75 points of STR used above the STR Minimum.

See the Key and Notes for the Firearms Tables on page 252 for an explanation of abbreviations and terms. The “N” in the damage column stands for “Normal Damage.”

SHAPED CHARGES

A shaped charge allows the force of an explosion to be aimed, roughly. Pressure waves are emitted by an explosion at right angles to the explosive, so by shaping the explosive, a bomber can provide some direction to the force of the explosion. A shaped charge typically uses a cone of metal or glass surrounded by a high-strength explosive (such as TNT or RDX). The detonation vaporizes the cone and projects it in the desired direction as an immensely hot and powerful “jet” of particles. This jet strikes the target and literally forces it to “flow” away from the point of impact. However, a shaped charge only uses a small percentage of the force of the explosion (about 15%), so the explosion is not totally contained or channeled.

Setting up a shaped charge requires a Demolitions roll at -0 to -3, depending upon the circumstances and the materials available.

- mechanical fuses (including impact fuses and “tremblers” that trigger a bomb if it’s moved)
- pressure fuses (which go off when a certain amount of pressure is applied, whether by foot [as with land mines] or by reaching a certain barometric pressure [as with some terrorist bombs placed on airplanes]).

The type of fuse chosen depends on the explosive used and the type of bomb. Flame works for black powder, for example, but not for plastique. An elaborate radio-controlled electrical fuse or a pressure fuse isn’t needed for a kamikaze bombing run with a truckful of dynamite, but would be ideal for many types of terrorist bombings.

Simple fuses impose no penalty to Demolitions rolls to disarm the explosive. Complex electrical, chemical, mechanical, or pressure fuses could impose a -1 to -4 penalty to Demolitions.

TYPES OF EXPLOSIVES

Here are some of the common types of explosives used in the modern world for various industrial, military, criminal, and terrorist activities.

Ammonium Picrate

Ammonium picrate (or explosive D) is made of picric acid and ammonium. It’s used in situations calling for an explosive that’s particularly resistant to impact. For example, ammonium picrate is sometimes used in anti-tank shells because of its ability to pierce armor without exploding — tests have shown it can be fired through twelve inches of armor and detonate on the other side! Picric acid itself is explosive, but is no longer used militarily because of its sensitivity. There is no modifier to Demolitions for working with ammonium picrate.

ANFO

ANFO, a combination of ammonium nitrate and fuel oil, is a favorite of terrorists because its ingredients are all legally available — the Oklahoma City bombing, for example, involved an ANFO bomb. ANFO’s legitimately used in mining, construction, and other industries. There is no modifier to Demolitions for working with ANFO.

Ammonium nitrate absorbs water easily. If it’s not stored in a watertight container or environment, it may not detonate as well (reduce damage by 25-50%).

Dynamite

Invented by Alfred Nobel in 1867, dynamite is a combination of nitroglycerin and various substances which absorb large amounts of the nitroglycerin, making it relatively safe to handle (it’s still sensitive to fire/heat and extreme impact, and if it gets wet tends to break down and becomes as volatile as nitroglycerine). The manufacturing process incorporates antacids and other stabilizers to make dynamite even safer to use. Today, demolition experts use various mixtures of explosives and bases to achieve different results. For example, there’s gelatin dynamite which has great water resistance and more blasting power than comparable dynamites, and can be molded into crude shapes.

Another development is low-freezing dynamite, which works well in extremely cold conditions. Using dynamite adds +1 or +2 to a character’s Demolition roll in appropriate circumstances.

Dynamite has many commercial uses (such as the construction industry). That means it’s widely available (though it usually requires a license or other authorization to purchase); it’s generally sold in sticks.

Foam Explosive

Foam explosive is an explosive substance with the appearance and consistency of shaving cream or the like. Designed primarily for detonating landmines, it can stick to objects and delivers a low-powered blast — but one that’s strong enough to make a mine go off, or open a door. Compared to other explosives, it makes very little noise, so it’s ideal for some of the covert missions characters perform. Working with it entails no Demolitions penalty.

Initiators

Initiators are explosive devices used to start larger explosions. They include blasting caps and detonating cord.

Blasting caps, both basic and electric, but instead are small cylindrical devices used to initiate explosions. They consist of a base charge (usually RDX or PETN), a priming charge (usually lead azide or silver azide), and a flash charge (usually lead styphnate), all contained in an aluminum or copper shell. Mercury fulminate used to be an important blasting cap ingredient, but is no longer commonly used. A basic blasting cap is set off by a fuse, whereas an electrical blasting cap has two wires running through it that let the demolitionist detonate it with electricity (allowing for precise timing of an explosion). Working with blasting caps (e.g., crimping them onto a timing fuse and detonating cord) can be quite dangerous, imposing a -2 to the Demolitions roll.

Detonating cord (detcord, also called primacord) is a cord made with a core of sensitive explosive (such as PETN or RDX) surrounded by a plastic or cloth covering. It’s usually used together with blasting caps, and enables the demolitionist to time explosions precisely. Working with it entails no Demolitions penalty.

Lead Azide

Lead azide ($Pb(N_3)_2$) is a primary explosive used in a variety of military explosives and in initiators. It tends to be more stable than many other primary explosives, particularly at higher temperatures, so a cover charge of lead styphnate (or another more sensitive explosive) is often added to ensure detonation. A related chemical, silver azide, is more powerful and is used similarly, but is more sensitive to heat. There’s no modifier to Demolitions for working with lead azide.

Mercury Fulminate

Mercury fulminate (mercuric cyanate, $HgC_2N_2O_2$) is a grey-white powder that explodes at 320° F. It’s both a primary and a secondary explosive, and is sensitive to electricity, fire/heat, impact,

EXPLOSIVES AND INCENDIARIES

Name	Suggested Effect	Scaling
Explosives		
Ammonium Picrate (1 liter)	EB 9d6 Explosion	+1d6 per +1 liter
ANFO	(0.45 kg)	EB 10d6 Explosion +1d6 per +0.45
Black powder (0.45 kg)	EB 2d6 Explosion	+1d6 per +0.45 kg
Dynamite (one .25 kg stick)	EB 5d6 Explosion	+1d6 per +1 stick
Foam explosive (one .25 kg can)	EB 4d6 Explosion per quarter-can used	+1d6 per +quarter can
HMX (0.45 kg)	EB 13d6 Explosion	+2d6 per +0.45 kg
Initiator		
Blasting cap	RKA 1 point	+1 point per +1 cap
Detonating cord (.3 m)	RKA ½d6	+½d6 per +.3 meter
Lead azide (0.45 kg)	EB 12d6 Explosion	+2d6 per +0.45 kg
Mercury fulminate (0.45 kg)	EB 9d6 Explosion	+1d6 per +0.45 kg
Nitroglycerin (1 liter)	EB 12d6 Explosion	+2d6 per +1 liter
PETN (1 liter)	EB 13d6 Explosion	+2d6 per +1 liter
RDX (0.45 kg)	EB 12d6 Explosion	+2d6 per +0.45 kg
Plastique (one 0.56 kg block)	EB 15d6 Explosion	+5d6 per +1 block
TNT (0.45 kg)	EB 12d6 Explosion	+1d6 per +0.45 kg
Amatol (0.45 kg)	EB 12d6 Explosion	+1d6 per +0.45 kg
Cyclotol (0.45 kg)	EB 14d6 Explosion	+1d6 per +0.45 kg
Pentolite (0.45 kg)	EB 14d6 Explosion	+1d6 per +0.45 kg
Tetrytol (0.45 kg)	EB 13d6 Explosion	+1d6 per +0.45 kg
Torpex (0.45 kg)	EB 10d6 Explosion	+1d6 per +0.45 kg
Incendiaries		
Fire bottle/Molotov cocktail	RKA 1-2d6, 1 Hex, 1 Turn/Charge	N/A
Gelled gasoline (1 liter)	RKA 3d6, Explosion, 1 Turn/Charge	Increase size of Explosion by a +¼ Advantage for each +2 liters
Incendiary brick	RKA 1d6, 1 Turn/Charge	N/A
Magnesium (0.25 kg)	RKA ½d6, 1 Turn/Charge	RKA +1 point per +.25 kg, to a maximum of +10 points
Napalm (1 liter)	RKA 2d6, Explosion, 1 Turn/Charge	Increase size of Explosion by a +¼ Advantage for each +1 liter
Paraffin-Sawdust	RKA 1½d6, 1 Turn/Charge	
Thermite (one 0.10 kg pellet)	RKA 2d6, Armor Piercing, 1 Hex, 1 Turn/Charge	RKA +1 point per +.10 kg, to a maximum of +10 points
Thermate (one 0.10 kg pellet)	RKA 2½d6, Armor Piercing, 1 Hex, 1 Turn/Charge	RKA +1 point per +.10 kg, to a maximum of +10 points
White Phosphorus (0.25 liter)	RKA 3d6, Armor Piercing; Trigger (on contact with air), 1 Turn/Charge; plus Change Environment 2" radius (smoke cloud), -3 to Sight Group PER Rolls, 1 Turn/Charge	RKA +1 point per +0.25 liter, to a maximum of +10 points

For explosives, the GM may substitute the equivalent DCs in Killing Damage, if preferred.

Incendiary devices, and many explosives, set flammable objects on fire (sometimes their heat alone ignites nearby objects). The GM can apply the incendiary effect from Incendiary bullets (page 206) if desired.

and friction (-2 to Demolitions rolls in appropriate circumstances). It was discovered in the late 1600s, and was used for many years in initiators and commercial explosives. Because cheaper and better replacements were found, it fell out of use in the 1970s, but *Dark Champions* characters may still chance across some here and there, or even discover an illegal lab manufacturing it for terrorists.

Nitroglycerin

This explosive oil or liquid was discovered by Ascanio Sobrero in 1846. It's one of the principal ingredients in dynamite. By itself, nitroglycerin is extremely sensitive and very dangerous to handle (-3 or more to Demolitions rolls), so it's rarely used without stabilizers.

PETN

PETN (pentaerythritol tetranitrate) was invented in 1891. It's cheaply and easily produced, and is as strong as nitroglycerin but safer to handle. Because it's almost insoluble, it's commonly used for underwater demolitions work. There's a -1 modifier to Demolitions for working with PETN.

RDX And HMX

RDX (cyclonite) is one of the most common military explosives in use today. HMX is similar, but denser and with a higher melting point and explosion temperature. Both are white crystalline solids that are extremely stable. They're usually mixed with TNT to desensitize them. RDX is as powerful as nitroglycerin, HMX is slightly more powerful.

RDX is used to produce *plastique*, or plastic explosive (PE), of which Semtex (a combination of RDX and PETN, in varying ratios) is one variety. PEs are about 80% RDX and 20% oils, waxes, and plastics. They're very stable, requiring both heat and impact to detonate — a blasting cap or other initiator will do it, but by itself an electrical charge, fire, or impact won't set plastique off. Plastique can be safely molded into an infinite number of forms, and is extremely powerful, even in small amounts — a single block (0.56 kg) can create a 30 cm square hole in 10mm thick steel plate! Thus, PEs are a favorite of the military, terrorists, and criminals. The American military uses four types designated C1 through C4, each of which is useful in a different temperature range. C4, for example, remains plastic down to -70° F, and does not leak up to 170° F.

RDX is also the primary ingredient in many military composite explosives, such as Composite A3 and Composition B4.

Working with RDX, HMX, plastique, or other composite explosives including RDX or HMX adds +1 to +2 to Demolitions rolls in appropriate circumstances.

TNT

TNT (trinitrotoluene), which differs from dynamite, is one of the principal military explosives. Made from toluene and nitric acid, it's stable and insensitive to impact, friction, and electricity (+1 to +2 to Demolitions rolls). It does not readily absorb water, and may be stored indefinitely in temperate areas.

TNT is usually melted and used to fill bombs,

either by itself or in combination with other substances (binary explosives): ammonium nitrate (amatol); ammonium picrate (picratol); HMX (octol); PETN (pentolite); RDX (cyclotol); RDX and ammonium (torpex); tetryl (tetrytol); and so forth. TNT binary explosives can be very powerful — for example, cyclotol and pentolite have detonation pressures as high as 4,000,000 pounds per square inch.

Incendiaries

Incendiaries are chemicals designed to start fires and/or burn people. They're usually used in firebombs and flamethrowers, but *Dark Champions* characters may also want to build incendiary grenades, pellets, and other weapons. Working with incendiaries is a function of the *Demolitions* Skill.

Fire Bottle/Molotov Cocktail

A fire bottle is a primitive incendiary grenade — a bottle filled with gasoline and sulfuric acid, then wrapped in a rag or piece of paper. Just prior to use, the wrapper is soaked with a sugar-potassium chlorate mixture (which is very sensitive). Upon impact, the chemicals mix and the reaction ignites the gasoline. The Molotov cocktail, a bottle filled with some flammable liquid and with a rag stuffed in the top and lit, counts as a crude fire bottle.

Gelled Gasoline

Gelled gasoline is ordinary gasoline which has been gelled by the use of chemicals or improvised substances (such as soap powder, lye, wax, or animal blood). Charcoal may be added to increase the mixture's flammability. Essentially, gelled gasoline is a primitive form of napalm (see below), and like napalm it sticks to surfaces. Working with it imposes a -1 penalty to Demolitions rolls.

Incendiary Brick

This object looks like an ordinary brick, but is made of potassium chlorate, sulfur, sugar, iron filings, and wax. It burns relatively slowly and is normally used to set fire to buildings and other flammable objects. Creating or using one imposes no Demolitions penalty.

Magnesium

The metallic element magnesium is an incendiary substance which burns at very high temperatures and is easily manufactured and handled. It can get hot enough to melt mild steels, and often scatters molten bits of metal about, increasing the chances of setting secondary fires. Even worse, using water to try to put out a magnesium fire may create an explosive mix of hydrogen and some other gases. Working with magnesium imposes no Demolitions penalty.

Napalm

Modern napalm is made of gasoline, benzene, and polystyrene thickener. Earlier forms of napalm were advanced forms of gelled gasoline, but modern napalm is a liquid. It's used by militaries for many different kinds of weapons. By varying the amount of thickener and the additives, a demo-

litionist can impart different properties to it (such as increased burning time, increased fluidity, and so forth). Napalm sticks to surfaces (even vertical ones), so the victim cannot simply wipe it off.

Napalm is not self-igniting — it requires some sort of initiating heat (such as from an electric spark or another incendiary substance) to set off. Working with it imposes no Demolitions penalty.

Paraffin-Sawdust

This incendiary is a simple mix of paraffin wax or beeswax and sawdust. It burns slowly and is used to set fire to flammable objects and buildings. It can be carried and stored safely; working with it provides a +2 Demolitions bonus.

Thermite

Thermite is made of powdered ferric oxide and powdered or granular aluminum. When lit it creates molten iron aluminum oxide, and can produce temperatures as high as 2,400° C under proper conditions. It has many commercial uses (such as welding) in addition to its military applications.

Thermite requires strong heat to ignite it (more than a match), so igniter materials (such as magnesium, white phosphorus, or depleted uranium flakes) are added when it's used for military purposes. (In game terms, working with it involves no Demolitions penalty.) However, its stability also means characters can safely carry and store it, and that it burns strongly once lit. It's easy to use in cold and windy situations, and can burn through metal containers to ignite any flammable objects they hold.

Demolitionists can mix thermite with pyrotechnic agents to form a more volatile compound called thermate. Neither thermite and thermate can be doused with water.

White Phosphorus

White phosphorus (WP, or “Willie Pete”) is most often used to ignite other incendiaries, but can be used on its own. It is pyrophoric (self-igniting) — it burns on contact with air. It's stored underwater. Working with it entails a -2 Demolitions penalty.

A WP incendiary consists of white phosphorus dissolved in carbon disulfide (or some other solvent to keep it away from air). To use it, a demolitionist pours it on the item he wants to burn. Once the solvent evaporates, the WP bursts into flame, creating large clouds of dense white smoke. For military purposes, sometimes plastic white phosphorus (PWP) is used; this is a rubbery solution that binds the WP together so it cannot disperse freely. WP cannot be doused with water.

RESTRAINTS AND NON-LETHAL WEAPONS

Not every weapon needs to kill or injure the target. Sometimes it's sufficient — even desirable — to simply incapacitate an enemy.

BLINDING LASER

Although portable laser weapons able to deliver

enough energy to kill a target are not (yet) technologically feasible, military engineers have developed laser weapons intended to blind an opponent or visual sensor (either temporarily or permanently). There are two models: a small model which mounts underneath the barrel of an assault rifle; and a larger model with much greater range and power.

Underbarrel Blinding Laser: *Sight Group Flash 4d6 (20 Active Points); OAF (-1), Real Weapon (-¼), 12 Charges (-¼). Total cost: 8 points.*

Blinding Laser

Cost Power

- 48 *Blinding Laser:* Multipower, 105-point base, 32 Charges for entire Multipower (+¼); all OAF Bulky (-1½), Real Weapon (-¼)
- 1u 1) *Dazzling Setting:* Sight Group Flash 6d6, Increased Maximum Range (525”; +¼); OAF Bulky (-1½), Real Weapon (-¼)
- 3u 2) *Blindness Setting:* Major Transform 7d6 (sighted person or sensor to blind person or sensor); OAF Bulky (-1½), All Or Nothing (-½), Limited Target (sighted beings/objects; -¼), Real Weapon (-¼)

Total cost: 52 points.

HANDCUFFS

Handcuffs and various related restraints (such as thumbcuffs, legcuffs, and flexible plastic-strip restraints) are bought as Entangles with several Limitations. See *Contortionist*, page 69, and *Lockpicking*, page 73, for rules on escaping from them.

Handcuffs: *Entangle 3d6 (standard effect: 3 BODY), 6 DEF, Takes No Damage From Attacks (+½) (67 Active Points); OAF (-1), Cannot Form Barriers (-¼), Set Effect (hands only; -1), Does Not Prevent Use Of Accessible Foci (-1), No Range (-½), Must Follow Grab Or Target Must Be Willing (-½), 1 Recoverable Charge (-1¼), Can Be Escaped Automatically With Modified Lockpicking Or Contortionist Roll (-½). Total cost: 9 points.*

MACE/PEPPER SPRAY

Mace and pepper spray are chemical agents designed to blind an attacker (and in the process cause some discomfort and pain). They come in small spray canisters, and are often carried by women and corrections officers. The spray may be liquid, or it may be a foam. In either case, it can get around glasses and other forms of eye protection that do not offer total protection; only solid eye coverings, such as goggles or a sealed helmet, offer a defense against this weapon.

Mace/Pepper Spray: *Sight Group Flash 5d6, NND (defense is solid eye covering; +1), Delayed Recovery (+2) (100 Active Points); OAF (-1), No Range (-½), Real Weapon (-¼), 12 Charges (-¼) (total cost: 33 points) plus Energy Blast 3d6, NND (defense is solid eye covering; +1) (30 Active Points); OAF (-1), No Range (-½), Real Weapon (-¼), 12 Charges (-¼) (total cost: 10 points). Total cost: 43 points.*

PNUEGUN

The PnueGun is a small tube which uses compressed carbon dioxide to fire a small, hard beanbag up to 150 feet. The force of the impact is enough to stun a man and knock him down.

PnueGun: *Energy Blast 6d6 (30 Active Points); OAF (-1), Limited Range (22"; -¼), Real Weapon (-¼), 1 Charge (-2). Total cost: 7 points.*

SHOCKBATON

This riot control baton contains a small battery capable of providing a localized high-voltage shock. It also emits a loud crackling noise to frighten off attackers.

Cost Power

- 2 *Schockbaton — Baton:* HA +2d6 (10 Active Points); OAF (-1), Hand-To-Hand Attack (-½), Real Weapon (-¼)
- 27 *Shockbaton — Incapacitating Touch:* Energy Blast 8d6 NND (defense is insulated ED; +1) (80 Active Points); OAF (-1), No Range (-½), Real Weapon (-¼), 12 Charges (-¼)

Total cost: 29 points.

SLICKNESS SPRAY

This is a chemical spray or foam, such as the product Riotril, which coats hard surfaces (stairs, roads, floors, and the like) so that they become too slick to stand on. Criminals and rioters can't keep their feet, and cars that drive across slicked-up roads lose traction and control. After the substance dries, it can be peeled up easily.

Slickspray: *Change Environment 16" radius (normal hard surfaces to extremely slippery hard surfaces), -4 to DEX Rolls to move on (34 Active Points); OAF (sprayer; -1), Only Affects Characters Who Are Moving On The Ground (-¼), Real Weapon (-¼), 1 Continuing Charge lasting 5 Minutes (-¾). Total cost: 11 points.*

SONIC AND ACOUSTIC WEAPONS

The military has experimented with sonic weapons and riot-control devices for many years. High-pitched, high-decibel sound can cause headaches, feelings of nausea, confusion, vertigo, and similar symptoms with no visible cause. Sound below the pitch of human hearing is also dangerous — it can shake buildings and rupture internal organs in some cases. Sonic (or acoustic) weapons could be set for low-intensity or high-intensity (in other words, nonlethal or lethal effects). They can be used offensively, or defensively (for example, to set up a "barrier" which would effect anyone walking into it). Sonic weapons can even penetrate buildings to affect the occupants (in *HERO System* terms, they're Indirect).

Cost Power

- 20 *Sonic Cannon:* Multipower, 32-point base, 100 Charges for entire reserve (+¾); all OAF Bulky (-1½), Real Weapon (-¼)
- 1u 1) *Nonlethal Pain Effect:* Energy Blast 2d6, NND (defense is Hearing Flash Defense, earplugs, or solid coverings over the ears; +1),

Continuous (+1), Indirect (+¼); OAF Bulky (-1½), Limited Range (20"; -¼), Real Weapon (-¼)

- 1u 2) *Lethal Effect:* RKA ½d6, Continuous (+1), Indirect (+¼); OAF Bulky (-1½), Limited Range (20"; -¼), Real Weapon (-¼)
- 1u 3) *Vertigo Effect:* DEX Drain 1d6, Limited Range (20"; +¼), Continuous (+1), Indirect (+¼); OAF Bulky (-1½), Real Weapon (-¼)

Total cost: 23 points.

Sonic Barrier Generator: *Energy Blast 4d6, NND (defense is Hearing Flash Defense, earplugs, or solid coverings over the ears; +1), Area Of Effect (24" Line; +1¼), Continuous (+1), Indirect (+¼) (90 Active Points); OAF Bulky (-1½), No Range (device generates the line directly from itself; -½), Real Weapon (-¼). Total cost: 28 points.*

STICKY FOAM

Sticky foam, or sprayfoam, is a rapid-hardening foam used to restrain prisoners, rioters, and similar targets. The dispenser is a flamethrower-like backpack tank with a spraygun that attaches to the tank via a hose. The foam is so sticky and quick-setting that it can instantly trap targets; it's virtually impossible to remove without a special liquid solvent. The U.S. Marines used this technology in Somalia in 1995. Potential problems arise include the fact that the solvent is potentially toxic, the spray can be lethal if sprayed directly into the target's face (he suffocates), and the weapon has a very short range and affects an entire area indiscriminately.

Sprayfoam: *Entangle 3d6, 3 DEF, Area Of Effect (One Hex Doubled; +¾) (52 Active Points); OAF Bulky (-1½), Cannot Form Barriers (-¼), Limited Range (5"; -¼), Side Effect (victim can suffocate if sprayed directly in the face; -0), Susceptible (to special solvent; -¼), 16 Charges (-0). Total cost: 16 points.*

TASERS

Tasers shock the victim with 2,000 or more volts of electricity — enough to knock him out, but not kill him (though a character could create a taser with lethal levels of voltage). They come in two varieties. The first works over a short range. It projects a small metal dart into the victim; the dart's attached to the weapon via a wire down which the electricity travels. Characters need WF: Small Arms to use this type of taser. The other type, used with WF: Fist-Loads, requires the character to touch the target with the device.

Taser (Ranged): *Energy Blast 8d6, NND (defense is insulated ED; +1) (80 Active Points); OAF (-1); Limited Range (4"; -¼), 1 Recoverable Charge (-1¼). Total cost: 23 points.*

Taser (Non-Ranged): *Energy Blast 8d6, NND (defense is insulated ED; +1) (80 Active Points); OAF (-1); No Range (-½), 12 Charges (-¼). Total cost: 29 points.*

chapter six:



FIELD KIT

DARK CHAMPIONS GEAR

ACQUIRING EQUIPMENT



Guns and knives aren't the only types of gear *Dark Champions* characters need. There's a whole array of other equipment, from body armor to nightsight devices to microelectronic "bugs" to all kinds of vehicles, that help them with their war on crime. This chapter describes some of that gear.

But before they can use gear, characters have to obtain it (the same goes for weapons). How they obtain it depends on both setting considerations and game rules considerations. For these purposes, equipment is divided into four types:

Standard: Equipment is *Standard* if an ordinary, law-abiding citizen could acquire it without too much difficulty or the need to obtain a special license (or other form of permission). This includes a lot of equipment — many types of firearms, some types of body armor and surveillance devices, and so on — but not most law enforcement/military equipment such as submachine guns, grenades, and advanced body armors.

Street-Level Equipment: Equipment is *Street-Level* if it is low-level industrial, law enforcement, or military equipment not commonly available to law-abiding citizens. This includes submachine guns and assault rifles, many types of explosives, many types of body armor, and the like (but not heavy equipment such as machine guns or anti-tank rockets). It also includes equipment which characters need a license (or other form of permission) to buy, such as some security and surveillance devices.

In games using the Resource Point rules, the ability to buy Street-Level equipment with Equipment Points is a 3-point Perk.

Military Equipment: Equipment is *Military* if it is mid-level industrial, law enforcement, or military equipment not commonly available to law-abiding citizens. This includes some heavy weapons (such as machine guns and most types of grenades) and some types of body armor, but not really heavy weapons (such as flamethrowers, anti-tank missiles, or the like).

In games using the Resource Point rules, the ability to buy Military equipment with Equipment Points is a 5-point Perk.

Advanced Military Equipment: Equipment is *Advanced Military* if it's too dangerous, large, rare, expensive, or restricted to qualify as Military. This includes any type of military vehicle or heavy weapon.

In games using the Resource Point rules, the ability to buy Advanced Military equipment with Equipment Points is a 10-point Perk.

Obtaining Equipment In The Campaign World

In the campaign setting, typically characters can acquire equipment in four ways: buy it; steal it; requisition it; or create it.

BUY IT

The most common method of obtaining equipment is to buy it. Standard equipment tends to be readily and easily available this way, and may not even be that expensive.

For Street-Level, Military, and Advanced Military equipment, things aren't necessarily that simple. The character may need a license, permission from an administrative governmental agency, or the like just to buy the equipment (assuming he can afford it). Many types of equipment won't be available at all; they'll be restricted to only certain military or government users. That forces the character to go to the black market (or at least grey market) to do his shopping, and what he's looking for may or may not be available. See below for rules for buying restricted items.

STEAL IT

Characters can also obtain equipment by stealing it (or in similar ways, such as taking gear from defeated foes). Standard goods are pretty easy to steal; characters may not even need any special Skills to do so. The more advanced and dangerous types of gear are protected by increasingly tight security — everything from locks and alarms to guards and advanced protective technology. And this assumes, of course, that a character can find what he wants available for theft. Locating a "target" for theft may prove more difficult than actually stealing it.

REQUISITION IT

In campaigns where the PCs belong to a large organization — such as the military or an intelligence agency — characters may have the ability to requisition gear.

Characters can generally requisition any type of Standard equipment, assuming their organization has what they want (or can obtain it), their demands are not excessive, and they're not having any difficulties with the organization or their superior officers. Usually Standard gear is available when it's requested, or within one hour at most.

Requisitioning Street-Level equipment is more difficult. Unless he has explicit permission from an authorized official to requisition a particular item, a character has to make a Bureaucrats roll

at -3 to requisition Street-Level gear. Military and Advanced Military gear are even tougher — they require Bureaucratics rolls at -6 and -9, respectively. Of course, even if a character successfully puts in a requisition request, he may not get the gear immediately. If it's not in stock, he may have to wait days or weeks until what he wants is available.

The ability to requisition equipment comes from the *Membership Perk* (or the like) that a character pays for when he joins an organization. But it's not a free pass to get any weapon or gadget the character wants — if characters abuse it that way, or the GM treats their requisition requests leniently, the campaign may quickly become unbalanced. The GM can control characters' ability to requisition gear in two ways. First, he can rule that some types of equipment are only available to characters if they have permission from an authorized superior officer — and since the superior officer is an NPC, the GM can have him grant or deny permission as desired. Second, he can rule that the requested item simply isn't available for some reason (after all, not even the largest organization has unlimited resources).

Regardless of how they obtain it, characters who requisition gear are responsible for it. If it's a durable good of some sort (such as a rifle or a car), they're expected to keep it in good condition, use it responsibly, and return it intact at the end of the mission for which they requisitioned it. If it's a usable good, such as ammunition, they probably have to file reports indicating how they used it, and return any unused portions. A character who fails to return requisitioned equipment, who returns requisitioned equipment in damaged condition, or fails to file the proper reports may soon find that he's not allowed to requisition equipment anymore.

CREATE IT

Lastly, characters with the appropriate Skills can create the equipment they want. In some ways this poses the most problems for the GM, since it's largely unrestricted — the GM can't reasonably tell a character who's bought Weaponsmith that he can't build a gun, since that's what the Skill is *for*. However, a responsible GM can control the process in legitimate ways if the PCs start to abuse their ability to build gear.

First, he can strictly follow rules concerning how long such projects take. As noted on page 83, building a new gun from scratch takes 1d6 weeks, possibly more. Given the busy life of a *Dark Champions* adventurer, it may take characters a lot more than 1-6 calendar weeks to get the work done.

Second, just because characters have the Skills they need doesn't mean they have the resources required. Creating equipment requires tools (often highly specialized ones), a workspace, and most of all the right raw materials. Finding and buying the raw materials and tools may be as expensive, difficult, and dangerous a process as buying the item the character wants to build.

Third, for some highly specialized or cutting-edge technological developments, the GM may require characters to buy one or more Background Skills to represent their knowledge of the subject.

For example, a character who wants to design a new type of "armor piercing frangible" ammunition might have to buy SS: Ballistics and/or KS: Frangible Ammunition.

Obtaining Equipment In Game Terms

In game terms, there are three ways characters can obtain equipment: Character Points; Resource Points; and Money.

CHARACTER POINTS

If a character's willing to spend Character Points on a piece of equipment, he doesn't have to justify where he got it or jump through any other hoops — he can provide whatever explanation he wants. However, the GM still has to approve the gear; just because a character has the Character Points to buy an H&K G11 doesn't mean the GM will let him have it.

The 5-Point Doubling Rule

Dark Champions characters often use the "+5 Character Points doubles the number of items of equipment purchased" rule from page 456 of the *HERO System 5th Edition, Revised* when buying equipment (they can even use this rule with Resource Points; see page 150). Here are some additional rules and clarifications regarding the "5 point doubling" rule.

The 5 point doubling purchase is a separate cost, not a part of the gadget being purchased. Therefore it doesn't affect the purchased gadget's Active Points or the like. If a character applies the "+5 points doubles the number of items of equipment you have" rule to a gadget built with Limitations, those Limitations do not apply to the +5 points. The +5 points aren't subject to Power Modifiers.

If a character wants to buy multiple items of equipment that cost less than 5 points, he can buy the items individually or using the 5-point rule, whichever is cheaper. For example, some of the Vehicles in *The Ultimate Vehicle* only cost 1 point, so a character could buy 8 of them for 1 point apiece. Even then, though, the character may reach a point where the 5-point method is cheaper. For example, if he's buying two 4-point gadgets, it's cheaper to buy them individually; if he wants eight such devices, the 5-point method is cheaper.

Items of equipment bought with the 5 point doubling rule are considered "separate" from the original gadget. They're distinct from one another, each with its own identity and uses even if they're defined identically in *HERO System* rules terms. Thus, a character could use two of them for Two-Weapon Fighting, or a multiple-power attack, or the like. In the interest of game balance, common sense, or dramatic sense, the GM may forbid any uses of double-bought equipment which he deems inappropriate.

If a character uses the 5 point doubling rule to buy multiple weapons or gadgets, each of them has to be identical. However, if he uses this rule (or a corresponding rule) to buy extra Computers, Vehicles, or Bases, the various items can differ — they just all have to be built on that same point total or

PRICES TABLE

Weapons	Equipment Category	Price Range
Assault rifle	Military	\$3,000-20,000
Grenades (any type, per grenade)		
20/22mm	Military	\$20-25
24mm	Military	\$20-25
30mm	Military	\$25-30
40mm	Military	\$10-14
52mm	Military	\$12-16
Handgun	Standard	\$50-2,000
Knife	Standard	\$20-100
Machine gun	Advanced Military	\$4,000-30,000
Rifle, hunting	Standard	\$500-3,000
Rifle, military	Military	\$500-5,000
Shotgun, hunting	Standard	\$500-2,000
Shotgun, military	Military	\$800-4,000
Submachine gun	Street-Level	\$1,000-5,000
Ammunition*		
.22	Standard	\$5-8
.32, .38	Standard	\$5-8
.40, 9mm	Standard	\$5-8
.357 M, .41 M, 10mm	Standard	\$8-12
.45 ACP, 11mm	Standard	\$5-8
.44 M, .45 Win Mag	Standard	\$8-12
.223, 5.56mmN	Standard	\$10-15
.50 AE, 7.62mmN	Standard	\$10-15
.410 gauge shot or slugs	Standard	\$10-15
28, 24 gauge shot or slugs	Standard	\$10-15
20, 16 gauge shot or slugs	Standard	\$10-15
12 gauge shot or slugs	Standard	\$12-18
10 gauge shot or slugs	Standard	\$12-18
4 gauge shot or slugs	Standard	\$15-20
Firearms Accessories		
Brass Catcher	Standard	\$40-120
Camera	Military	\$2,000-5,000
Flashlight	Standard	\$100-250
Flash Suppressor	Standard	\$150-300
Lanyard	Standard	\$20-30
Rangefinder	Standard	\$150-300
Recoil Compensator		
Type 1	Standard	\$80-150
Type 2	Standard	\$100-200
Type 3	Standard	\$150-300
Sights and Scopes		
Collimating/Reflex	Standard	\$250-2,000
Laser Sight		
Standard, Small	Standard	\$300-500
Infrared, Small	Military	\$400-600
Standard, Long Arm	Standard	\$450-900
Infrared, Long Arm	Military	\$500-1,000
Micrometer Sight	Standard	\$50-300
Nightsight Scope		
Type I	Standard	\$1,000-2,500
Type II	Standard	\$2,000-4,000
Type III	Street-Level	\$4,000-8,000
Telescopic Sight		
x2	Standard	\$100-200
x3	Standard	\$150-300
x4	Standard	\$250-600
x6	Standard	\$400-800
x8	Standard	\$500-1,100
x10	Standard	\$800-1,700

Sights and Scopes (Cont.)	Equipment Category	Price Range
Targeting Computer	Advanced Military	\$12,000-20,000
Thermal Sight	Military	\$4,000-10,000
Silencer		
Small, Poor Quality	Street-Level	\$150-300
Small, Average Quality	Street-Level	\$200-400
Small, High Quality	Street-Level	\$500-1,000
Large, Poor Quality	Street-Level	\$500-1,000
Large, Average Quality	Street-Level	\$600-900
Large, High Quality	Street-Level	\$750-1,200
Slide-Stop	Street-Level	\$250-500
Gear		
Body Armor†		
Level I	Standard	\$200-300
Level II-A	Standard	\$250-500
Level II	Standard	\$300-700
Level III-A	Standard	\$350-1,100
Level III plates		
Metal	Street-Level	\$100-150
Ceramic	Street-Level	\$150-250
Polyethylene	Street-Level	\$300-400
Level IV plates		
Metal	Street-Level	\$125-175
Ceramic	Street-Level	\$200-300
Polyethylene	Street-Level	\$350-600
Anti-IR Coating	Military	\$250
Combat Wear		
Ballistic Face Shield	Street-Level	\$45-80
Camouflage Clothing	Standard	\$30-120
Combat Vest	Street-Level	\$350-500
Gas Mask	Standard	\$75-200
Helmet	Standard	\$120-300
Holsters	Standard	\$20-50
Security Devices		
Motion Detector	Standard	\$25-100
Pressure Plate	Standard	\$25-100
Sensory Equipment		
Bomb Detector	Standard	\$100-200
Bugging equipment		
Bugs, various	Street-Level	\$100-500
Bug detector	Standard	\$150-300
Drug Detector	Standard	\$150-300
Nightsight Goggles		
Generation 1	Standard	\$200-400
Generation 2	Street-Level	\$400-800
Generation 3	Military	\$1,200-4,000
Radios, standard	Standard-Military	\$50-1,000
Radios, encrypted	Military-Advanced Military	\$200-1,200
Satellite Link	Advanced Military	\$100,000 or more
Surveillance Scopes	Street-Level	\$250-350
TEMPEST Gear	Street-Level	\$1,000-4,000
Thermalvision Devices	Street-Level	\$1,200-4,000
Wolf's Ears	Street-Level	\$800-2,000
Underwater Equipment		
SCUBA Equipment	Standard	\$850-6,000
SCBA Equipment	Standard	\$1,000-8,000

*: Ammunition prices are for a 20-round box, and assume Standard ammunition, shot, or slugs. For exotic rounds, the GM should multiply the price in proportion to the usefulness; additionally, many exotic rounds count as Street-Level or Military equipment.

†: Prices listed for soft body armor are for 11- coverage. For 14- coverage, multiply the price by 30-60%.

less. For example, a character could buy four 200-point Vehicles, defining them as a car, a motorcycle, a boat, and a mini-copter.

Characters may not apply the 5 point doubling rule to innate powers or abilities.

RESOURCE POINTS

In campaigns using the optional Resource Points rules (page 150), characters use their Equipment Points to “buy” equipment. But that doesn’t free them of the obligation to explain where they got the gear — they can’t simply allot their Equipment Points to any item they feel like and claim they have it. Before a character can allocate Equipment Points to have an item in his Kit, that item has to be in his Armory, and that means he has to obtain it in the game somehow (buy, steal, build, or the like). Additionally, for equipment more advanced than Standard, he has to have the appropriate Perk (page 88). (Though as stated on page 153, a character can always include in his Armory equipment he’s obtained during actual game play, such as by taking it from defeated enemies, regardless of whether he has the necessary Perk.)

MONEY

In campaigns that don’t use the Resource Points rules, characters typically get their equipment by buying it (and if Resource Points are used, they can buy equipment for their Armories). This is where the *Money* Perk can have a significant affect on play, and possibly even unbalance the campaign if the characters have too much money combined with too much access to sources of powerful equipment.

However, just because characters have money doesn’t mean they can automatically obtain any equipment they want just by paying the market price. As mentioned above, many factors can complicate the process. Buying equipment is a three-stage process. First the characters have to find what they want. Then they have to negotiate a price. Finally, the transfer of goods must take place. Each of these stages is fraught with potential difficulties and adventure possibilities.

Finding The Goods

The first step in buying equipment is finding what the character wants for sale. In the case of Standard equipment, this is usually no problem — all the character has to do is consult the proper catalog/sales flyer/website/salesperson and place his order. If the item isn’t available immediately, he’ll probably receive it within a week, or at most two.

Street-Level equipment isn’t so readily accessible. It may be for sale, but usually not to just anyone who asks. In game terms, the character has to either (a) have access to a legal source for the item, and the proper license/permission to purchase that item, or (b) succeed with a Streetwise roll at -3 to find someone who’s willing to sell to him on the black market (or perhaps grey market). The character may need to falsify licenses or other documentation with *Forgery* as part of this process, conceal his identity with *Disguise*, or the like. Locating the right seller and obtaining the goods typically takes a minimum of a day, and

may involve a week or more of legwork, phone calls, and shadowy meetings.

For Military equipment, the process is similar, though the black market is almost certainly the character’s only resource. He has to succeed with a Streetwise roll at -6 to find someone who’s willing to sell to him, and this takes a minimum of a week, and possibly as much as a month. During this time he may have to meet with several prospective sellers and try to convince them of his trustworthiness — an excellent opportunity for some roleplaying... and if things go wrong, maybe a close-quarters gunfight!

Advanced Military equipment is even more difficult to obtain, requiring success on a Streetwise roll at -9 and a minimum of two weeks’ time to locate. Due to the blatant illegality of buying and selling such equipment, the persons involved are likely to be very dangerous... and very suspicious of any irregularities or problems. If things don’t go as planned, they’re inclined to shoot first and ask questions later (assuming they didn’t plan to kill the characters and take their money regardless).

Negotiating A Price

In many cases, there’s no fixed price for the sort of equipment *Dark Champions* characters want. Standard gear has clearly-established prices, and some Street-Level equipment might as well. But most Street-Level and better gear, has a black market price that can fluctuate wildly based on demand, quality/scarcity of the goods, the relationship between buyer and seller, the seller’s perception of the buyer’s desperation, and other factors. The Prices Table on pages 266-67 lists some suggested price ranges for various types of weapons and gear, but these are only guidelines — the GM should alter or adapt them as he sees fit.

The prices listed in the Prices Table are *legal prices* — what a character who’s legally entitled to buy the item would pay in a fair market transaction. For a grey market transaction, multiply the listed price by x2 to x5. For a black market transaction, multiply the listed price by x3 to x10.

If the GM wants to roleplay the negotiation of the price, characters can use their *Trading* Skills to dicker. (If a character doesn’t have *Trading*, he can use *Persuasion* at -2; if he has *Persuasion*, *Seduction*, or some other relevant Skill in addition to *Trading*, he can use it as Complementary to *Trading*.) After a period of appropriate roleplaying (offer, counter-offer, veiled threats, bluffing...), both parties make their role in a Skill Versus Skill Contest, modified by the GM to reflect the quality of the roleplaying and other factors. If the seller wins, the price goes up five percent (5%) per point by which his roll exceeded the buyer’s roll from the base price the GM sets; if the buyer wins, the price goes down five percent (5%) per point. In any event, either party can choose to walk away from the deal at any time; no one has to accept a deal he’s not happy with.

Transfer Of Goods

After buyer and seller reach an agreement, they have to physically exchange the money for the goods. The specifics of this process depend on the

goods being bought and the currency used. In most cases, the deal is a relatively simple one involving the physical exchange of the purchased good for cash. (Cinematically, characters seem able to fit a million dollars or more in a briefcase; realistically, a million dollars in United States currency is far too large to fit in any briefcase.) It's at this point that a double-cross is most likely to occur — one side or the other may try to get away with goods and cash alike. The GM should play the situation for maximum tension and excitement, if appropriate.

Of course, alternate arrangements are possible. Characters might conduct the entire transaction remotely, negotiating with a trusted seller via phone or Internet and paying by electronic transfer. The seller may want something other than cash — diamonds, bearer bonds, other weapons, the performance of some service. The possibilities for adventure are practically endless.

Once the characters have the goods, they may have to figure out how to transport them. If they're just buying a few guns, that's probably no prob-

lem. If they bought missiles, a tank, or fifty pallets of 5.56mm ammunition, hopefully they planned ahead. Given the value of their cargo, they'd best beware hijackers and other such problems.

Contacts

Other than Money, the Perk that tends to be the most useful when it comes to buying and selling equipment is Contacts. Many a *Dark Champions* character has a Contact who's a fence, an underworld armorer, or a black market arms dealer. Finding such a Contact and establishing a business relationship with him, or explaining the history between the two characters as part of a PC's background, can add an enjoyable dimension to the campaign.

A Contact who can provide characters with significant help when it comes to acquiring equipment almost always counts as having "extremely useful Skills or resources" and "significant Contacts of his own." It's not uncommon for him to have "access to major institutions" as well.

DEFENSIVE EQUIPMENT



With all the bullets, knives, clubs, explosives, and other dangers they're likely to encounter, characters want gear to defend themselves with almost as much as they want weapons.

BODY ARMOR

Modern science offers soldiers and law enforcement officers high-tech body armor which is as effective as any suit of metal armor worn by the knights of old. The Body Armor Table lists some sample armors for characters to use.

Body armor is typically bought as PD and ED Armor with the following Limitations: OIF (-½), Activation Roll (roll and value vary), Half Mass (-½), and Real Armor (-¼). The different entries for Activation Roll (which represent how much of the body the armor protects; see page 488 of the *HERO System 5th Edition, Revised*) reflect varying levels of realism/cinematic action. Generally, a Mass of Normal Mass is a good approximation of "realistic," if you prefer that.

The *Real Armor* Limitation signifies that the armor is often uncomfortable, needs maintenance to continue to function properly, and may impede the character. At the GM's option, if the armor has an Activation Roll higher than 11-, the character suffers a -1 penalty on appropriate DEX Rolls and Agility Skill rolls for each point above 11- (for example, an Activation Roll 13- means a -2 penalty).

Characters can make soft body armor concealable (under sufficiently bulky clothes) by convert-

ing it from an OIF to an IIF (-¼). Hard body armor cannot realistically be made concealable.

BODY ARMOR TYPES

Roughly speaking, body armor comes in two types: soft and hard. Soft body armor is made of Kevlar or other substances (see below) that are tightly woven so they spread the impact of the bullet and prevent it from penetrating. Hard body armor is made of plates of ceramic, metal, or other substances, usually contained in pockets in soft armor.

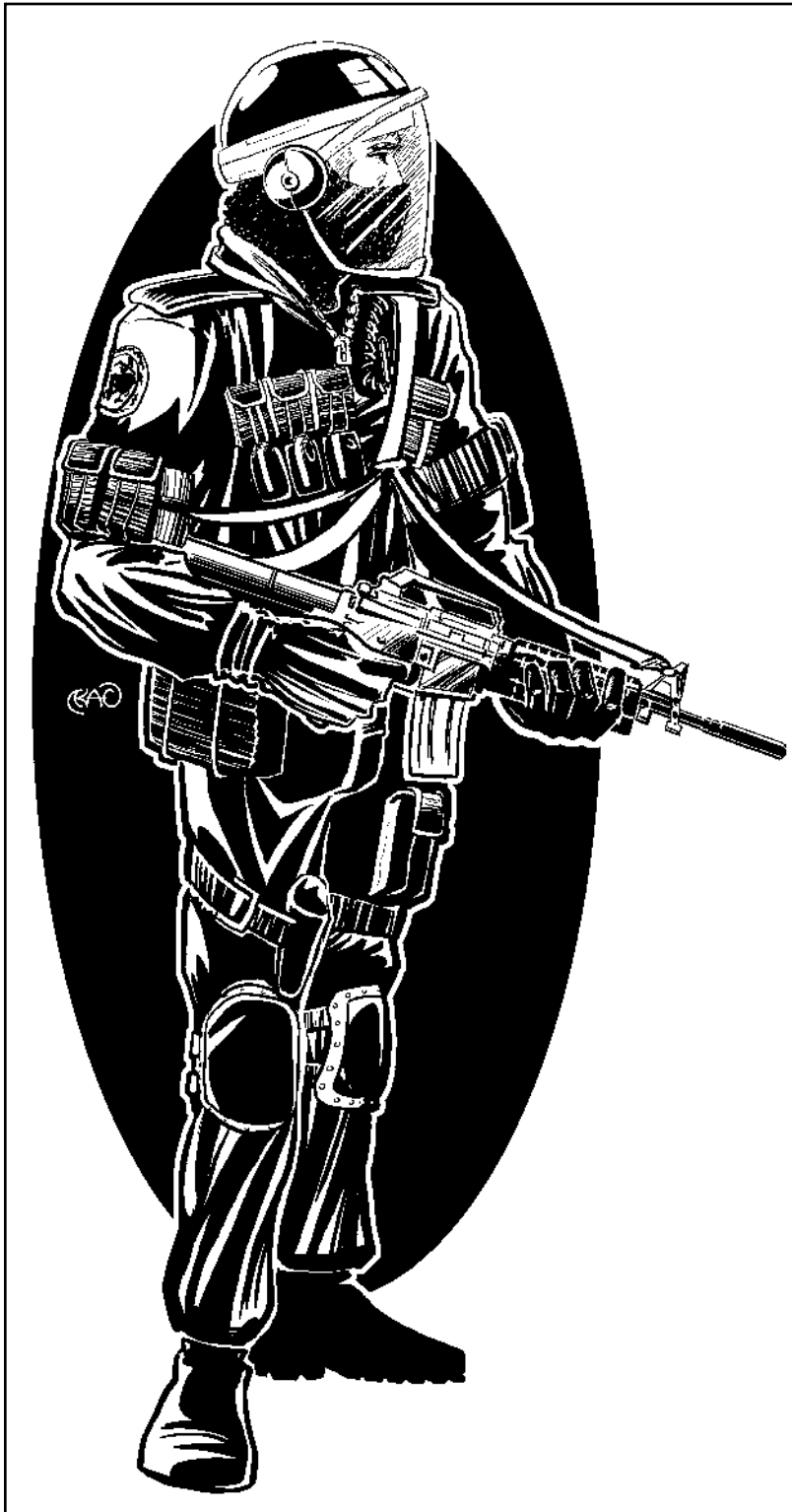
BODY ARMOR SUBSTANCES

Typical soft body armor is made from Kevlar, a name trademarked by DuPont for products made with aramid fibers. Kevlar 29, the form most often used in body armor, is five times as strong as steel and does not burn (though it carbonizes at temperatures about 800° Fahrenheit). Although Kevlar body armor is less effective against bladed weapons than against bullets, it is still approximately 98% effective against such attacks (in game terms, its PD does not take any sort of Limitation). Kevlar deteriorates over time from exposure to ultraviolet light or human sweat. It's also less effective when wet (-1 DEF) unless waterproofed. It can be woven with fiberglass, graphite fibers, or metal fibers to increase its strength, or chemically treated to make it tougher.

Spectra, an ultradense plastic, is another material currently used to make body armor. It's about ten times as strong as steel, or approximately twice as strong as Kevlar.

REALISM AND BODY ARMOR

The *HERO System* rules aren't design to precisely model how body armor works "realistically" — as always, the rules err on the side of dramatic action. If you want body armor to function a little more "realistically," consider all handgun rounds to have the *Reduced Penetration* Limitation when used against body armor. That way heavy rifle rounds still have a good chance to get through the lighter armors, but less powerful handgun rounds do not.



As of 2004, several other substances are being developed for potential use in soft body armor; they're listed on the Body Armor Table for GMs interested in running "near future" games, or games in which the PCs have technology more advanced than standard. Vectran is an artificial fiber that's five to ten times as strong as steel, or up to twice as strong as Kevlar. Biosteel is a spider silk fiber that's genetically produced using goats; it's up to 20 times as strong as steel (or as much as four times as strong as Kevlar). A third possibility is carbon nanotube fibers, which are even stronger than biosteel.

Hard body armors protect the wearer with plates made of steel, ceramic, or polyethylene. Steel loses its protective ability less quickly after multiple hits, and is cheaper. But ceramics and polyethylene provide better protection for only a third to half the weight of steel. The plates are typically inserted into pockets in soft body armor, and thus are defined in game terms as adding DEF to the DEF of soft armor. (If a character wears a plate by itself, consider it to provide DEF equal to 8 + its bonus over Hit Locations 10-11.)

Body armor can be treated to reduce the wearer's heat signature, making him harder to see with thermal scopes (*i.e.*, with Infrared Perception).

BODY ARMOR RATINGS

The Body Armor Table uses a system developed by the National Institute of Justice for ranking body armor. Here are the ratings and some of the types of bullets they're supposed to stop:

Rating	Resists These Rounds
Level I	.22 LR, .32, .38
Level II-A	.45 ACP, low-velocity .357 Magnum, low-velocity 9mm, 12 gauge buckshot
Level II	High-velocity .357 Magnum, low-velocity .44 Magnum, 10mm
Level III-A	High-velocity 9mm, high-velocity .44 Magnum, .308 Win
Level III	12 gauge slugs, 7.62mm, .308 Win, .30 carbine
Level IV	.30-06 AP

Levels I to III-A are soft body armor; levels III-IV are hard body armor.

These ratings are used to determine the DEF the armor provides based on the average damage of the major rounds in question — not the maximum damage, since sometimes body armor doesn't work as well as expected (and sometimes it works better). Body armor's effectiveness depends on many factors.

The accompanying Body Armor Table lists the following for each type of body armor: the DEF (the PD/ED Armor it provides), A/R Cost (the armor's cost in Active and Real Points), Mass (the armor's weight in kilograms, using the rules on page 487 of the *HERO System 5th Edition, Revised*), and any other pertinent information.

Characters may wear sectional body armor. For example, a character might have a suit of Level II body armor protecting most of his person (Activation Roll 14-), but Level IV ceramic plates around his torso (Hit Locations 10-13, Activation Roll 10-). Standard rules for sectional defenses apply.

BODY ARMOR TABLE

Type Of Armor	Activation		A/R Cost	Mass	Notes
	DEF	Roll			
Soft Body Armor					
Kevlar (normal)					
Level I	3	14-	9/3	3.0	
Level I	3	11-	9/3	2.2	
Level II-A	6	14-	18/6	8.75	
Level II-A	6	11-	18/5	6.25	
Level II	7	14-	21/8	12.25	
Level II	7	11-	21/6	8.75	
Level III-A	8	14-	24/9	17.5	
Level III-A	8	11-	24/7	12.5	
Kevlar (enhanced), Spectra, Vectran					
Level I	4	14-	12/4	4.4	
Level I	4	11-	12/4	3.15	
Level II-A	7	14-	21/8	12.25	
Level II-A	7	11-	21/6	8.75	
Level II	8	14-	24/9	17.5	
Level II	8	11-	24/7	12.5	
Level III-A	9	14-	27/10	24.5	
Level III-A	9	11-	27/8	17.5	
Biosteel, carbon nanotubes					
Level I	5	14-	15/5	6.15	
Level I	5	11-	15/5	4.4	
Level II-A	8	14-	24/9	17.5	
Level II-A	8	11-	24/7	12.5	
Level II	9	14-	27/10	24.5	
Level II	9	11-	27/8	17.5	
Level III-A	10	14-	30/11	35.0	
Level III-A	10	11-	30/9	25.0	
Hard Body Armor					
Ceramic or polyethylene plates					
Level III					
Chest and back	+3	9-	9/2	1.3	Hit Locations 10-11
Chest, sides, back	+3	10-	9/3	1.75	Hit Locations 10-11, including sides
Level IV					
Chest and back	+3	9-	11/3	1.3	Hardened (+¼), Hit Locations 10-11
Chest, sides, back	+3	10-	11/3	1.75	Hardened (+¼), Hit Locations 10-11, including sides
Metal plates					
Level III					
Chest and back	+2	9-	6/2	0.95	Hit Locations 10-11
Chest, sides, back	+2	10-	6/2	1.25	Hit Locations 10-11, including sides
Level IV					
Chest and back	+2	9-	7/2	0.95	Hardened (+¼), Hit Locations 10-11
Chest, sides, back	+2	10-	7/2	1.25	Hardened (+¼), Hit Locations 10-11, including sides
Other Options					
Anti-IR Coating	—	—	14/6	—	Change Environment (-2 to Infrared Perception PER Rolls), 0 END, Persistent; No Range, Self Only
Armored Clothing	2	14-	6/2	2.0	

COMBAT WEAR

Uniforms and body armor aren't the only things that characters might wear into combat.

Headgear

A variety of protective gear is available to cover a character's head and/or face.

GAS MASK

Effect:	Life Support: Self-Contained Breathing plus Sight Group Flash Defense, Only Protects Against Tear Gas-Type Flashes
Target/Area Affected:	Self
Duration:	Constant/Persistent
Range:	Self
Charges:	1 Continuing Fuel Charge/0 END
Breakability:	4 DEF

Description: A gas mask covers the entire head and either screens out harmful gases or gives the wearer his own self-contained air supply for a short time. This protection extends to tear gas.

Game Information: *Life Support: Self-Contained Breathing (10 Active Points); OIF (-½), 1 Continuing Fuel Charge (easy to replenish, 1 Hour; -0) (total cost: costs 7 points) plus Sight Group Flash Defense (10 points) (10 Active Points); OIF (-½), Only Protects Against Tear Gas-Type Flashes (-1) (total cost: 4 points). Total cost: 11 points.*

HELMETS AND FACE SHIELDS

Effect:	Armor (8 PD/8 ED) on the head
Target/Area Affected:	Self
Duration:	Persistent
Range:	Self
END Cost:	0
Breakability:	8 DEF

Description: None of the suits of body armor described above protect the head; for that, a character needs to wear a helmet. The PASGT helmet, the standard headgear of the modern U.S. military, is made of polyethylene or improved aramid fibers, making it more protective than the older steel helmets but lighter in weight. Some versions are shaped to allow the wearer to easily mount a night-vision device or communications equipment.

Game Information: *Armor (8 PD/ED) (24 Active Points); OIF (-½), Activation Roll (protects Locations 3-4; -2), Half Mass (-½), Real Armor (-¼). Total cost: 6 points.*

Options:

1) **Face Shields:** Some soldiers and police officers also wear *ballistic face shields* — large plates of transparent protective material designed to protect the wearer's face. They offer relatively little resistance to bullets; their main purpose is to keep thrown rocks and debris from hitting the wearer in front (this

also counts as a defense against NND Sight Group Flashes defined as thrown mud, powder, or the like). Some model face shields are worn on their own, others attach to a helmet. Character also, or alternatively, buys: *Armor (3 PD/3 ED) (9 Active Points); OIF (-½), Activation Roll (protects Location 4 when attacked from the front; -2), Half Mass (-½), Real Armor (-¼). Total cost: 2 points.*

Holsters

Most holsters just do what the typical holster is designed to: carry a gun safely. But some types provide other benefits.

CONCEALMENT HOLSTER

Effect:	+1 to Concealment for a particular handgun
Target/Area Affected:	Self
Duration:	Constant
Range:	Self
END Cost:	0
Breakability:	1 DEF

Description: A Concealment holster is specially designed to help a character conceal a particular type of handgun.

Game Information: *+1 to Concealment (2 Active Points); IIF (-¼), Only For Hiding A Particular Handgun (-2). Total cost: 1 point.*

FAST DRAW HOLSTER

Effect:	+1 to Fast Draw
Target/Area Affected:	Self
Duration:	Constant
Range:	Self
END Cost:	0
Breakability:	1 DEF

Description: This type of holster is specially designed to allow the shooter to draw his gun quickly. (A variant on this is the springsleeve holster, which keeps a small gun hidden up a character's sleeve and uses a spring to thrust it into his hand when he flexes his arm properly.)

Game Information: *+1 to Fast Draw (Small Arms) (2 Active Points); OIF (-½). Total cost: 1 point.*

Tactical Vests And Clothing

CAMOUFLAGE CLOTHING

Effect:	+1 to Stealth in appropriate settings
Target/Area Affected:	Self
Duration:	Constant
Range:	Self
END Cost:	0
Breakability:	1 DEF

Description: The military has camouflage uniforms for all sorts of environments (for example, arctic, desert, forest/jungle, mountains, and urban), and *Dark Champions* characters can certainly use this sort of clothing. The GM determines when camo clothing offers a bonus to its wearer.

Game Information: +1 to *Stealth* (2 Active Points); OIF (-½), Only Works In Appropriate Settings (-1). Total cost: 1 point.

COMBAT VEST

Effect:	Armor (4 PD/4 ED) plus various weapons
Target/Area Affected:	Self/Varies
Duration:	Persistent/varies
Range:	Self/varies
END Cost:	0/varies
Breakability:	4 DEF

Description: This vest not only provides the wearer with protection in the torso region, it allows him to carry several weapons and gadgets easily. Characters can design their own vests with individualized selections of equipment.

Game Information:

Cost	Power
4	<i>Armored Vest:</i> Armor (4 PD/4 ED); OIF (-½), Activation Roll 11- (-1), Half Mass (-½), Real Armor (-¼)
17	<i>Combat Vest Weapons:</i> Multipower: 25-point reserve; all OIF (multiple OAFs, -½)
1u	1) <i>.41 Handgun:</i> RKA 1½d6; OAF (-1), Beam (-¼), Real Weapon (-¼), STR Minimum (10, STR Minimum Doesn't Add/Subtract Damage; -1), 2 clips of 12 Charges each (-0)
1u	2) <i>Combat Knife:</i> HKA 1d6 (up to 2d6 with STR); OAF (-1), Real Weapon (-¼)
1u	3) <i>Smoke Grenades:</i> Change Environment 4" radius, -3 to Sight Group PER Rolls; OAF (-1), Range Based On STR (-¼), Real Weapon (-¼), 4 Continuing Charges lasting 1 Turn each (-½)
1u	4) <i>Flashlight:</i> Sight Group Images 1" radius, +3 to PER Rolls; OAF (-1), Only To Create Light (-1), 1 Continuing Fuel Charge lasting 1 Hour (-0)

Total cost: 25 points.

POLICEMAN'S BELT

Effect:	Various weapons and useful tools
Target/Area Affected:	Varies
Duration:	Varies
Range:	Varies
END Cost:	Varies
Breakability:	1 DEF

Description: This is a slight variation on the traditional "Sam Browne" belt worn by police officers. Characters can also design their own belts with individualized selections of equipment.

Game Information:

Cost	Powers
53	<i>Policeman's Belt:</i> Multipower, 80-point reserve; all OIF (-½)
1u	1) <i>.41 Handgun:</i> RKA 1½d6; OAF (-1), Beam (-¼), Real Weapon (-¼), STR Minimum (10, STR Minimum Doesn't Add/Subtract Damage; -1), 2 clips of 12 Charges each (-0)
1u	2) <i>Handcuffs:</i> Entangle 3d6 (standard effect: 3 BODY), 6 DEF, Takes No Damage From Attacks (+½) (67 Active Points); OAF (-1), Cannot Form Barriers (-¼), Set Effect (hands only; -1), Does Not Prevent Use Of Accessible Foci (-1), No Range (-½), Must Follow Grab Or Target Must Be Willing (-½), 1 Recoverable Charge (-1¼), Can Be Escaped Automatically With Modified Lockpicking Or Contortionist Roll (-½)
1u	3) <i>Tonfa:</i> HA +3d6, Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½); OAF (-1), Hand-To-Hand Attack (-½), Real Weapon (-¼)
3u	4) <i>Pepper Foam Spray:</i> Sight Group Flash 5d6, NND (defense is solid eye covering; +1); OAF (-1), No Range (-½), Real Weapon (-¼), 12 Charges (-¼) plus Energy Blast 3d6, NND (defense is solid eye covering; +1); OAF (-1), No Range (-½), Real Weapon (-¼), 12 Charges (-¼)
1u	5) <i>Flashlight:</i> Sight Group Images 1" radius, +3 to PER Rolls; OAF (-1), Only To Create Light (-1), 1 Continuing Fuel Charge lasting 1 Hour (-0)
1u	6) <i>Walkie-Talkie:</i> Radio Listen and Transmit (Radio Group); OAF (-1), Affected As Hearing Group As Well As Radio Group (-¼)

Total cost: 61 points

SENSORY EQUIPMENT



Sometimes he who perceives the enemy first lives longest. These devices help characters perform reconnaissance, communicate with each other, detect enemies and other threats, and in general perceive the world around themselves.

COMMUNICATIONS GEAR

A group of *Dark Champions* characters — such as a team of PC heroes — needs a way to stay in touch with each other. Proper battlefield communications often contributes more to winning battles and ensuring the success of a mission than heavy firepower or the best body armor.

RADIOS

Effect: Radio Perception/Transmission
 Target/Area Affected: Self
 Duration: Persistent
 Range: Self
 END Cost: 0
 Breakability: 2 DEF

Description: The typical communications gear for the modern era is the radio, which characters can buy in several different forms, as described below.

Game Information:

Radio Handset: *Radio Perception/Transmission (Radio Group) (10 Active Points); OAF (-1), Affected As Hearing Group As Well As Radio Group (-¼), 1 Continuing Fuel Charge (battery, Easy to obtain; 6 Hours; -0). Total cost: 4 points.*

Radio Headset: *Radio Perception/Transmission (Radio Group) (10 Active Points); OIF (-½), Affected As Hearing Group As Well As Radio Group (-¼), 1 Continuing Fuel Charge (battery, Easy to obtain; 6 Hours; -0). Total cost: 6 points.*

Concealed Radio Headset: *Radio Perception/Transmission (Radio Group) (10 Active Points); IIF (-¼), Affected As Hearing Group As Well As Radio Group (-¼), 1 Continuing Fuel Charge (battery, Easy to obtain; 6 Hours; -0). Total cost: 7 points.*

Options:

1) **Advanced Radios:** In campaigns focusing on advanced technology, the GM might allow characters to substitute High-Range Radio Perception for Radio Perception/Transmission:

HRRP Handset: *HRRP (Radio Group) (12 Active Points); OAF (-1), Affected As Hearing Group As Well As Radio Group (-¼), 1 Continuing Fuel Charge (battery, Easy to obtain; 6 Hours; -0). Total cost: 5 points.*

HRRP Headset: *HRRP (Radio Group) (12 Active Points); OIF (-½), Affected As Hearing Group As Well As Radio Group (-¼), 1 Continuing Fuel Charge (battery, Easy to obtain; 6 Hours; -0). Total cost: 7 points.*

Concealed HRRP Headset: *HRRP (Radio Group) (12 Active Points); IIF (-¼), Affected As Hearing Group As Well As Radio Group (-¼), 1 Continuing Fuel Charge (battery, Easy to obtain; 6 Hours; -0). Total cost: 8 points.*

2) **Cell Phones:** Alternately, in a game that takes place in an urban area, characters may rely on cellular phones instead of radios. Many modern cell phones allow characters to send images as well as sound.

Cellular Phone: *HRRP (Radio Group) (12 Active Points); OAF (-1), Affected As Sight And Hearing Group As Well As Radio Group (-½), Cellular Phone-Band Communications Only (-1), 1 Continuing Fuel Charge (battery, Easy to obtain; 6 Hours; -0). Total cost: 3 points.*

ENCRYPTED COMMUNICATIONS

Sometimes the ability to communicate doesn't do characters much good if they can't conceal what they're saying. In the *HERO System*, there are several ways to represent encrypting and decrypting transmissions:

Concealed

The first is to apply the *Concealed Sense Modifier* to the Sense doing the transmitting. In this case the special effect of the Sense Modifier could be one of two things: either “the transmission cannot be detected” (which is what Concealed is normally used for); or “even if detected, the transmission cannot be understood.” The end result is the same — the enemy doesn't have a transmission he can comprehend (though in the latter case, intercepting the transmission may be enough for the enemy to determine the point of transmission). Decrypting this sort of encryption requires decoding equipment built with an Enhanced Sense that can “perceive” through the encryption. If a character buys a set of radios (or the like) which all have Concealed, it's safe to assume each of them can understand (decrypt) the transmissions of the others — the

encryption/decryption process is programmed or hardwired into the devices.

Encrypted Radio Handsets: *Radio Perception/Transmission (Radio Group), Concealed (-5 to Radio Group PER Rolls), Usable Simultaneously (up to eight persons at once; +1) (30 Active Points); OAF (-1), Affected As Hearing Group As Well As Radio Group (-¼), 1 Continuing Fuel Charge (battery, Easy to obtain; 6 Hours; -0). Total cost: 13 points.*

Improved Encrypted Radio Handsets: *Radio Perception/Transmission (Radio Group), Concealed (-10 to Radio Group PER Rolls), Usable Simultaneously (up to eight persons at once; +1) (40 Active Points); OAF (-1), Affected As Hearing Group As Well As Radio Group (-¼), 1 Continuing Fuel Charge (battery, Easy to obtain; 6 Hours; -0). Total cost: 18 points.*

Alternately, instead of relying on the fallible (but more “realistic”) Concealed, characters can buy Invisible Power Effects (invisible to tracing) for their radios. That way, no matter how good a Systems Operation roll an enemy makes, he won’t be able to perceive the transmission (he may not receive it at all, or at best it sounds like meaningless static from which he can determine nothing).

Ultimate Encrypted Radio Handsets: *Radio Perception/Transmission (Radio Group), Invisible To Tracing (+¼), Usable Simultaneously (up to eight persons at once; +1) (22 Active Points); OAF (-1), Affected As Hearing Group As Well As Radio Group (-¼), 1 Continuing Fuel Charge (battery, Easy to obtain; 6 Hours; -0). Total cost: 10 points.*

Language Variable Power Pool

Another way to scramble transmissions is a Variable Power Pool for Languages. Only a person with another radio device, programmed with the same “language,” can understand what’s being sent. This method requires the GM’s permission, since characters can’t buy Skills in Power Frameworks without the GM’s approval — but since this is an intriguing, fun, and not especially abusive construct, most GMs allow it.

To encrypt a transmission, the characters simply agree on which Language their radios will use. They don’t necessarily have to be real languages; the characters can simply call them Language A, Language B, and so on. Identifying the language precisely doesn’t matter; the Languages are just a way to represent the special effect of “encrypted communications” in *HERO System* terms.

The Language VPP method is cheap and easy, but it has some drawbacks. A successful Cryptography roll can decrypt a scrambler “language,” but the users can counter the cryptographer by changing the computer-generated “language” at frequent intervals. This constitutes changing the Pool and requires 1 Minute. To change the Pool in just a Full Phase, the character must buy a Skill to do so, though GMs could let characters use Cryptography

or Systems Operation instead of making them buy a separate Skill.

Radio Handset with Scrambled Transmission Option: *Radio Perception/Transmission (Radio Group) (10 Active Points); OAF (-1), Affected As Hearing Group As Well As Radio Group (-¼), 1 Continuing Fuel Charge (battery, Easy to obtain; 6 Hours; -0) (total cost: 4 points) plus Variable Power Pool (Scrambler Pool), 4 base + 2 control cost; OAF (-1), Only For One Language At A Time (-1), 1 Continuing Fuel Charge (battery, Easy to obtain; 6 Hours; -0) (total cost: 5 points). Total cost: 9 points.*

This sort of scrambling is also vulnerable to certain types of decryption equipment. In game terms, you can represent that equipment with Universal Translator that Requires A Systems Operation Roll.

Mind Link

Another way to create a closed, untappable communications system is Mind Link. The character defines the number of radios he has, and that tells him how many people he can communicate with at once. (Alternately, he can buy Mind Link to Link with one other person who has bought the same power.) For true privacy/encryption, leave the Mind Link as a Mental Power, meaning that only other characters with appropriate Mental Powers, or decryption devices built with those Mental Powers, can penetrate the communications net. More realistically, characters should apply the Limitation *Affected As Radio And Hearing Groups, Not Mental Group (-½)* — that way things like Darkness to the Radio Group can block their transmissions.

Closed Radio Link (Type 1): *Mind Link, specific group of up to any 8 minds, No LOS Needed (35 Active Points); OAF (-1), Affected As Radio And Hearing Groups, Not Mental Group (-½), Does Not Provide Mental Awareness (-¼), 1 Continuing Fuel Charge (battery, Easy to obtain; 6 Hours; -0). Total cost: 13 points.*

Closed Radio Link (Type 2): *Mind Link, any one mind, No LOS Needed (25 Active Points); OAF (-1), Only Can Be Maintained With Others Who Have Mind Link (-1), Affected As Radio And Hearing Groups, Not Mental Group (-½), Does Not Provide Mental Awareness (-¼), 1 Continuing Fuel Charge (battery, Easy to obtain; 6 Hours; -0). Total cost: 7 points.*

Cryptography

The fourth method is to give the radio equipment its own *Cryptography* Skill to represent its ability to encrypt its transmissions (and to decrypt those it receives, though as long as two users agree on the form of encryption the decryption is automatic). Decrypting this sort of encryption requires decoding equipment built with its own *Cryptography* Skill to crack the code in a Skill Versus Skill Contest; Systems Operation may serve as a Complementary Skill.

BATTLE CODES

Another way for characters to keep their communications secret is to develop their own unique language — a “battle code,” if you will. When used with an encryption system, a unique language (or a very rare real-world one, such as Navajo) provides a double layer of security. However, it may be vulnerable to characters or equipment with the *Universal Translator Talent*.

THE RANGE OF TRANSMIT

Usually it's not necessary to establish an exact range over which a Sense with the *Transmit* Sense Modifier can "broadcast" — the GM can simply establish ranges for Transmit on a case-by-case basis, depending on special effects, the technology used in the campaign, common sense, and dramatic sense. In situations where knowing the exact range is important, GMs can use one of two methods.

For strict precision, give any Sense with Transmit a broadcast range of 1 kilometer per Active Point. To increase this range, apply the *MegaScale* Advantage, with the $+\frac{1}{4}$ level increasing it to 10 km per Active Point, and so on up the *MegaScale* Table from there. Characters may need to apply *MegaScale* as a naked Advantage, or put Senses in a *Multipower* (one slot *MegaScaled*, one not), to create both short-range and long-range communications systems.

For more "dramatic" results, assume a transmission can reach anywhere within an area defined by the GM (one city, one nation, one planet, one solar system, or the like). For each +5 Character Points, the character can increase the range of transmission by one step down the *MegaScale* Table.

Radio Handset with Encryption System: *Radio Perception/Transmission (Radio Group)* (10 Active Points); OAF (-1), *Affected As Hearing Group As Well As Radio Group* ($-\frac{1}{4}$), 1 *Continuing Fuel Charge* (battery, Easy to obtain; 6 Hours; -0) (total cost: 4 points) **plus** *Cryptography 20* (25 Active Points); OAF (-1), *Only To Encrypt/Decrypt Its Own Transmissions* (-1), 1 *Continuing Fuel Charge* (battery, Easy to obtain; 6 Hours; -0) (total cost: 8 points). Total cost: 12 points.

Systems Operation

Similarly, a radio could be built with its own *Systems Operation* Skill. The character trying to send an encrypted transmission makes a *Systems Operation* roll to reflect his ability to hide/encrypt the transmission; a character trying to intercept the transmission makes a competing roll to locate/decrypt it. In either case, *Computer Programming*, *Cryptography*, and/or *Electronics* may act as *Complementary Skills*.

Radio Handset with Encryption System: *Radio Perception/Transmission (Radio Group)* (10 Active Points); OAF (-1), 1 *Continuing Fuel Charge* (battery, Easy to obtain; 6 Hours; -0) (total cost: 4 points) **plus** *Systems Operation 20* (25 Active Points); OAF (-1), *Only To Encrypt/Decrypt Its Own Transmissions* (-1), 1 *Continuing Fuel Charge* (battery, Easy to obtain; 6 Hours; -0) (total cost: 8 points). Total cost: 12 points.

SIGHT ENHANCEMENT GEAR

Mankind has long sought for ways to improve peoples' ability to see. Here are some modern devices that do just that.

BINOCULARS

Effect: +6 versus the Range Modifier for Sight Group
Target/Area Affected: Self
Duration: Constant
Range: Self
END Cost: 0
Breakability: 2 DEF

Description: Binoculars increase a character's ability to see over a distance by magnifying the subject viewed. They range from small versions (including monoculars) that provide only slight amplification, to larger military and hunting models that also have electronic readouts on distance, direction, and the like.

Game Information: +6 versus the Range Modifier for Sight Group (9 Active Points); OAF (-1). Total cost: 4 points.

Options:

1) **Large Binoculars:** Increase to +10 versus the Range Modifier for Sight Group (15 Active Points); OAF (-1) (total cost: 7 points) **plus** *Absolute Range*

Sense (3 Active Points); OAF (-1) (total cost: 1 point) **plus** *Bump Of Direction* (3 Active Points); OAF (-1) (total cost: 1 point). Total cost: 9 points.

NIGHTSIGHT DEVICES

Effect: +2 to +4 to Sight Group PER Rolls, Only To Counteract Darkness Penalties
Target/Area Affected: Self
Duration: Constant
Range: Self
Charges: 1 Continuing Fuel Charge
Breakability: 2 DEF

Description: Nightsight devices, sometimes known as night vision devices (NVDs), allow a character to see at night by amplifying ambient light (such as starlight). The user, who suffers from a slightly decreased field of vision, sees the world in a monochrome green, but he can see much more clearly in darkened conditions than someone without such enhancement. A nightsight device also allows the user to see infrared light (not heat patterns; that requires a thermal vision device [see below]), and may have a short-range infrared "flashlight" attached to improve visibility, allow him to read maps, and so forth. However, an NVD won't function in total darkness (it needs light to amplify). Nightsight devices emit ultrasonic sound (which animals, and characters with proper equipment, can hear).

Nightsight devices come in three "generations," and the higher the generation, the more sophisticated (and expensive) the device. In campaigns featuring more advanced (perhaps fictionally advanced) technology, it may be possible to shrink these often bulky devices down to much smaller sizes — perhaps even to lenses that would fit in the eyeholes of a mask.

Game Information:

Nightsight Goggles (Generation 1): +2 to Sight Group PER Rolls (4 Active Points); OAF (-1), *Only To Counteract Darkness Penalties* ($-\frac{1}{2}$), *Requires Ambient Light* (it won't work in total darkness; $-\frac{1}{4}$), *Side Effect* (character suffers a 2 x Effect Vulnerability to Sight Group Flashes based on bright light while looking through the scope, and may experience a minor Sight Group Flash from looking at a bright light, always occurs; $-\frac{1}{2}$), 1 *Continuing Fuel Charge* (battery, Easy to obtain; 3 Hours; -0) (total cost: 1 point) **plus** *Detect Infrared Light (Sight Group)* (3 Active Points); OAF (-1), *Linked* ($-\frac{1}{2}$), 1 *Continuing Fuel Charge* (battery, Easy to obtain; 3 Hours; -0) (total cost: 1 point). Total cost: 2 points.

Nightsight Goggles (Generation 2): As above, but +3 to Sight Group PER Rolls (6 Active Points for the first power). 9 Active Points; total cost 3 points.

Nightsight Goggles (Generation 3): As above, but +4 to Sight Group PER Rolls (8 Active Points for the first power). 11 Active Points; total cost 3 points.



Infrared "Flashlight": *Sight Group Images*, +3 to PER Rolls (19 Active Points); OAF (-1), Limited Range (2"; -¼), Only To Create Infrared Light (-1½), 1 Continuing Fuel Charge (easily refueled, 1 Hour; -0). Total cost: 5 points.

SURVEILLANCE SCOPE

Effect: Clairsentience (Sight Group)
Target/Area Affected: Self
Duration: Constant
Range: No Range
Charges: 1 Continuing Fuel Charge
Breakability: 4 DEF

Description: A surveillance scope is a viewing device consisting of a flexible fiber optic cable with a miniaturized camera on one end. The other end connects to a viewing system (a device similar in size and shape to a laptop computer or portable television set; some scopes have much smaller viewing systems for easy portability). The user can insert the cable under doors, through holes in walls, around corners, or the like to see into other areas without exposing himself to attack (or, in some cases, letting the persons being viewed know they're under surveillance). A similar device, the borescope, can be drilled through a wall or door to look beyond it (characters can also use borescopes to look inside locked briefcases and other closed objects without having to open them). The user can make a Stealth roll to keep the people under surveillance from detecting the scope's presence, if appropriate.

Game Information: *Clairsentience (Sight Group)* (20 Active Points); OAF (-1), Limited Perspective (character has a limited range of vision when using scope; -¼), No Range (-½), 1 Continuing Fuel Charge (battery, Easy to obtain; 1 Hour; -0). Total cost: 7 points.

Options:

1) **Nightsight Surveillance Scope:** Add Generation 1 nightsight device. 24 Active Points; total cost 9 points.

THERMALVISION DEVICE

Effect: Infrared Perception (Sight Group)
Target/Area Affected: Self
Duration: Constant
Range: Self
Charges: 1 Continuing Fuel Charge
Breakability: 1 DEF

Description: Thermalvision devices allow a character to see heat patterns and traces, making it possible to see people (and many objects) in the dark based on their body heat. They have many mundane applications, such as detecting overheating components in electronic or mechanical equipment.

Game Information: *Infrared Perception (Sight Group)* (5 Active Points); OAF (-1), 1 Continuing Fuel Charge (battery, Easy to obtain; 2 Hours; -0). Total cost: 2 points.

BUGS AND BUG DETECTORS

Bugs are electronic tracking and/or listening devices. There are two basic kinds: those that emit a simple radio signal which can be traced (such as a character might put in an enemy's car so he could find the car anywhere in the city); and those that are actually miniature microphones and/or cameras, allowing a listener to hear or view what occurs in the vicinity of the bug. Either type of bug needs to be properly placed so that it's hidden but works as well as possible. This often involves sneaking into someone's office or home to plant the bug, and requires the *Bugging* and *Concealment* Skills for best results. Of course, where there are bugs, there are devices to detect and neutralize them as well, even if they're hidden inside walls or phone systems.

STANDARD VISUAL BUG

Effect: Clairsentience (Sight Group)
Target/Area Affected: Special
Duration: Constant
Range: 800"
Charges: 1 Continuing Fuel Charge
Breakability: 7 DEF

Description: This is the typical sort of device used for visual electronic surveillance of a fixed location. It broadcasts what it "sees" over a range of one mile. Unless there's a direct wire connection between the bug and the reception equipment (which is unlikely), anything that interferes with radio transmissions can disrupt the bug's transmission temporarily or permanently. Because it's an Obvious Focus, a character has to use his *Concealment* Skill (with *Bugging* as a Complementary Skill) to hide it.

This bug has an internal battery able to power it for up to one week. The longer the bug's range, the larger its batteries have to be... but the easier it is to detect. Some visual bugs are extremely small (for example, pinhole lenses about 1/8 inch across), but most are at least a little larger than that.

Game Information: *Clairsentience (Sight Group), 8x Range (800", or 1 mile) (61 Active Points); OAF (-1), No Range (character must place bug at perception point before he can use the power; -½), Affected As Radio Group As Well As Sight Group (-¼), 1 Continuing Fuel Charge (battery, Easy to obtain; 1 Week; -¾). Total cost: 22 points.*

Options:

- 1) High-Powered Bug:** Increase to 16x Range (1,600"). 70 Active Points; total cost 25 points.
- 2) Low-Powered Bug:** Decrease to 2x Range (200"). 44 Active Points; total cost 16 points.
- 3) Standard Audio Bug:** This is the same sort of bug, but it picks up and transmits sound rather than visual images. Some of them are as small as pencil erasers. Change to Clairsentience (Hearing Group). 61 Active Points; total cost 22 points.

4) Standard Visual And Audio Bug: This bug picks up and transmits both visual images and sound. Change to Clairsentience (Sight and Hearing Groups). 79 Active Points; total cost 29 points.

5) Landline Connection: This bug has a direct, wired connection between itself and the unit that receives the image it transmits, making it much more difficult to disrupt the transmission. Remove Affected As Radio Group As Well As Sight Group (-¼). Total cost: 24 points.

6) Disguised Bug: This form of the Standard Bug is built into, or made to look like, an everyday object — a radio, a clock, a smoke detector, or just about anything else you can think of. Someone who examines the bug closely or takes it apart will soon realize what it is (or at least that it's not what it looks like). Change OAF (-1) to IAF (-½):

Standard Visual: Total cost 27 points

Standard Audio: Total cost 27 points

Standard Visual And Audio: Total cost 35 points.

7) Hard-To-Find Bug: This bug's transmissions are particularly difficult to find with bug detectors for some reason. Usually bugs like these are a little larger than normal, and thus harder to hide and easier to find than a normal bug. Add Concealed (-6 to PER Rolls with Detect Bugs).

Standard Visual: 72 Active Points; total cost 26 points.

Standard Audio: 72 Active Points; total cost 26 points.

Standard Visual And Audio: 89 Active Points; total cost 32 points.

Disguised Standard Visual: 72 Active Points; total cost 32 points.

Disguised Standard Audio: 72 Active Points; total cost 32 points.

Disguised Standard Visual And Audio: 89 Active Points; total cost 39 points.

8) Undercover Agent Audio Bug: This "bug" is a listening device worn by an undercover police officer (or the like). Concealed under the clothes, it transmits voices and noises in the wearer's vicinity to a nearby receiver. To the Standard Audio Bug, add Mobile Perception Point. 70 Active Points; total cost 25 points (for an OAF version) or 31 points (for an IAF version disguised as a pen, a calculator, a watch, or the like).

TRACKING BUG

Effect: Images to Radio Group, +4 to PER Rolls
Target/Area Affected: 32" Radius
Duration: Constant
Range: RBS
Charges: 1 Continuing Recoverable Charge lasting 1 Week
Breakability: 1 DEF

Description: This is a device which characters can attach to cars and other moving objects to follow them. It emits a distinctive radio signal which



identifies the bug's location. Tracking the beacon requires any specialized radio-perceiving device (one such device is assumed to come with the Tracking Bug when the character buys it, but he could also use other radio equipment if necessary).

The Tracking Bug can reliably be "picked up" on tracking equipment primarily within a 32" radius. However, much like a character can see the beam from a flashlight from far away without being inside the beam, characters outside the 32" radius may still be able to track the Tracer, if the GM so permits: from 33-64", the Image is at only +2 to PER Rolls; from 65-125", it's at +0; from 126-250" it's at -2; beyond that it would require an Extraordinary Skill Roll to locate it.

Game Information: *Images to Radio Group*, +4 to PER Rolls, *Increased Size* (32" radius; +1¼), *Usable As Attack* (allows character to "stick" the Image to a target; +1), *Range Based On STR* (+¼), 1 *Continuing Recoverable Charge* lasting 1 Week (stops functioning if it gets wet or experiences severe radio interference; +1) (76 Active Points); *IAF Fragile* (-¾), *Set Effect* (detectable signal; -1), *Image Only Perceivable On Special Radio Frequencies* (-0). *Total cost:* 28 points.

Options:

- 1) **Strong Bug:** Increase to +6 to PER Rolls. 103 Active Points; total cost 37 points.
- 2) **Weak Bug:** Decrease to +2 to PER Rolls. 49 Active Points; total cost 18 points.
- 3) **Broad-Signal Bug:** Increase to *Increased Size* (125" radius; +1¾). 85 Active Points; total cost 31 points.

WIRETAP

Effect:	Clairsentience (Hearing Group), Only For Defined Phones
Target/Area Affected:	Defined phone(s)
Duration:	Constant
Range:	800" (see text)
Charges:	1 Continuing Fuel Charge
Breakability:	7 DEF

Description: This bug is installed in a telephone (or, in some cases, on a telephone trunk line leading to an entire office, entire building, or the like). It picks up and transmits all conversation that takes place over that phone, but doesn't hear other sounds.

Game Information: *Clairsentience* (Hearing Group), *8x Range* (800", or 1 mile), 1 *Continuing Fuel Charge* (battery, Easy to obtain; 1 Week; +¾) (61 Active Points); *OAF* (-1), *No Range* (character must place bug at perception point before he can use the power; -½), *Can Only Hear Sound From Specific Telephone(s)* (-1), *Affected As Radio Group As Well As Sight Group* (-¼). *Total cost:* 16 points.

Options:

- 1) **Strong Wiretap:** Increase to 16x Range (1,600"). 70 Active Points; total cost 19 points.
- 2) **Weak Wiretap:** Decrease to 2x Range (200"). 44 Active Points; total cost 12 points.
- 3) **Fax Tap:** Similar devices exist to monitor and capture information coming through fax machine phone lines. Change to *Clairsentience* (Radio Group). *Total cost:* 16 points.

BUG DETECTOR

Effect:	Detect Bugs 16-
Target/Area Affected:	Self
Duration:	Constant
Range:	10"
Charges:	1 Continuing Charge
Breakability:	4 DEF

Description: This device detects bugs by perceiving the radio waves they generate. This means it only detects “active” bugs — bugs which are transmitting while the Detector is in use. It cannot detect bugs which are turned off or inactive (and some types of bugs are harder to detect than others), nor bugs using infrared light or other media than radio waves. Its batteries provide enough power for a total of one hour of operation.

Game Information: *Detect Active Bugs 16- (Radio Group), Increased Arc Of Perception (360 Degrees) (17 Active Points); OAF (-1), Affected As Sight Group As Well As Radio Group (-½), Limited Range (10"; -¼), 1 Continuing Fuel Charge (Easy to replace batteries, 1 Hour; -0). Total cost: 6 points.*

Options:

- 1) **Strong Bug Detector:** Increase to Detect Active Bugs 20-. 21 Active Points; total cost 8 points.
- 2) **Weak Bug Detector:** Decrease to Detect Active Bugs 13-. 14 Active Points; total cost 5 points.

MISCELLANEOUS SENSORY DEVICES

BOMB DETECTOR

Effect:	Detect Explosives 16-
Target/Area Affected:	Self
Duration:	Constant
Range:	Self
END Cost:	0
Breakability:	2 DEF

Description: This device detects nearby explosive substances by identifying the chemical vapors they give off. It needs to be near the explosives for approximately two seconds to detect them.

Game Information: *Detect Explosives 16- (Smell/Taste Group) (12 Active Points); OAF (-1), Extra Time (Extra Phase; -¾). Total cost: 4 points.*

DRUG DETECTOR

Effect:	Detect Illegal Drugs 14-
Target/Area Affected:	Self
Duration:	Constant
Range:	Self
END Cost:	0
Breakability:	2 DEF

Description: A Drug Detector senses the chemical vapors given off by illegal drugs. It can usually “sniff out” drugs even if they’re hidden inside objects or

their odor is “masked” by other substances. It does not indicate which drugs are present, and must be reasonably close to the drugs to detect them.

Game Information: *Detect Illegal Drugs 14- (Smell/Taste Group) (10 Active Points); OAF (-1). Total cost: 5 points.*

SATELLITE LINK

Effect:	Various viewing abilities
Target/Area Affected:	Self
Duration:	Constant
Range:	Self
END Cost:	Varies
Breakability:	9 DEF

Description: This gadget uses the world-spanning satellite network to give the user a view of anything seen by satellite! The character uses the link to tap into the network and obtain a “feed” from it showing whatever can be seen in the target area at that time. There may not always be a satellite available that’s watching what a character wants to see; in game terms, if the Activation Roll fails, the character’s objective is in a “blind zone” (either because no satellite is “on target” or because weather blocks his view).

If there’s a satellite in position, the character can see a lot — given the powerful IR and UV capabilities of many satellites, a link might be able to read the heat patterns of a building to determine its layout, how many people are in it (and where they are), and so forth.

A typical Satellite Link requires a large system of computer banks and monitors that must be kept in a Base.

At the GM’s option, in a high-tech campaign it might be possible for characters to have a Satellite Link that only requires a laptop computer, or even a viewing device mounted on a bracer or large wrist-watch-like device. For a laptop, change OAF Immobile (-2) to OAF (-1) (total cost: 20 points); for a bracer, change it to OIF (-½) (total cost: 26 points).

Game Information:

Cost	Power
------	-------

- | | |
|---|---|
| 9 | <i>Satellite Link (Worldwide Viewing):</i> Clairsentience (Sight Group), MegaScale (1" = 1,000 km, can scale down to 1" = 1 km; +1¼); OAF Immobile (-2), Activation Roll 11- (can only see target area if satellites are available; -1), Requires A System Operations Roll (-½), Limited Vision (can only see what a satellite could see; -½) |
| 1 | <i>Satellite Link (IR Capability):</i> Infrared Perception (Sight Group); OAF Immobile (-2), Linked (-½) |
| 1 | <i>Satellite Link (UV Capability):</i> Ultraviolet Perception (Sight Group); OAF Immobile (-2), Linked (-½) |
| 3 | <i>Satellite Link (Penetrating IR Capability):</i> N-Ray Perception (stopped by anything that would block powerful IR sensors) (Sight Group); OAF Immobile (-2), Linked (-½) |

Total cost: 14 points.



TEMPEST EQUIPMENT

Effect: Detect Computer Radio Emissions 14-
Target/Area Affected: Self
Duration: Constant
Range: Self
Charges: 1 Continuing Fuel Charge
Breakability: 3 DEF

Description: TEMPEST stands for “Transient Electromagnetic Pulse Emanation Standard.” It refers to the amount of electromagnetic radiation given off by various types of computer equipment (monitors, cables, motherboards, and so forth). Using what’s known as van Eck technology, TEMPEST gear monitors and records everything that passes across a computer’s screen by perceiving and “reading” the electromagnetic radiation. This won’t necessarily work over long distances (the normal rules for applying the Range Modifier to PER Rolls applies), and anything that provides the computer with Power Defense automatically blocks TEMPEST reading (as will placing a sheet of metal between the computer and the TEMPEST gear).

Game Information: *Detect Computer Radio Emissions 14- (Radio Group) (10 Active Points); OAF (-1), Blocked By Power Defense (-½), 1 Continuing Fuel Charge (batteries, Easy to obtain; 10 Hours; -0). Total cost: 4 points.*

WOLF’S EARS

Effect: +4 PER for Hearing Group plus Hearing Group Flash Defense (10 points)
Target/Area Affected: Self
Duration: Constant
Range: Self
Charges: 1 Continuing Fuel Charge
Breakability: 2 DEF

Description: This device serves two purposes. First, it enhances the user’s hearing. Second, it screens out all sounds above a certain level, preventing the wearer from being deafened by explosions or gunshots.

Game Information:

Cost	Power
5	<i>Wolf’s Ears (Hearing Enhancement):</i> +4 PER for Hearing Group; OIF (-½), 1 Continuing Fuel Charge (battery, Easy to obtain; 6 Hours; -0)
7	<i>Wolf’s Ears (Hearing Protection):</i> Hearing Group Flash Defense (10 points); OIF (-½), 1 Continuing Fuel Charge (battery, Easy to obtain; 6 Hours; -0)

Total cost: 12 points.

MISCELLANEOUS EQUIPMENT



FAST CARS

Dark Champions characters often use or encounter vehicles in their adventures — everything from sleek sportscars, to powerful combat helicopters and jetfighters, to mighty tanks. For nearly 200 sample vehicles, most of them appropriate to the modern-day action-adventure genre, see *The Ultimate Vehicle* and *The HERO System Vehicle Sourcebook*.

Here are a few more pieces of equipment that don't belong in the categories above, or which are only appropriate for certain types of characters or campaigns. As always, characters should get the GM's approval before introducing any unusual devices into the game.

COSTUMED VIGILANTE GADGETS

Here are a few gadgets that costumed vigilantes might use. They're not particularly "realistic" (or at least, not entirely), but they're perfectly appropriate for many campaigns.

BILLY CLUB

Effect:	HA +3d6, Energy Blast 6d6, Swinging 10", Clinging
Target/Area Affected:	Varies
Duration:	Varies
Range:	Varies
END Cost:	Varies
Breakability:	6 DEF

Description: A popular multi-purpose weapon and tool among martial artists and costumed vigilantes, the billy club looks like an ordinary stick-like club about a foot long and an inch or so in diameter, but it has several other uses and built-in devices. First, in addition to hitting people with it, the character can throw it at his foes; he must get it back (often by devoting a single Combat Skill Level to making it bounce back to him) before he can use the club for any purpose again. Second, the club can project a high-strength line and hook, allowing the user to swing (but if he does so, he can't use the club for anything else that Phase while the line retracts). Third, the club can extend just the hook, allowing the user to hold onto the club and hang from any projection or niche on a wall or slippery surface.

Game Information:

Cost	Powers
15	<i>Billy Club:</i> Multipower, 30-point reserve; all OAF (-1)
1u	1) <i>Club:</i> HA +3d6; OAF (-1), Hand-To-Hand Attack (-½)
1u	2) <i>Hurled Club:</i> Energy Blast 6d6; OAF (-1), Range Based On STR (-¼), 1 Recoverable Charge (-1¼), Lockout (cannot use any slot in Multipower until Charge is recovered; -½)
1u	3) <i>Swingline:</i> Swinging 10"; OAF (-1), Lockout (cannot use any other slot in same Phase in which Swinging is used; -½)
1u	4) <i>Hanging Onto Projections:</i> Clinging

(normal STR); OAF (-1), Requires A STR Roll (-½), Cannot Resist Knockback (-¼), No Movement Allowed (-½)

Total cost: 19 points.

Options:

- 1) **Strong Billy Club:** Increase reserve to 40 points, and HA to +5d6, Energy Blast to 8d6, and Swinging to 20". Total cost: 24 points.
- 2) **Simple Billy Club:** This form of Billy Club lacks all the bells and whistles; it's just intended for use as a weapon. Remove Slots 3 and 4. Total cost: 17 points.

GLIDER CAPE

Effect:	Gliding 12"
Target/Area Affected:	Self
Duration:	Constant
Range:	Self
END Cost:	1
Breakability:	2 DEF

Description: The character's cape is designed with a special aerodynamic shape, and is cleverly reinforced, so he can glide through the air while wearing it.

Game Information: *Gliding 12"* (12 Active Points); OAF (-1), Costs Endurance (-½). Total cost: 5 points.

Options:

- 1) **Faster Glider Cape:** Increase to Gliding 15". 15 Active Points; total cost 6 points.
- 2) **Slower Glider Cape:** Decrease to Gliding 8". 8 Active Points; total cost 3 points.
- 3) **Realistic Glider Cape:** The character's ability to glide depends on his holding his body a certain way; if he moves the wrong way or tries to perform other actions than just gliding, he falls to earth. Add Requires A PS: Use Glider Cape Roll (-¼) and Gestures (throughout; -½). Total cost: 4 points.
- 4) **Parachute Cape:** The character cannot actually glide, but his cape can act as a parachute to keep him from hurting himself in falls. Add Limited Movement (character cannot gain altitude, and must move at least 12" downward for every 1" forward; -½). Total cost: 4 points.
- 5) **Concealable Hangglider:** The character's cape doesn't normally allow him to glide, but it (or his costume) conceals a hangglider-like device that lets him glide once it's activated. Change OAF (-1) to IAF (-½) and add Extra Time (Full Phase to activate; -¼). Total cost: 5 points.

MULTI-BRACER

Effect:	Swinging 12" and various Attack Powers
Target/Area Affected:	Varies
Duration:	Varies
Range:	Varies
Charges/END Cost:	Varies
Breakability:	10 DEF

Description: Much like the Billy Club, the Multi-Bracer is a combination weapon/tool popular with martial artists and costumed vigilantes. The bracer has five sections, each with a specific device built into it: a blaster; a swingline; a knockout gas pellet projector; a tangleweb pellet projector; and a flash pellet projector.

Game Information:**Cost Power**

33	<i>Multi-Bracer:</i> Multipower, 50-point reserve; all OIF (-½)
1u	1) <i>Swingline:</i> Swinging 12"; OIF (-½)
2u	2) <i>Blaster:</i> RKA 2½d6 OIF (-½), 8 Charges (-½)
2u	3) <i>Knockout Gas Pellets:</i> Energy Blast 4d6, NND (defense is Life Support [Self-Contained Breathing or appropriate Immunity]; +1), Explosion (+½); OIF (-½), 8 Charges (-½)
2u	4) <i>Mini-Bolos:</i> Entangle 5d6, 5 DEF; OIF (-½), 8 Charges (-½)
2u	5) <i>Flash Pellets:</i> Sight Group Flash 6d6, Explosion (+½); OIF (-½), 8 Charges (-½)

Total cost: 42 points.

Options:

- 1) **Strong Bracer:** Increase reserve to 60 points, Slot 1 to Swinging 20", Slot 2 to RKA 2½d6 Armor Piercing, Slot 3 to Explosion (-1 DC/3"; +1), Slot 4 to Entangle 6d6, 6 DEF, and Slot 5 to Flash 8d6. Total cost: 53 points.
- 2) **Weak Bracer:** Decrease reserve to 40 points, Slot 1 to Swinging 10", Slot 2 to RKA 1d6, Slot 3 to EB 3d6, Slot 4 to Entangle 4d6, 4 DEF, and Slot 5 to Flash 5d6. Total cost: 35 points.
- 3) **Multi-Pistol:** This form of the weapon is a pistol, not a bracer. Change OIF (-½) to OAF (-1) throughout. Total cost: 34 points.

UTILITY BELT

Effect:	Various
Target/Area Affected:	Varies
Duration:	Varies
Range:	Varies
END Cost:	Varies
Breakability:	6 DEF

Description: A utility belt is a way to carry numerous small devices a character may find useful in crimefighting or combat situations. If a belt is not to the character's taste, other possibilities include a vest, a harness or bandolier with cartridge belt-like pockets, or the like.

The Utility Belt listed below carries an enormous number of gadgets, and creative players can undoubtedly think of many more. A character may buy any or all of these gadgets, as desired. The GM may prefer to have a character pick a limited number of them — say, 15 or 20 at most — to keep things from getting out of hand.



Game Information:

Cost Power

- 20 *Utility Belt*: Multipower, 30-point reserve; OIF (-½)
- 1u 1) *Advanced Lockpick Set*: +2 to Lockpicking; OAF (-1)
- 1u 2) *Billy Club*: HA +3d6, Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½); OAF (-1), Hand-To-Hand Attack (-½)
- 1u 3) *Bomb Defusing Kit*: +2 to Demolitions; OAF (-1), Only To Defuse Bombs (-¼)
- 1u 4) *Boomerang*: Energy Blast 4d6, Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½); OAF (-1)
- 1u 5) *Calculator*: Lightning Calculator; OAF (-1)
- 1u 6) *Crime Scene Kit*: +2 to Criminology; OAF (-1), 8 Charges (-½)
- 1u 7) *Fake Bomb*: Sight and Hearing Group Images 1" radius, -5 to PER Rolls; OAF (-1), 1 Charge (-2), Set Effect (fake bomb; -1)
- 1u 8) *Fear Darts*: Drain PRE 2d6, Range Based On STR (+¼); OAF (-1), Must Target Non-Armored Hit Locations (-¼), 6 Charges (-¾)
- 1u 9) *Flashlight*: Sight Group Images 1" radius, +4 PER Rolls; OAF (-1), Only To Create Light (-1), Limited Range (10"; -¼), 1 Continuing Fuel Charge (refueled by recharging, easy to obtain; 1 Hour; -0)
- 1u 10) *Flash Pellets*: Sight Group Flash 2d6; OAF (-1), 6 Charges (-¾), Range Based On STR (-¼)
- 1u 11) *Freeze Gas*: Minor Transform 3d6 (normal object to frozen stiff object, "heal" by thawing out at normal rate); OAF (-1), 4 Charges (-1), Limited Target (Freeze Gas is for use against the working parts of an alarm, a bomb, and so forth, not against living creatures; -½)
- 1u 12) *Laser Torch*: RKA 1 point, Penetrating (x2; +1); OAF (-1), No Range (-½), 1 Continuing Fuel Charge lasting 5 Minutes (battery, easy to replace; -½)
- 1u 13) *Medkit*: +2 to Paramedics; OAF (-1), 4 Charges (-1)
- 1u 14) *Miniature Climbing Rig*: +2 to Climbing; OAF (-1)
- 1u 15) *Mini-bolos*: Entangle 3d6, 3 DEF; OAF (-1), 3 Charges (-1¼)
- 1u 16) *Mini-camera*: Eidetic Memory; OAF (-1), Visual Images Only (-½)
- 1u 17) *Mini-Console*: HRRP (Radio Group); OAF (-1)
- 1u 18) *Mini-radios*: Mind Link, up to 4 minds at once; OAF (-1), Affected As Hearing And Radio Groups, Not Mental Group (-¼), Only Works With Others Who Have Same Mind Link (-1)
- 1u 19) *Mini-recorder*: Eidetic Memory; OAF (-1), Sound Only (-½)
- 1u 20) *Nightsight Monocular*: Infrared Perception (Sight Group) and +6 versus Range Modifier for Sight Group; OAF (-1)
- 1u 21) *Painkillers*: Physical and Energy Damage Reduction, Resistant, 25%; OAF (-1), 2 Continuing Charges lasting 1 Hour each (-0)
- 1u 22) *Paint Tag Bomb*: Cosmetic Transform 4d6 (normal person to person painted bright red, heal by washing with vinegar), Partial Transform (+½); OAF (-1), 4 Charges (-1), Range Based On STR (-¼)
- 1u 23) *Parabolic Mini-Mike*: +6 versus Range Modifier for Hearing Group; OAF (-1)
- 1u 24) *Rebreather*: Life Support (Expanded Breathing: Breathe Underwater); OAF (-1), 1 Continuing Fuel Charge (refueled through recharging system, easy to obtain; 1 Hour; -0)
- 1u 25) *Security Systems Analyzer*: +2 to Security Systems; OAF (-1)
- 1u 26) *Sleep Gas Pellets*: Energy Blast 3d6, NND (defense is Life Support [Self-Contained Breathing or appropriate Immunity]; +1); OAF (-1), 6 Charges (-¾), Range Based On STR (-¼)
- 1u 27) *Smoke Pellets*: Darkness to Sight Group 3" radius; OAF (-1), 8 Continuing Charges lasting 1 Turn each (removed by high winds or rain; -0), Range Based On STR (-¼)
- 1u 28) *Swingline*: Swinging 10", Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½); OAF (-1)
- 1u 29) *Thermite Pellets I*: RKA 1d6, Armor Piercing (+½), Explosion (+½); OAF (-1), 6 Charges (-¾), Range Based On STR (-¼)
- 1u 30) *Thermite Pellets II*: RKA 1d6, Continuous (+1); OAF (-1), 6 Continuing Charges lasting 1 Turn each (-¼), Range Based On STR (-¼)
- 1u 31) *Throwing Blades*: HKA ½d6 (up to 1d6+1 w/ STR), Armor Piercing (+½), Auto-fire (3 shots; +¼), Range Based On STR (+¼); OAF (-1), 6 Recoverable Charges (-¼)
- 1u 32) *Vertigo Darts*: Drain DEX 2d6, Range Based On STR (+¼); OAF (-1), Must Target Non-Armored Hit Locations (-¼), 6 Charges (-¾)
- 1u 33) *Weakness Darts*: Drain STR 2d6, Range Based On STR (+¼); OAF (-1), Must Target Non-Armored Hit Locations (-¼), 6 Charges (-¾)

Total cost: 53 points (assuming character buys all slots)

SECURITY DEVICES

Here are a few examples of devices used to secure areas. Characters who want to infiltrate those areas covertly have to use Security Systems to bypass or defeat them.

MOTION DETECTOR

Effect:	Detect Moving Persons/Objects 15-
Target/Area Affected:	Self (8" protected area)
Duration:	Persistent
Range:	Self (8" protected area)
END Cost:	0
Breakability:	8 DEF

Description: Motion detectors use ultrasonic sound (or sometimes microwaves or other forms of energy) to detect whether anything is moving in their field of "vision" (which extends for about 50 feet in front of them). When someone moves into the protected area, he disturbs the "field," and the device registers this and activates the alarm. They're best used in high-security areas with hard surfaces where no movement is expected (*i.e.*, where guards don't patrol, there are no pets or cuckoo clocks, and so on). Rooms with soft or absorbent surfaces (such as thick carpet or heavy drapes) absorb more sound, so ultrasonic motion detectors don't work well in them (reduce the device's PER Roll by -2 or more).

Ultrasonic versions of this alarm can only cover a single enclosed area (since the sound waves bounce off walls and other solid surfaces). However, a single microwave-based motion sensor may cover multiple rooms (because microwaves reflect off metal, but not off glass, wallboard, wood, and the like). Because microwave-based motion detectors perceive through solid objects, they can be hidden behind a piece of furniture, a cover, or the like. On the other hand, this means a microwave-based motion detector might be triggered by innocuous movement outside the building it's installed in (such as a passing bird or car), and fluorescent lights and radio transmissions can sometimes cause false alarms.

Some poor-quality motion detectors won't register objects moving slowly. In game terms, this usually means moving at no greater speed than 1" per Turn. This requires a Stealth roll (in addition, the GM may require characters to make EGO Rolls to force themselves to move that slowly). If the character succeeds with his Stealth roll exactly, the sensor suffers a -1 penalty to its PER Roll; each point by which the Stealth roll is made beyond that increases the penalty by another -1. Better models can't be fooled by slow movement, and will even detect the presence of immobile objects that aren't normally in the area they cover.

Defeating motion sensors is difficult, at best. The easiest thing to do is avoid them, but if that's not possible, sometimes characters can overload or jam them with devices designed to broadcast the same frequency of sound (in game terms, such a device is a Change Environment that reduces the motion detector's PER Roll). Another possibility would be to wear garments made of sound-absorbent material (even thick cloth or fur might do); this, too, would be defined as a Change Environment that diminished the device's PER Roll. If characters can get to the device's receiver without triggering it, covering up the receiver (say, with tape) may render it "blind" (or at least significantly reduce its PER Roll), though newer models have "anti-masking" features that trigger an alarm if any object is placed too close to them.

Game Information:

Cost Power

- | | |
|----|---|
| 4 | <i>Motion Detector:</i> Detect Moving Persons/Objects 15- (Radio Group) (11 Active Points); OIF Immobile (-1½), Limited Range (8"; -¼) |
| 13 | <i>Secured System:</i> Change Environment 1" radius, -6 on Security Systems rolls, Reduced Endurance (0 END; -½), Persistent (-½) (40 Active Points); OIF Immobile (-1½), Self Only (only affects attempts to find or neutralize the system itself; -½) |

Total cost: 17 points.

Options:

- 1) High-Quality System:** Increase to Detect Moving Persons/Objects 17-. 13 Active Points (total cost 5 points); total cost of device 18 points.
- 2) Poor-Quality System:** Decrease to Detect Moving Persons/Objects 13-. 9 Active Points (total cost 3 points); total cost of device 16 points.
- 3) Disguised System:** Change OIF Immobile (-1½) to IIF Immobile (-1¼). Total cost:
 - Standard: 17 points.
 - High-Quality: 18 points.
 - Poor-Quality: 17 points.
- 4) More Secure Device:** This type of motion detector is harder to bypass or defeat. Change to -8 on Security Systems rolls. 52 Active Points (total cost 17 points); total cost of device 21 points.
- 5) Less Secure Device:** This type of motion detector is easier to bypass or defeat. Change to -3 on Security Systems rolls. 22 Active Points (total cost 7 points); total cost of device 11 points.

PRESSURE PLATES, MATS, AND SWITCHES

Effect:	Detect Sufficient Weight/ Pressure 16-
Target/Area Affected:	Self
Duration:	Persistent
Range:	Self
END Cost:	0
Breakability:	4 DEF

Description: Placed under carpets, entry mats, and the like, pressure plates (also known as switch mats) trigger an alarm if any weight is placed on them. (If necessary, they can be programmed to ignore small weights, like the weight of a guard dog.) Advanced ones are too sensitive to fool, but poorer-quality ones can be defeated by characters who distribute their weight — for example, by placing a sheet of plywood or thick plastic over the plate before stepping on it. Other ways to defeat a pressure plate are to short it out, to cut the power to it (or its feed to the alarm system), or to avoid stepping on it (by climbing along the walls or ceiling, for example).

Pressure plates can also be used in the opposite way: they're placed underneath an object (such as an antique in a display case), and if the object is removed (*i.e.*, the pressure is lifted), they trigger an alarm. In this case they're often known as *pressure switches*. Characters can defeat a pressure switch in a variety of ways, including in some cases a simultaneous replacement of the removed object with one of equal weight (this requires a Sleight Of Hand roll at the same penalty for Security Systems rolls). More sensitive models — pressure transducers — register any change of pressure (increased or decreased) and are much harder to defeat (increase the penalty for defeating them by -2).

Game Information:

Cost	Power
4	<i>Pressure Plate:</i> Detect Sufficient Weight/ Pressure 16- (Touch Group) (10 Active Points); OIF Immobile (-1½)
7	<i>Secured System:</i> Change Environment 1" radius, -3 on Security Systems rolls, Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½), Persistent (+½) (22 Active Points); OIF Immobile (-1½), Self Only (only affects attempts to find or neu- tralize the system itself; -½)

Total cost: 11 points.

Options:

1) **High-Quality System:** Increase to Detect Sufficient Weight/Pressure 18-. 12 Active Points (total cost 5 points); total cost of device 12 points.

2) **Poor-Quality System:** Decrease to Detect Sufficient Weight/Pressure 14-. 8 Active Points (total cost 3 points); total cost of device 10 points.

3) **Disguised System:** Change OIF Immobile (-1½) to IIF Immobile (-1¼). Total cost:

Standard: 12 points.

High-Quality: 13 points.

Poor-Quality: 11 points.

4) **More Secure Device:** This type of pressure plate is harder to bypass or defeat. Change to -4 on Security Systems rolls. 28 Active Points (total cost 9 points); total cost of device 13 points.

5) **Less Secure Device:** This type of pressure plate is easier to bypass or defeat. Change to -2 on Security Systems rolls. 16 Active Points (total cost 5 points); total cost of device 9 points.

SPY GADGETS

Spies, both real and cinematic, are known for the many clever devices they use to perform their clandestine tasks. Here are a few examples:

Real-World Spy Gadgets

The following gadgets are all examples of espionage gadgets actually built and used.

.22 BALLPOINT PEN GUN

Effect:	RKA 1d6-1
Target/Area Affected:	One character
Duration:	Instant
Range:	60"
Charges:	1 Charge
Breakability:	2 DEF

Description: This single-shot gun looks like an ordinary fountain pen. By pulling back and releasing the "cap," the user fires it... though it's not very accurate, so he'd better be close to his target.

Game Information: *RKA 1d6-1 (12 Active Points); IAF (-½), Beam (-¼), Inaccurate (character is half OCV, and the Range Modifier accrues in 3" increments; -¼), Real Weapon (-¼), 1 Charge (-2). Total cost: 3 points.*

CONCEALED LOCKPICKS

Effect:	Concealment 16-, Only To Hide Lockpick Set
Target/Area Affected:	Self
Duration:	Constant
Range:	Self
END Cost:	0
Breakability:	1 DEF

Description: A character may need to carry a set of lockpicks into a location without anyone detecting them. This set is specially concealed inside a pen or like object. Since characters don't normally pay Character Points for ordinary tools, it's bought as a highly-Limited form of Concealment; for tools characters pay points for (such as lockpicks good enough to provide a Skill Roll bonus), you can simply buy them as IAFs instead of OAFs.

Game Information: *Concealment 16- (17 Active Points); IAF (-½), Only To Hide Lockpick Set (-2). Total cost: 5 points.*

TIE CAMERA

Effect: Eidetic Memory, Visual Images Only
 Target/Area Affected: Self
 Duration: Constant
 Range: Self
 Charges: 1 Continuing Fuel Charge
 Breakability: 1 DEF

Description: This miniature camera takes pictures through a special tie-tack that keeps the agent's necktie in place. It's triggered by an activator concealed in the agent's pants pocket, and has enough film for 50 shots.

Game Information: *Eidetic Memory* (5 Active Points); *IAF* (-½), *Visual Images Only* (-1), 1 *Continuing Fuel Charge* (film, easily replaced, 50 Seconds; -¾). Total cost: 1 point.

Cinematic Spy Gadgets

And here are a few spy gadgets that you'll only find in spy movies, comic books, and the like.

AUTOMOBILE ACCESSOR

Effect: Security Systems and Electronics 20-, Only Work On Automobiles
 Target/Area Affected: Self
 Duration: Constant
 Range: Self
 END Cost: 0
 Breakability: 5 DEF

Description: This device uses radio and ultrasonic broadcasts to (a) disarm any automobile security devices, and (b) start any automobile without the key. It's small enough to carry concealed in a pocket, but is obviously something unusual.

Game Information:

Cost Power

8 *Automobile Accessor (Defeat Security)*: Security Systems 20- (25 Active Points); OAF (-1), Only Works On Automobile Security Devices (-1)

8 *Automobile Accessor (Start Automobiles)*: Electronics 20- (25 Active Points); OAF (-1), Only To "Hotwire" Motor Automobiles (-1)

Total cost: 16 points.

LASER WATCH

Effect: RKA 1 point, Penetrating plus other abilities
 Target/Area Affected: One character/Self
 Duration: Instant/Constant
 Range: No Range/Self
 Charges: 16 Charges/0 END
 Breakability: 2 DEF

Description: In addition to being a top-notch chronometer, this watch functions as a compass, GPS tracking unit, and miniature laser torch.



Game Information:

Cost Power

- 1 *Laser Watch (Chronometer)*: Absolute Time Sense (3 Active Points); OAF (-1)
- 2 *Laser Watch (Concealed Compass)*: Bump Of Direction (3 Active Points); IAF (-½)
- 5 *Laser Watch (GPS Tracker)*: Detect Exact Position On Earth 14- (Radio Group) (8 Active Points); IAF (-½)
- 3 *Laser Watch (Laser Torch)*: RKA 1 point, Penetrating (+½) (7 Active Points); IAF (-½), No Range (-½), 16 Charges (-0)

Total cost: 11 points.

X-RAY CAMERA

Effect: N-Ray Perception and Eidetic Memory

Target/Area Affected: Self

Duration: Constant

Range: Self

Charges: 1 Continuing Fuel Charge

Breakability: 2 DEF

Description: This seemingly ordinary camera can be tuned to emit x-rays that let the character see through solid objects (and, if desired, take pictures of what he sees).

Game Information:

Cost Power

- 5 *X-Ray Camera (X-Ray Viewing)*: N-Ray Perception (Sight Group) (blocked by lead or gold) (10 Active Points); IAF (-½), Concentration (½ DCV throughout use; -½), 1 Continuing Fuel Charge (battery, easily replaced, 1 Hour; -0)
- 1 *X-Ray Camera (Photography)*: Eidetic Memory (5 Active Points); OAF (-1), Visual Images Only (-1), 1 Continuing Fuel Charge (film, easily replaced, 50 Seconds; -¾)

Total cost: 6 points.

UNDERWATER EQUIPMENT

Here's some gear characters need for underwater missions.

SCUBA EQUIPMENT

Effect: Life Support (Self-Contained Breathing)

Target/Area Affected: Self

Duration: Constant

Range: Self

Charges: 1 Continuing Fuel Charge

Breakability: 2 DEF

Description: SCUBA (self-contained underwater breathing apparatus, or simply SCBA for models designed for out-of-water use) equipment allows a swimmer to remain underwater for long periods of time by breathing oxygen supplied by tanks worn on the back. When the user exhales, he creates a trail of bubbles.

Game Information: *Life Support (Self-Contained Breathing)* (10 Active Points); OAF (-1), 1 Continuing Fuel Charge (oxygen tanks, Easy to obtain; 1 Hour; -0). Total cost: 5 points.

Options:

1) **Rebreather**: A rebreather is an improved form of SCUBA technology, usable by characters who have TF: SCUBA. Unlike SCUBA gear, it does not create a trail of bubbles to give away the swimmer's position. Instead of releasing the swimmer's exhaled air, a rebreather recirculates, purifies, and supplements it with fresh oxygen, thus allowing the user to breathe it again. This has the additional effect of extending the time the user can remain underwater, but also tends to limit him to dives of no more than about 30 feet (5", or up to 7" for no more than about five minutes). Change to: Life Support (Self-Contained Breathing), Invisible Power Effects (leaves no bubble trail; +¼) (12 Active Points); OAF (-1), 1 Continuing Fuel Charge (oxygen tanks, Easy to obtain; 2 Hours; -0). Total cost: 6 points.

chapter seven:



THE ENEMY

**DARK CHAMPIONS
ADVERSARIES**

ORGANIZED CRIME



THE FIVE FAMILIES

About half of the Mafia's membership is concentrated in the northeastern portions of the United States. The so-called "Five Families" of New York City — Bonanno, Colombo, Gambino, Genovese, and Lucchese — dominate the region. (These names may change slightly, depending on the point in time you look at and the source consulted.) The Mafia tends to be more organized, entrenched, and powerful in the Northeast; families in the West are not as formally organized or as strong. According to many sources, the authority of the New York families extends up and down the eastern seaboard and as far west as Chicago. The Chicago Mafia families control Chicago, St. Louis, Kansas City, and most of the rest of the Midwest and West.

An action hero needs enemies to fight — without them, he's just a would-be hero waiting for an emergency he can respond to. The type and nature of the enemies a *Dark Champions* character has depends on the subgenre and campaign he belongs to, of course, but certain types of adversaries appear in many subgenres or with greater than normal frequency. This chapter reviews those enemies *briefly*; for more information, see other *Dark Champions* publications from Hero Games, the books listed in the Bibliography, and other reference sources.

Roughly speaking, "organized crime" refers to groups of criminals, working together as part of a larger whole, and subject to a more-or-less formal hierarchy or "chain of command." By joining together, the members of an organized crime group become more powerful than they would be individually, can protect themselves against competitors better, and can use their greater wealth and influence to accomplish things few (if any) members could individually. Many organized crime groups become extremely powerful, effectively displacing the government in many neighborhoods (or even entire cities).

THE MAFIA

The most well-known form of organized crime in America today is the Mafia, also known as *La Cosa Nostra* ("this thing of ours," abbreviated LCN). When most Americans refer to "organized crime," what they really mean is "the Mafia."

The precise origins of the Mafia are shrouded in mystery. The American Mafia can probably trace its beginnings to the Sicilian Mafia, which was "brought over" to this country by Italian immigrants. Initially the Mafia was a relatively minor organized crime group preying on Italian communities, but in the 1920s and '30s Prohibition made it much wealthier and more powerful, and encouraged the formation of larger, more formally-organized Mafia "families."

Even after Prohibition, the Mafia continued to thrive. Despite such setbacks as the Kefauver committee hearings of the early 1950s, the discovery of the Apalachin conference in 1957, and Attorney General Robert Kennedy's war on organized crime in the 1960s, the Mafia remained powerful and rich. However, beginning in the 1980s, the FBI and Department of Justice began to score major successes against the Mafia using new federal criminal laws. As of the early twenty-first century, the Mafia is not nearly as powerful as it once was... but it's still a force to be reckoned with.

ORGANIZATION AND STRUCTURE

The basic unit of the Mafia is the *borgata*, or "family." A family is usually not actually a true family at all, though the leadership and/or some of the members may be related by blood or marriage. Most scholars believe there are approximately 24 families in the United States; estimates of the total core membership range from about 1,700 to as high as 5,000 or so (making the Mafia small compared to many other organized crime groups). However, many thousands of other criminals who aren't members of the Mafia associate and work with it.

Capo (Boss)

Most Mafia families have a relatively simple structure. A *capo*, or "boss" (sometimes known as a "godfather" or a "don") rules the family, though he remains aloof from the everyday activities of his underlings. He maintains order within the family and works to maximize profits. His authority is absolute (unless the Commission [see below] overrules him), and anyone who disobeys him, or who fails to pay him his "cut" (portion of all money earned by any family member), suffers severe punishment. Bosses sometimes fight for the high-legendary position of "*capo di tutti capi*" ("boss of all the bosses") for the whole country, but supposedly no one has claimed the title since Salvatore Maranzano in 1931 (and he was killed five months later).

Sottocapo (Underboss) And Consiglieri

The boss's second in command is the *sottocapo*, or "underboss," who advises and assists him, gathers information for him, gives orders on his behalf, and fills in for him when necessary. In some cases, the underboss is the boss's protégé — the man being groomed to take over when the boss dies or retires (though other family members may make their own bids for power). Some families may have two or three underbosses.

Advising the boss, but outside the regular chain of command, is the *consiglieri*, or "counselor," who gives the boss advice on family matters. He may be an older, "retired" family member, or it may be someone such as the family's chief attorney. A family only has one "official" *consiglieri*, though a boss can always ask other members for advice too.

Lower Ranks

Below the underboss, *caporegimas* ("captains" or "lieutenants") supervise the day-to-day criminal operations and moneymaking activities of the family and serve as middlemen between the family's leaders and rank-and-file members. Their number varies from family to family, depending on family size and activities. A *caporegima* attains his rank by being an

“earner” — someone who makes a lot of money for the family. Captains often own businesses or other ventures and get income from them in addition to the money earned by their soldiers.

Each *caporegima* commands a “crew” of *soldatos* (“soldiers,” also called “wise guys,” “button men,” or “made men”) — the lowest-ranking official members of the family. A soldier usually supervises a specific criminal operation (such as the numbers bank on Canal Street), either for a share of the earnings or on a “pay a cut for the right to own and operate” basis. Soldiers often form partnerships with other soldiers and/or with higher-ups to perform crimes.

Below the soldiers are *associates* — workers who do the tasks needed to keep the Mafia in business, such as running numbers, selling drugs, or working in legitimate businesses owned by family members. Unlike true members, they don’t have to be Italian, but they don’t receive the family’s protection. The Mafia also has *protectors*: corrupt lawyers, policemen, accountants, public officials, and others who use their skills, learning, power, or influence on the Mafia’s behalf, usually because they’re on the take.

The Commission

Mafia families sometimes work together — and at other times are bitter enemies as they compete for power, money, and “turf.” Mafia leaders long ago recognized the need for traditions and procedures to resolve disputes peacefully. One of these is *arguimendo*, or “arbitration,” when two families meet to settle their differences. A more important inter-family institution is the Commission.

Founded in 1931 by Charles “Lucky” Luciano, the Commission is a body intended to regulate disputes over territory, rules, or policies which affect all of the families, and to help coordinate inter-family enterprises and deals. Traditionally, it consists of the bosses of the Five Families of New York City, plus the bosses of some of the more important families from around the country (such as the Buffalo, Detroit, Chicago, and Philadelphia families). The Commission mainly concerns itself only with things that affect the Mafia overall (such as inter-family wars), preferring to, at most, offer “advice” on local matters and intra-family disputes.

MAFIA ACTIVITIES

The Mafia participates in just about every form of criminal activity: hijacking and theft; drug smuggling (despite the myth that the Mafia doesn’t get involved with narcotics dealing); intimidation and assassination; loansharking (at rates of up to 150% per week); prostitution; fraud; extortion; and much, much more. Two activities it’s closely associated with are gambling and labor racketeering.

Gambling

According to some scholars, illegal gambling is the Mafia’s biggest money-making enterprise. Estimates of the annual intake nationwide range from \$7-50 billion.

Mafia gambling interests take several forms. First, the authorities believe the LCN has influence over, or even control of, legitimate gambling in places like Las Vegas and Atlantic City. Second, in places that lack legal casinos, the Mafia runs (or takes a cut of) illegal “underground” casinos and other gambling events. Third, the Mafia participates in *bookmaking*, or illegal sports betting. Bookies associated with (or beholden to) the Mafia take bets by phone, using the Las Vegas “line” (the points spread, legally calculated in Las Vegas) and other methods to try to ensure that they make the maximum “vigorish” (profit).

Lastly, the Mafia is involved in *numbers* running, also called “policy” (though it’s not necessarily the only group that runs numbers in a city). This popular form of gambling allows players to place bets as small as a dime on a number from 000-999. The daily number comes from some publicly-verifiable source, such as the last three digits of the number of stocks that advance, decline, or are traded on the New York Stock Exchange. Winners earn a payoff that varies from 6-to-1 to 600-to-1, depending on various factors and type of bets. An elaborate system of runners (people who take bets and distribute winnings, such as bartenders or newsstand operators), collectors, and banks (the financier who puts up the money to run the operation) keeps the whole system operating smoothly.

Labor Racketeering

The Mafia has a long history of involvement with organized labor. Infiltration and control of labor unions allows the Mafia to establish a sort of “monopoly” in a particular industry by controlling its labor supply (thus providing the Mafia with opportunities to extort money from that industry). The Mafia can also force non-union businesses to pay “bribes” to keep from being unionized. Control of unions allows the LCN to skim money from union funds, and control of union workers facilitates other mob activities (such as hijacking, gambling, and loansharking). The trucking, longshoreman’s, and hotel and restaurant workers’ unions are particularly thought to be Mafia-dominated; so are the construction and waste disposal industries in some places. *Dark Champions* characters who own businesses might find themselves confronting the Mafia as part of their “day jobs” because of this activity.

BECOMING A MADE MAN

To become a “made man” — a true member of the Mafia, and not just an associate or hanger-on — a criminal must be a male of Italian ancestry. He must have a long career of crime behind him, primarily service to the family as an associate. Family members ask the potential member to help them with some crimes, perhaps including a murder to prove the candidate’s ruthlessness and loyalty (sometimes known as “making your bones”). The next step is to circulate the candidate’s name around the family, and sometimes around other families or corrupt law enforcement officers, to see what people know or think about him. And of course, to be made, a potential member needs a “sponsor.” If the new member turns out “sour” (no good, worthless, or a traitor), the sponsor may also pay the penalty, so sponsorship is a serious relationship.

If the prospective member performs flawlessly on his “tests” and the family learns nothing bad about him, they make him a member. A small “initiation ceremony” may take place. The new member vows to keep the family as the foremost thing in his life, and swears to die rather than reveal its secrets. When speaking among themselves, other family members now refer to their new brother as “a friend of ours” (rather than “a friend of mine”). The number of made men in the United States is estimated at between 1,700 and 5,000.

THE MAFIA CODE OF HONOR

In the movies, at least, Mafiosi follow a stringent code of conduct. In real life, respect for the old traditions has faded significantly since the early twentieth century, but some codes of behavior may still apply (at least in some places). At the GM's option, Mafiosi characters may represent the following behavior with a Psychological Limitation, *Mafia Code Of Honor*.

The Mafia code has two components. The first is *omerta*, translated as “silence” or “manliness.” *Omerta* means members remain silent when questioned by the police, and do not go to the police or become informers. A person who squeals or informs violates *omerta*, and must be punished (often with death). However, *omerta* does not always apply to a family's higher-ups, who may inform the police about another family or “feed” the police lower-level members of their own organization if necessary.

The second part of the Mafia code is *rispetto*, or “respect.” Respect means lower-echelon Mafiosi remain totally loyal to their commanders and their boss. They show respect through obedience, speaking only when spoken to, and by turning over a portion of their profits to their boss. Anyone who fails to pay the proper respect risks punishment, up to and including death. Some bosses care more about the little rituals of respect, such as having the door held open for them by their underlings, than others; the GM should decide what each *capo* in his campaign demands of his men.

OTHER ITALIAN ORGANIZED CRIME

While the Mafia is the best-known form of Italian organized crime (particularly in the United States), it's not the only type.

The Sicilian Mafia, from which the American Mafia sprang, remains alive and active to this day, despite numerous efforts by the Italian government to stamp it out. In recent decades Sicilian Mafiosi have become widely involved in smuggling drugs and weapons, money laundering, and related crimes, often forming alliances with Russian or Colombian mobsters (not to mention their American cousins). It's thought to have about 180 families with approximately 5,000 members.

The *Camorra*, an organization based in Naples, supposedly arose during Spanish occupation of that area in the early 1800s. It's thought to be well-organized and filled with highly disciplined men. Historically it divided Naples (and other nearby regions) into twelve sections, each with its own *capo in testa* (section chief). *Capo'ntrini* (gang leaders) control the *picciutto*, or lowest-ranking members, and report to their *capo in testa*. Today it has branched out to cover more territory in Europe, and the extent to which the traditional forms of organization still hold true remains unclear. The *Camorra* participates in many different criminal activities, ranging from burglary and street theft to counterfeiting and wide-scale drug smuggling; it also launders money for other Italian organized crime groups, and has formed ties to Russian syndicates. *Camorra* members tend to dress and act more flamboyantly than Sicilian Mafiosi.

The *Ndrangheta*, or Calabrian mafia, is a violent organized crime group based in the south of Italy. It's thought to be similar to the Sicilian Mafia in most respects, though it consists of families closely related by blood, marriage, or godparenthood. It's thought to have approximately 140 clans and around 5,000 total members.

A fourth group, the *Sacra Corona Unita* (“United Sacred Crown”) formed in the 1970s or early 1980s in Puglia. Using money from kidnapping and extortion, it got involved in the international drug trade and quickly became a power in the underworld. It has a pyramidal structure similar to that of the Mafia; scholars believe it consists of about 20 families with approximately 1,000-1,400 members.

CHINESE ORGANIZED CRIME

Although few Americans realize it, the Chinese Triads are one of the largest, most powerful, and most ruthless organized crime groups in the world. Some experts estimate that in Hong Kong, there are at least fifty Triads, with as many as 300,000 members. Their American equivalent, the tongs, add thousands more members to the overall army of Chinese organized crime.

The modern-day Triads formed in the late 1600s not as criminal organizations, but as secret political organizations devoted to the overthrow of the ruling Manchu dynasty. They took their name from a symbol for three important concepts in Chinese thought — Heaven, Earth, and Man. Later they opposed the influence of Western powers in China. But gradually, for various reasons, the Triads verged into criminal activities, eventually abandoning any true political aspirations for illegal power and profit.

The Tongs

The Manchu crackdown in the mid-1800s sent thousands of Triad members fleeing not only to Hong Kong, but to the United States as well. Rather than establish the Triads here, they set up tongs. “*Tong*” is Chinese for “town hall,” “assembly hall,” or “clan association.” Like the Triads in China, the tongs



often served as sort of a “benevolent association,” helping the Chinese populace get by in a country of white men. In many ways, the tongs acted as a government, police force, and welfare agency; they did many good things for the Chinese community. But the tongs also controlled crime in Chinatown, especially the vice and opium trades. These enterprises attracted whites as well as Chinese, giving the Chinatown reputations as little more than enormous vice dens. This control of crime was highly profitable for the tongs. Today, a handful of tongs control most of the Chinese crime in the United States. Every major Chinese criminal is a member of a tong, even though many tong members are not criminals at all. Many tongs have strong ties to Triads in China, creating a worldwide network of Chinese organized crime.

There are no accurate numbers available for tong membership in the United States, but it can be assumed to be substantial. Chinese organized crime is one of the most difficult forms of organized crime to infiltrate and gain information on, for several reasons. Informants in the Chinese community — *hon chews*, “bananas,” so called because they are “yellow on the outside, white on the inside” — are rare. Law enforcement officers who can speak Chinese and work their way into the world of the tongs are few and far between, even in cities with large Chinese populations. Last but not least, Chinese organized crime groups tend to be very cohesive and loyal.

ORGANIZATION AND STRUCTURE

Although similar in most ways, Triads and tongs tend to use slightly different forms of organization.

Triad Structure

Triads generally have a hierarchical structure, with one supreme leader overseeing the activities of lieutenants and underlings. Each type of member has a special number and/or name; all of these numbers begin with “4,” and they are usually divisible by three, to satisfy ancient Chinese superstitions. The leader is a 489, and is sometimes known as a “Hill Chief” or a “Dragon Head.” Next, there are second-rank leaders, underbosses and lieutenants, each of whom is assigned a specific function. For example, there is the 432 (messenger or liaison), and the 438 (recruiter or incense master). Below the second rank is the 426, or “Red Pole,” who serves as both enforcer and organizer. Red Poles are brutal men who maintain Triad discipline and secrecy, often by violent or lethal means. Close in rank to the enforcer is the 415, an expert on such matters as finance, money laundering, and administration of the Triad. Lastly, there are 49s — the ordinary, “street-level” members.

Tong Structure

Some tongs organize themselves similarly to a Triad, but others do things differently, favoring a structure that’s more like a Mafia family (and some are even more loosely “organized” than that). The leader of this type of tong is known as a chairman or a “Dragon Head.” His “underboss” is usually called a vice-chairman. The third position on the chain of command is occupied by the two types

of tong secretaries. One is the “English secretary,” who speaks English well, helps run tong businesses, and fulfills duties similar to those of a *consigliere* in the LCN. The other is the “street secretary,” a sort of lieutenant or *caporegima*. A street secretary controls a group of tong men. Below him are “first grade” tong members, and below them are the “look-sees,” or soldiers of the organization.

Additionally, most Chinese tongs have an affiliated street gang which helps them run their criminal enterprises and does the tong’s “dirty work.” These aren’t necessarily youth gangs — though most members are young men, some (particularly the leaders) are often older. As long as the gangs fulfill their proper roles for the tong — running criminal operations and enforcing orders — they can have their own “businesses” (such as gambling, black marketeering, and robbery). This may lead to intense rivalries between some of the gangs; in some cases, enemy gangs have “shoot on sight” policies.

Some evidence suggests the tongs have a national “ruling council,” similar to the Commission of the Mafia. Law enforcement experts know little about it, but hypothesize that it functions similarly to the Commission.

Despite the presence of criminals in tongs, many tong members are *not* criminals. They’re simply ordinary Chinese people who belong to a seemingly benevolent social organization devoted to improving the lot of Chinese people in America.

CHINESE ORGANIZED CRIME ACTIVITIES

Compared to some organized crime groups, tong and Triad activities may seem limited. First and foremost they manufacture, smuggle, and sell heroin. The Triads and tongs control almost all of the heroin produced in the so-called “Golden Triangle” region of Asia, an area roughly composed of Thailand, Burma, and Laos. They process the raw heroin there in makeshift labs, then transship it through Hong Kong and on to America and Europe. Asian heroin, a highly-refined form known as “China White,” derives its name from its sellers.

Second, Chinese criminals smuggle humans. Chinese people eager to escape Communist China and make a better life for themselves in America or Europe pay tens of thousands of dollars to be snuck out of China by “snakeheads” (professional smugglers). They travel under deplorable conditions, crammed together in the holds of ships and the like — and many, unable to afford the fee, have to indenture themselves to their smugglers (typically as prostitutes or laborers) once they make it to their new home.

Third, tongs and Triads run illegal gambling operations. The Chinese people have a great love of gambling. Some Chinese start the day out with a game of chance the same way an American might consult his horoscope. Favored games among the Chinese include *mah-jongg*, *fan-tan* (a card game), and *paigow* (a dominoes game).

Fourth, Chinese criminals are adept at money laundering. They use their connections in Hong Kong’s financial sectors to make themselves appear to be legitimate businessmen.

HANGING THE BLUE LANTERN

Joining a tong is no easy matter. A prospective member must be sponsored by an existing member. Then, the prospective member’s name is posted in the tong headquarters. If no member objects within three weeks, the new member is inducted. (Triads similarly “vet” potential members.)

Both Triads and tongs have elaborate initiation ceremonies. The Triad ritual, known as “hanging the blue lantern,” derives from rituals developed centuries ago and contains elements of Buddhism, Taoism, and Confucianism. However, the modern ritual is much shorter, to avoid detection by the police — it used to last three days, but today takes no more than one day, and may only take an hour or so.

The older ritual involved elaborate costumes, altars, swords, flags, and other sumptuous trappings; the modern ritual has been boiled down to just a few of the older elements. First, initiates swear 36 blood oaths of loyalty, brotherhood, and secrecy. Usually the oaths invoke some horrible fate if the speaker harms the Triad (for example, “May I be struck by lightning a thousand times if I betray the Triad”). Then a rooster is beheaded, to signify the fate of those who betray the Triad. Next, initiates prick their fingers with a needle and mix their blood into a bowl of water or wine; members may also add their blood to the mixture. Initiates then drink

Continued on next page

from the bowl, signifying blood brotherhood.

The tong ritual derives from that of the Triads. Generally, initiates kneel before an altar and, while holding two crossed swords, take the thirty-six oaths of loyalty. Sometimes blood-drinking is involved. Again, because of pressure from modern law-enforcement agencies, the tong ritual is much shorter than it was in the past.

While these are the major activities of Chinese organized crime, they're not the only ones. Like the Mafia or yakuza, Chinese criminals are willing to use violence, intimidation, and murder to get what they want, drive away their enemies, or make money. Tongs mostly confine these (and other) criminals activities to Chinese communities.

HISPANIC ORGANIZED CRIME

While Hispanic evildoers have traditionally lagged behind Italian and Chinese criminals when it comes to organizing, their activities in recent years have more than made up for their late start. Three main groups exist: Colombian cartels; Mexican cartels; and the so-called Mexican Mafia.

COLOMBIAN CARTELS

The infamous Colombian drug cartels arose to prominence beginning in the 1970s as cocaine use in America grew. By the mid-1980s, they effectively controlled large areas of Colombia and neighboring nations — the only place in the world where coca plants (the source of cocaine) grow — and continue to do so to this day. At most times there have been approximately 20 Colombian cartels, of which five or so have dominated the cocaine trade. As of 2004, the most prominent of these is the Norte del Valle cartel, which displaced the infamous Medellín and Cali cartels in the 1990s. Some estimates claim Norte del Valle controls approximately 60% of the cocaine distributed in the United States, though recent infighting among cartel leaders may weaken the group. FARC (page 310) is also involved in the cocaine trade.

Organization And Structure

A Colombian cartel is built around a “family” — an actual extended family based on blood, marriage, and godparenthood which forms the its core. A single member, usually the eldest or most powerful man, despotically rules the family. Allied with the family are a number of semi-independent Colombian drug dealers. This allows the cartel to coordinate its entire cocaine manufacturing and distribution effort, resulting in a more efficient, and thus more profitable, operation. Over its entire network of cocaine processing and distribution, a cartel can have thousands of members.

A member's relationship with and duty to the family is that member's main priority in life. Members of the cartels perform many different jobs: growers, processors, smugglers, bankers, lawyers, chemists, sellers, enforcers, assassins, corrupters (members whose job is to corrupt officials all over the Western Hemisphere, to ensure that the cartels can continue to operate with as little interference as possible), and more. The cartels have a concept, *dignidad* or “dignity,” which resembles the Mafia's *rispetto* and dictates how members relate to one another.

Colombian Cartel Activities

The Colombian drug cartels are an organized crime group focused on a single activity: the growing and distribution of cocaine. (In recent years many have branched out into heroin production and distribution as well.) They sell millions of dollars of it each year in the United States, earning money so quickly they cannot even spend it all. They have established alliances with other organized crime groups in Europe and America to facilitate the distribution of drugs and the laundering of money.

The major cartels have warred with one another since the late 1970s. This doesn't slow down their smuggling, but leads to a great deal of violence throughout their sphere of operations. They enforce their will not only by torturing and killing those who offend or betray them, but those peoples' wives and children as well. Nor do they scruple to kill judges and high political officials who move too strongly against them.

MEXICAN CARTELS

When United States federal law enforcement made it difficult for the Colombian cartels to smuggle drugs into America via the Caribbean and Florida, the Colombians turned to longer but safer routes through Mexico. This brought increasing prestige and profits to the Mexican drug cartels, which got started as marijuana and heroin manufacturers/smugglers but in many ways eclipsed the Colombian cartels in the 1990s. Inter-cartel warfare and crackdowns by the authorities have weakened, but not destroyed, the Mexican cartels since then.

Organization And Structure

The dozen or more major Mexican drug cartels don't seem to have any specific type of structure. Most are led by a single man, or group of men (such as two or more brothers), with varying chains of underlings, lieutenants, soldiers, workers, and so on. The major cartels, each named after its home territory, include Tijuana, Sinaloa, Juárez, Gulf, Guadalajara, and Sonora.

In recent years, shakeups among the highest ranks of the cartels (such as the death or arrest of two of the three Arrellano Felix brothers who ran the Tijuana Cartel in 2002, and the arrest and jailing of Gulf Cartel mastermind Juan Garcia Abrego in 1996) have forced the cartels to behave more professionally. They've become quieter, more subtle, and more in favor of alliances and cooperation.

Mexican Cartel Activities

The Mexican cartels exist to manufacture drugs and smuggle them into the United States. On their own they produce and smuggle marijuana, Mexican heroin, and methamphetamines, but what made them vastly wealthy and powerful was becoming transshippers for Colombian cocaine. It's estimated that at times, upward of 70 percent of the cocaine entering the United States came in via Mexico.

To ensure the success of their large-scale operations, the Mexican cartels engage in massive

campaigns of corruption, paying off Mexican (and sometimes American) officials at the rate of up to \$15 million per month at times. When money won't do the trick, they turn to violence. American DEA agents, Roman Catholic cardinals, high-ranking Mexican officials, and thousands of other people have paid the ultimate price for defying the Mexican cartels... and sometimes that violence spills over into American cities via the cartels' distribution networks.

THE MEXICAN MAFIA

The Mexican Mafia got its start in 1957 in the prisons of California as a way for Mexican inmates to protect themselves. Gradually, their group became more and more powerful in the prison system, controlling the flow of illegal weapons and drugs to prisoners. They began to call themselves the "Mexican Mafia" (or later simply *La EME*, the Spanish word for M) out of admiration for *La Cosa Nostra*. Eventually, as members got out of prison and continued their illegal activities, the group developed a presence on the outside. Soon *La EME* formed alliances with criminal groups in Mexico to facilitate the group's main function, the smuggling and sale of drugs. They continue in this activity today, competing with the Chinese tongs, the Mafia, and other groups for their share of the drug market.

The Mexican Mafia remains a powerful force in many prison systems as well, where it often competes with another Hispanic gang, *La Nuestra Familia*. Ironically, the Mexican Mafia's ally in this struggle is the white supremacist, neo-Nazi prison gang called the Aryan Brotherhood, which also has links to American outlaw motorcycle gangs (see page 301). *La Nuestra Familia* in turn allies with the Black Guerrilla Family, a Maoist-oriented prison gang for blacks.

Organization And Structure

Most members join the Mexican Mafia while they're in prison, based on sponsorship by an existing member and a vote of approval by the rest of the gang members at that prison. Members must kill on command without hesitation.

The Mexican Mafia has very simple structure. There's a "general" in overall control, with several "godfathers" as underlings. These men control lower-rank members known, in descending order of importance, as captains, lieutenants, and *soldados* (soldiers). Individual gangs, and indeed the whole organization, may by now answer to one or more of the powerful and sophisticated Mexican cartels.

Mexican Mafia Activities

The Mexican Mafia mainly confines itself to a single activity: drug smuggling and sales. *La EME* is one of the ways by which the Mexican cartels sell their marijuana, heroin, cocaine, and methamphetamine in the United States. In the prisons, the Mexican Mafia also controls illicit activities such as gambling, homosexual prostitution, and making and selling illegal weapons. In or out of prison, *La EME* has a penchant for extreme violence: its members are well-known and highly feared for their willingness to maim and kill at the slightest provocation.

OTHER HISPANIC ORGANIZED CRIME

The Colombians and the Mexicans are the most prominent Hispanic organized criminals, but not the only ones. Cuban gangs have a strong presence in the southeastern United States, where they distribute cocaine and have large illegal gambling operations. Some of the people involved are military veterans (such as participants in the infamous Bay of Pigs invasion), and the gangs have become powerful enough that there's some evidence of them receiving a "cut" from Mafia activities!

Dominican gangs control much of the drug distribution in the northeastern United States, largely because the Colombian cartels deal with them almost exclusively. The Dominicans have also branched out into gambling, loansharking, and other crimes. Combatting them has proven very difficult, since most Dominican "gangs" aren't really organized at all — countless Dominicans have the Colombian connections they need to get into the business, so if one gang gets arrested, another almost immediately takes its place. They use heavily-fortified apartments and electronic security devices to hinder police raids.

RUSSIAN ORGANIZED CRIME

One of the newest organized crime threats facing the United States and the world is the *Organizatsiya* ("the organization"), more commonly known as the Russian Mafia. Although it was originally made up of Russian thugs and criminals of various sorts, since the collapse of the Soviet Union and the rise of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) many former KGB agents and Soviet military officers have become involved with the Russian gangsters, swelling their ranks and bringing dangerous knowledge with them.

The Russian Mafia probably gained its foothold in the United States in the mid-1970s, when Soviet officials began to let Russian Jews emigrate to America. As part of this wave of immigration, the KGB and Russian penal authorities released many of their most dangerous criminals and sent them to the United States as "Jewish immigrants." They also used the new immigration regulations as a way to slip KGB agents into this country unnoticed. Once free in the United States, these Russian criminals went back to their "careers." Since the Russian immigrant community tends to be very close-knit and suspicious of authority, and few law enforcement officers speak Russian, stopping or infiltrating the gangs has proven difficult at best.

ORGANIZATION AND STRUCTURE

While several "mafioski," such as Evsei Agron and Marat Balagula, have at one time or another been major powers within the *Organizatsiya*, none of them have ever controlled the gangs in America (or anywhere else), because the Russian Mafia is in many ways very poorly organized. Individual gangs, led by a *pakhany* or "leader," generally keep to themselves and do not acknowledge anyone as the

MEXICAN HEROIN

Mexican heroin is known as "Mexican brown" or "Mexican mud," because of its dark color (as compared to the "China White" heroin grown in the Golden Triangle of Asia and sold by the Chinese Triads and tongs). It's generally less pure than China White, though there's a variety of Mexican heroin known as "black tar" which is exceptionally pure.

Mexican farmers grow opium poppies (the source of heroin) primarily in the wild, mountainous Mexican states of Sinaloa, Durango, and Chihuahua. Some heroin also grows in Oaxaca, Michoacan, Jalisco, Nuevo Leon, and Veracruz. The harvest takes place twice a year, from September to November and March to April. After harvesting their crop, the Mexican cartels process it in hidden labs in the states of Sinaloa, Jalisco, and Guerrero. The processing of poppy sap into heroin generally takes from one to three days.

overall leader or commander of the Organizatsiya. The gangs tend not to divide areas into “turf,” so two or more gangs may run scams or commit robberies in the same territory. Alliances between different gangs can shift from day to day, and rarely solidify into any sort of advanced hierarchical structure like that of the Mafia or yakuza.

Russian organized crime in Russia itself is somewhat different from the American gangs. For one thing, in a society so riddled with corruption, it has much more power. Second, the gangs tend to segregate themselves along national lines and “specialize” in certain crimes. For example, Azeri gangs are said to be the drug dealers, Georgian gangs run casinos, and so forth. However, native Russian gangs maintain strong ties with American gangs; they often assist each other or establish criminal “joint ventures.”

The Russian Mafia has established itself not only in New York City but Baltimore, Boston, Buffalo, Chicago, Cleveland, Dallas, Detroit, Los Angeles, Miami, Philadelphia, Portland, San Francisco, Seattle, and many other cities. In some areas the FBI believes the Russian gangsters take over territory when key Mafia figures are sent to jail. Because of their viciousness and seemingly endless supply of compatriots and allies in Russia, law enforcement officials worldwide fear the Russian gangs may soon become an even greater criminal threat. They’re considered one of the fastest growing criminal organizations in the world.

The Vory v Zakone

One group of Russian criminals that may or may not play a prominent part in the world of Russian organized crime is the *vory v zakone*, or “thieves-in-law.” The vory were an “elite” group of criminals in the Soviet Union (and its prison system), with significant restrictions on who could join. According to some reports, they mark themselves with a distinctive eight-pointed star tattoo.

Some authorities believe many vory now head Organizatsiya gangs. Others claim that younger, more aggressive, less tradition-bound Russian gangsters have snubbed and bypassed the aging thieves-in-law. Certainly most of the modern gangsters do not follow one of the tenets of the code by which the vory supposedly live — a rejection of materialism and luxury.

RUSSIAN ORGANIZED CRIME ACTIVITIES

The Russian Mafia gangs got their start mainly with protection rackets and petty theft, but they’ve become powerful enough to attempt even worse crimes. Some of their major activities include gasoline bootlegging, tax fraud, insurance fraud, extortion, large-scale robberies, forgery and counterfeiting (of money, jewelry, and other valuables), contract theft, fencing, gambling, smuggling (to and from Russia, of everything from liquor to kidnapped women), illegal weapons trafficking (including the smuggling of stolen nuclear materials), credit card fraud, money laundering, and contract murder. They’ve



gotten involved with the drug trade as well — Golden Crescent heroin producers ship some of their goods to Russian criminals who send them to their American counterparts. Farmers in some parts of Russia may now be growing heroin (marijuana has grown wild there for centuries). The Russian gangs have established extensive ties with Italian and Colombian organized crime to make their operations even more efficient and profitable.

The Russian Mafia is particularly noted for the brutality of its crimes. Mafioski torture and beat people who fail to pay their debts, and kill anyone who crosses them. If necessary they mutilate bodies to prevent identification — they cut off fingers, dig out bullets, and so on. Many Russian Mafia killers fly in from Russia for one job, then immediately fly back out to foil law enforcement.

Russian criminals have little fear of American law enforcement. Most Organizatsiya members have experienced Soviet police and prisons (not to mention the KGB) in the past, and consider the American judicial and penological systems a joke. Some law enforcement authorities have also noted that because of Russian compulsory secondary education, Russian Mafioski tend to have better educations than their American counterparts, which contributes to the cleverness and audacity of some of their scams.

STREET GANGS

As American inner-city life has become more and more desperate, impoverished, and dangerous, even the children who live in these areas have become involved in crime. Today in all major American cities there are dozens, sometimes hundreds, of street gangs, made up of youths from pre-teen ages to their early twenties. Most of these gangs, which usually have distinctive names and identifying colors, are black or Hispanic.

In many ways Los Angeles seems to have the worst — or at least most distinctive — street gang problem. Its literally tens of thousands of gangsters often belong to one of two large-scale gangs (the Crips and the Bloods; see below). Many gangs in other cities try to imitate them, or form when Crips or Bloods travel there to escape the L.A. law.

The popular conception of street gangs is that they have only male members, but this isn't necessarily so. Mostly male gangs use females in a variety of roles (renting cars, establishing crack-houses and safehouses, carrying drugs, and managing the gang's finances, and so forth). Most large cities also have all-female gangs, every bit as vicious and competitive as their male counterparts.

ORGANIZATION AND STRUCTURE

Street gangs generally lack any sort of rigid or formal organization; they're very organic groups. One or more gang members may be (or claim to be) the gang's leader at any point in time, and they do not normally have "sub-officers." Wealth, gang occupation (such as drug dealer), and reputation do more to earn a gangster respect than some title. But some gangs "rank" members by age. Thus, in some Los Angeles gangs, members go from being "baby homies" to "little homies" to "TGs" (tiny gangsters) to "OGs" (original gangsters).

In Los Angeles, the black gangs typically ally with either of two loosely-knit "coalitions" of gangs: the Crips (whose color is blue), or the Bloods (whose color is red). Thus, a gang might call itself the Grape Street Crips or the Ujima Village Bloods. A gang that's part of one of these larger groups is a "set." Sets (and other gangs) frequently take their names from their territory ("turf"), their home street, or some distinctive landmark in their turf. Gangs mark their turf with graffiti.

The Bloods

The Bloods are said to have been founded by two men, Sylvester Scott and Vincent Owen, as a way to protect themselves from attacks by the Crips gang (see below). As a result, the Bloods and Crips have been (and continue to be) deadly enemies, although in recent years there have been some reports of cooperation between the two.

As their name suggests, the Bloods' color is red, taken from the school colors of Centennial High School in Compton, California. Bloods always wear red articles of clothing, known as "rags." They're also known as "Pirus" or "C/K" (Crip-killer). Each set may be known by its "sign," a hand signal members "throw," or display, to other gangbangers.





The Crips

The Crips gang is thought to have been founded by one Raymond Washington in the early 1980s. Its name probably comes from the “Tales from the Crypt” comic book or television show, and its color, blue, is taken from Washington High School in south-central Los Angeles. Crips always wear some article of blue clothing, often a headband or bandanna. They’re also known as “Cuz,” “B/K” (Blood-killer), or “P/K” (Piru-killer). Unlike Blood sets, which usually work together, most Crips sets are as willing to fight each other as they are to fight Bloods.

El Rukns

The El Rukns are a black gang founded in Chicago by one Jeff Fort in the 1980s. Originally the gang was based in a large building on South Drexel Street known as “the Fort.” The El Rukns became incredibly wealthy and powerful selling crack cocaine, and soon branched out into other crimes — for example, some organized crime figures hired El Rukns to commit murders. Even worse, Jeff Fort conspired with the Libyan government to commit acts of terrorism in the United States. Fortunately, in 1989 several dozen leading figures in the El Rukns, including Fort, were indicted by the federal government and subsequently went to prison, and “the Fort” was torn down. Fort’s sons ran parts of the gang for a time, but some have been murdered or arrested. However, the gang remains large and powerful.

STREET GANG ACTIVITIES

Because street gangs are so diverse and varied, it’s impossible to associate all of them with one type of crime, or group of crimes. However, most gangs involve themselves in certain types of crimes. Foremost among these is drug dealing. Street gangs in Los Angeles, for example, receive cocaine from Colombian and Mexican cartels. The gangs set up their own crackhouses, which they guard with armored doors, sophisticated communications and security technology, and armed guards. A desire for increased profits and “turf” may bring them into conflict with other gangs, or other groups such as the Jamaican posses.

Most gangs are also involved in property crimes (theft) and violent crime (such as robbery and murder). Street gangs have a well-earned reputation for violence, and rightly so. Even the youngest members are often armed to the teeth, and willing to fight for just about any reason — an insult, a girl, being looked at challengingly, and so on. The weapons of choice range from semiautomatic pistols to assault rifles, depending on resources and circumstances. Gangsters frequently try to take out their targets with drive-by shootings, but just as often end up hurting or killing innocent bystanders as hitting their intended victims.

THE YAKUZA

In Japan, the main organized crime group is the *yakuza* (pronounced “YA-ku-za,” not “ya-KU-za”). According to the best estimates, the 2,500 or so *yakuza* gangs have a total membership of 85,000 to 110,000. Approximately 26,000 *yakuza* members live in the United States (mainly on the West Coast), and their activities in America are sure to increase over time.

The historical origins of the *yakuza* are unclear. While some members like to trace their roots to townspeople who gathered together to protect their homes from gangs of criminal samurai, scholars point to bands of traveling peddlers, merchants, and gamblers in the mid-1700s. By the late nineteenth century, the *yakuza* gangs were powerful enough to become involved in far right-wing politics. World War II destroyed many of these gangsters and their nationalistic dreams, but from the ashes of the Japanese empire arose a new *yakuza*, one generally less concerned with politics and more interested in profit and power. Today the *yakuza* wields enormous influence within Japanese society.

Recognizing *yakuza* members usually isn't difficult. Some gangs have publicly-known offices, newsletters, magazines, flags, and group songs. Gang members sometimes wear pins or other identifying symbols, and dress and style their hair in distinctive ways. They often sport beautiful, elaborate tattoos, though they often stop short of tattooing any area they can't easily cover with clothes (such as the hand or face). Gangsters who fail their bosses may have to atone through *yubitsume*, the ritual cutting off of a portion of one finger (the greater the infraction, the more they have to cut).

ORGANIZATION AND STRUCTURE

The foundation of all *yakuza* groups is the *oyabun-kobun* relationship, which literally means “father-role — child-role” relationship. An *oyabun* acts as the sponsor, supporter, and mentor for the *kobun* (often a younger man), and in many ways compares to a Mafia *caporegima* (or sometimes to a Mafia *capo*, depending on the circumstances). Each *oyabun* has immense power and influence within his *nawabari* (“roped-off area”), or territory. The *nawabari* of an *oyabun* who is the absolute leader of an entire *yakuza* family is of course quite extensive. In exchange for the *oyabun*'s support and protection, the *kobun* serves him unhesitatingly and faithfully.

The *yakuza*, like the Mafia, organizes itself into large gangs known as *ikka*, or “families.” These families are not related by blood, but by “adoption” and sponsorship. Members of a family are *miuchi*, or “members of the same body.”

Gumi

Yakuza families typically have one of two basic types of structures. The first is the *gumi* (“association,” “company,” or “gang”), which is exemplified by the largest of the *yakuza* gangs, the Yamaguchi-gumi. A *gumi* has a hierarchical structure, with one chief *oyabun* (known as a *kumicho* [“supreme

chief”] or the *kaicho* [“chairman”]) in total control of the gang. Immediately below the chief are twelve leading bosses (with various titles and roles) and a group of *sanro-kai* (advisors similar to the *consigli-eri* of a Mafia family). Below the twelve bosses are lesser bosses who command other underlings, and eventually groups of *kobun* (“children”) or *kumi-in* (“enlisted men”) — the street-level members of the organization. All of these relationships and ranks are based on the *oyabun-kobun* system. A person's rank within a *gumi* is usually dependent upon his earning power and upon how many men owe him loyalty.

Rengo

The second type of *yakuza* gang structure is the *rengo*, or “federation” of gangs. A *rengo* is a “league” of *yakuza* gangs, with several powerful *oyabuns* as “partners.” A *rengo* is much more decentralized than a *gumi*, giving members much greater autonomy and power than *gumi* gangsters have. Each *oyabun* still has absolute power in his own individual gang, so if the entire *rengo* is to act in concert, the bosses must agree on what to do. Thus, this sort of gang moves much more slowly than does a *gumi*, but retains an individual flexibility and independence which a *gumi* lacks.

Gang Structure

There are three types of *yakuza* gangsters: *tekiya* (who are involved in crimes like drug dealing, extortion, protection rackets, labor racketeering, and so on); *bakuto* (gambling and vice crimes); and *gurentai* (“hoodlums,” who commit violent crimes). The street-level gangs centered around each type of gangster have their own distinctive structures and cultures, though in the modern day these distinctions (and the types of crimes the gang commits) tend to blur.

YAKUZA ACTIVITIES

The *yakuza* engages in a wide range of criminal activities: extortion; gambling; drug and gun smuggling; murder; loansharking; theft; fraud; and so on. Some of the more distinctive *yakuza* crimes include:

Vice Crimes

In addition to *tobaku* (gambling), which is thought to account for about one-fourth of the *yakuza*'s income, Japanese gangs also get involved in the illegal sex industry. They smuggle pornography, act as pimps, and so forth.

And sometimes the *yakuza* actually brings the women themselves to Japan. *Yakuza* involvement in white slavery (“selling spring,” in *yakuza* slang), often depicted in fiction, does in fact occur. Though the white slave trade from other Asian countries is more extensive, the greatest demand is for Western women, whom Japanese men regard as “exotic.” The usual *yakuza* scam is to work through a bogus “talent agency” which recruits aspiring American female performers for jobs in Japan. Once they arrive in Japan, they find out that the real job involves entertainment of a different sort. These hapless women, alone in a strange culture and unable to speak the language, often end up as slaves, forced to obey the whims of their *yakuza* captors.

JOINING THE YAKUZA

Any Japanese male could become a *yakuza*, but most members come from certain groups.

The first is the *bosozoku*, or hot-rod gangs — roughly speaking, the Japanese equivalent of street gangs and motor-cycle gangs. They provide about one-third of *yakuza* recruits, though many *yakuza* members look down on them. Another steady source of *yakuza* recruits are classes discriminated against in Japan: foreigners (such as Koreans and Chinese); the *burakumin* (Japan's traditional caste of “untouchables”); and so on. In some gangs, a majority of the members come from these groups.

Yakuza recruits usually spend six months to a year (or more) in “training.” This involves performing menial tasks for the boss and is often boring, but the recruit also learns about the gang's criminal activities. Recruits who display the proper attitude and aptitude move up the hierarchy of household tasks, and eventually make their way into a criminal enterprise (such as a gambling ring). Others quit or fail.

THE YAKUZA IN THE UNITED STATES

Despite its Japanese origins, the yakuza is no stranger to American shores. America provides a marketplace for yakuza drugs, and a source of guns and pornography.

Currently, most of the yakuza in the United States are in Hawaii and on the West Coast. For example, the 200,000 Japanese in Los Angeles's Little Tokyo offers the yakuza criminal opportunities similar to those in Japan. However, some evidence exists of links between the yakuza and the Mafia in New York City and elsewhere. The “agents” of the two groups can meet in Hawaii or Las Vegas to make deals and form alliances. The two organizations have worked together to set up illegal gambling operations and international theft networks.

Sokaiya

In addition to other financial crimes such as loansharking and fraud, the yakuza is known for a special type of corporate extortion. The *sokaiya* (“shareholder’s meeting man”) are combination corporate extortionists and financial strong-arm men. They earn money by exploiting Japanese business’ desire for a staid image and efficient operations. Typically, a *sokaiya* buys a few shares of a corporation’s stock; this entitles him to attend the annual shareholder’s meeting. Then he contacts the corporation’s officers and threatens to disrupt the meeting and make trouble unless the company pays him off — which it does, to avoid the trouble and embarrassment. Alternately, a *sokaiya* may uncover blackmail information about corporate officers or corporate activities, then force the corporation to pay to keep the information secret.

Sometimes the *sokaiya* work for the corporation. For a price, groups of *sokaiya* show up at the shareholder’s meeting to quell any dissent or undesirable proposals by threatening or harassing stockholders. In other words, a corporation might deal with one group of *sokaiya* by hiring another group of *sokaiya* to take care of it.

MISCELLANEOUS ORGANIZED CRIME GROUPS

Here are a few more organized crime groups that *Dark Champions* characters might encounter.

JAMAICAN POSSES

In the 1980s, a new organized crime group emerged on the American crime scene: Jamaican posses, which take their name from the members’ love of Western movies. Individual posses usually take their names from the neighborhoods in Jamaica where they began; some of them include: Banton; the Gulleymen; Rankers (or Southies); Shower; Spangler; Super; Tel-Aviv; Waterhouse Riverton City. As of 1991, authorities estimated that there were approximately 40 posses with 20,000 members in the United States. Since then, it’s thought that many posses have fragmented, slowed down, or merged with other black gangs.

Posse members often sport distinctive “dreadlock” hairdos and Caribbean accents, though some deliberately avoid these features (as best they can). While there’s no firm evidence of specific connections between the posses and the Rastafarian religious movement, some posse members use Rastafarian slang to confuse the police. Examples include “baldhead” (an undesirable outsider) and “beast” (the police). Similarly, there’s no known connection between Jamaican posses and voodoo or voodoo-like religions, but action movies and stories often mix the two, and GMs can do the same to create “voodoo posses.”

Organization And Structure

Most posses have three “levels” of membership. At the top are one or more leaders, sometimes called “generals,” who control the posse but don’t get involved in street-level operations. Sometimes two or more members share leadership, or the top position shifts from one person to another. The second level consists of lieutenants who transport drugs, weapons, and profits to (and from) the leader(s). Occupying the lowest level are the street-level drug dealers, who also commit the bulk of the posse’s violent crimes. Within a posse there may also be several factions.

Posses are close-knit and disciplined, and thus difficult to infiltrate or gather intelligence on. Many consist of members who all come from the same neighborhood in Jamaica and/or are related by blood or marriage. If necessary, gang leaders can threaten to harm loved ones back in Jamaica to keep a member in line. However, the posses don’t seem to demand much in the way of gang loyalty. If a member wants to, he can switch from one posse to another with no consequences.

Posse Activities

Though the posses involve themselves in a number of criminal activities, by far their chief activity is drug smuggling. They smuggle cocaine and marijuana into this country and sell it for great profit. They’re well-known for their high-grade “sinsemilla” marijuana, and for selling crack cocaine. Their close ties to the Colombian cartels allow them to “vertically integrate” their operations — rather than working with middlemen, a posse acquires its cocaine directly from the source and controls it all the way to street-level sales. Posses usually sell drugs from crackhouses (sometimes called “gatehouses”) — old, extensively-fortified buildings with solid steel doors, heavily armed guards, guard dogs, and the like. It’s not uncommon for a posse to sell high-quality drugs for extremely low prices to drive away competition; if that doesn’t work, a posse won’t hesitate to resort to violence and murder.

Unlike other organized crime groups, posses collect their drug profits after the street-level dealers make sales — a sort of “drugs on consignment” system. The lower ranks channel the profits back up to the leader, who distributes the money to members as he sees fit. This system has caused conflicts within some posses.

Posses don’t seem to be as involved in money laundering as other drug dealing groups. They keep their profits in cash, and use their money to buy personal property, land, weapons, and businesses.

Besides drug distribution, posses are also participate in firearms smuggling, forgery, auto theft, kidnappings, robberies, insurance fraud, and “home invasions” (a combination violent robbery and party in which the invaders terrorize the homeowners, and sometimes torture and/or murder them).

All of these activities have earned the posses a well-deserved reputation for incredibly violent, murderous behavior. There’s nothing a posse member loves so much as a good gun; they favor

powerful handguns, the “mini” submachineguns, and assault rifles, and don’t hesitate to use them. Some evidence suggests individual posses actually train for combat; some authorities have described them as “lusting after” violence and guns.

OUTLAW MOTORCYCLE GANGS

In the United States today, there are an estimated 800-900 criminal motorcycle gangs, some quite small but others extremely large (with worldwide membership in some cases). The four major gangs — the Hell’s Angels, the Outlaws, the Bandidos, and the Pagans — are wide-ranging, full-time organized criminal groups, despite their attempts to maintain a facade of innocent activity. According to DEA estimates, these four have a combined membership of over 3,000, possibly with as many as ten non-member “associates” per member.

Besides his motorcycle, a biker gang member’s most prized possession is his “colors” — a sleeveless leather jacket distinctively decorated with patches, gang logos, and sometimes the name of the owner’s home chapter or town. (In *HERO System* terms, wearing colors is a Distinctive Feature.) Reports describe some motorcycle gangs as abandoning their bikes and colors in an effort to become more like “mainstream” organized criminals.

Organization And Structure

Despite their reputation as rowdy, almost anarchistic, rebels, outlaw motorcycle gangs actually have sophisticated, organized structures. In most cases, the overall gang divides into “chapters” which belong to “regional” groups as well as the national organization. A “mother club” leads the entire national gang; usually it’s either the gang’s very first chapter, or a national body in which each member oversees a portion of the gang’s chapters. The national president isn’t always an actual leader, though — he may just be the gang’s spokesman.

The leadership of an individual gang chapter consists of a president, vice-president, secretary-treasurer, and sergeant-at-arms. The gang fills each position through an election for a set term. Additionally, a gang may have informal “leaders” who in fact wield more power and influence than the elected leadership.

Most chapters have a “clubhouse” that serves as the gang’s headquarters. Many clubhouses are actually armed fortresses, complete with elaborate security systems.

Joining an outlaw motorcycle gang is no easy task. First, an established member has to introduce the prospective member to the chapter. Next, the chapter checks the prospect’s background (often with the help of gang women who work in government offices). A prospect who comes up “clean” goes through a probationary period in which the chapter tests his loyalty and willingness to commit crimes. Only men can join; biker gangs treat women as property that’s less important than a member’s motorcycle — almost as slaves, in other words.

Biker Gang Activities

Outlaw motorcycle gangs are involved in just about every sort of criminal activity, including arson and bombings, assault, auto theft, drug trafficking, extortion, murder for hire, kidnapping, rape, receiving stolen goods, and robbery. Some of the gangs also produce methamphetamines, including the designer drug “ice,” which sometimes brings them into competition with the yakuza for markets. A chapter’s mobility makes it difficult to investigate and apprehend.

Some criminal motorcycle gangs, particularly the Hell’s Angels, are known to have links to the Mafia. The Mafia uses motorcycle gang members for contract murders, drug distribution, and the intimidation of witnesses in criminal trials.

The different criminal motorcycle gangs sometimes compete for criminal territory, and this can lead to bloody wars. In particular, the Hell’s Angels and the Outlaws have a deep and abiding hatred for one another, and engage in ambushes, bombings, and outright combat in an attempt to destroy each other.

VIETNAMESE STREET GANGS

When the Communist forces in Vietnam won the war there in the early 1970s, hundreds of thousands of non-communist Vietnamese fled for their lives. Many of them ended up in the United States. Among those thousands were many who became involved in criminal activities against their own people.

Adult Vietnamese Gangs

Vietnamese crime gangs can be divided into two types: adult gangs and youth gangs. The adult gangs consist of older men, often all of whom belonged to the same South Vietnamese combat unit (which means they have lots of combat-related Skills).

Adult Vietnamese gangs engage in such illegal activities as gambling, murder, arson, fraud, and extortion (they threaten to label a Vietnamese-American as pro-communist unless he pays them a substantial sum of money). The adult gangs, because of their training and attitudes, are capable of extremely violent and brutal behavior.

Vietnamese Youth Gangs

The youth gangs are generally small, with from fifteen to thirty members. They differ from other street gangs in some ways. First, they usually don’t claim a set territory, preferring to remain mobile. Sometimes they travel great distances to commit crimes (or entire crime sprees). Second, gang members sometimes change affiliation quickly, since there’s no initiation ritual, nor a penalty for leaving the gang. In fact, the membership can change daily as the gang travels.

Second, Vietnamese youth gangs don’t always have a name. Early gangs didn’t choose names or colors for themselves. This has changed in some cities, and a few gangs (Born To Kill, the Black Eagles, the Pink Knights, and the Thunder Tigers, among others) are known nationwide.

Other than this, though, Vietnamese gangs tend to be a lot like other youth gangs. They totally



exclude females (some all-female Vietnamese youth gangs exist), though they may use girls as money managers or the like. The leader of a Vietnamese youth gang is usually one of the older members; he directs the gang's criminal operations, disposes of stolen goods, and obtains drugs for his followers.

Vietnamese Gang Activities

Vietnamese youth gangs mainly commit property crimes such as theft, burglary, protection rackets, and extortion; they favor other Vietnamese and Chinese people as their targets. Some gangs specialize in stealing cars and car stereos, disposing of the stolen vehicles through sophisticated "chop shop" operations. The sophistication and precision of some Vietnamese gangs' operations suggests the possibility of outside control, such as by an adult gang or Chinese tong.

The Vietnamese gangs are infamous for their so-called "home invasions," a particularly violent form of robbery. First, they gather "intelligence" about a particular family. At the right time (often during a party, wedding, or similar event), the gang bursts in and begins terrorizing and robbing everyone present. Vandalism, sexual assaults, and murders often occur. Afterwards, the gang's money manager divides the loot among the members in proper proportion.

Vietnamese youth gangs are known for their incredible viciousness and violent tendencies. They favor high-caliber handguns, and aren't afraid of armed confrontations with the police.

OTHER CRIMINALS



While organized criminals are the most likely foes for *Dark Champions* characters in many circumstances, they're not the only denizens of the underworld that action heroes might encounter.

CINEMATIC MASTERMINDS

In James Bond-style espionage campaigns and other “cinematic” games, the hero (or heroes) often find themselves opposed by a “mastermind” villain — the sort of criminal genius common to comic books and adventure stories despite the fact that he has no real-world equivalent. Most cinematic masterminds have several traits in common:

Wealth: Cinematic masterminds are fabulously wealthy. Most of them tend to be industrialists, or at least to have vast industrial holdings; others might be arms dealers, media moguls, former military or espionage operatives, or perhaps even organized crime leaders with aspirations of world rule.

Grandiloquent Schemes: Because they're rich, cinematic masterminds don't commit their crimes for money. What they want is power. Typically they intend to rule the world, or at least a large part of it (much like many comic book supervillains); other possible goals include control of the oceans, outer space, the media, or some valuable resource (such as gold).

Independence: Cinematic masterminds usually don't belong to organizations or groups. They lead their own organizations, of course, but they don't have partners or allies — after all, they don't need them.

Powerful Lieutenants: Few cinematic masterminds have any significant skill at combat. They're thinkers and schemers, not fighters. Instead, they have one (or several) bodyguards and/or lieutenants who possess all the brawn and combat ability they lack. A lieutenant might even possess mildly “super-human” abilities or unique weapons thanks to the mastermind's scientific prowess.

Pets: Masterminds love pets. Often these are particularly vicious or dangerous beasts (tigers, sharks, schools of piranha, trained guard dogs), but more than one mastermind has had a penchant for elegantly-groomed, long-haired cats.

RESOURCES

Masterminds use their wealth and influence to obtain the extensive resources they need to make their plans succeed. Some of the most common include:

Secret Headquarters

Most masterminds have a secret headquarters where they hide their super-weapons and private armies (see below) until the time is ripe to reveal them to the world. Typically a secret headquarters is located in a picturesque, often difficult-to-reach location: outer space; the ocean floor; high in the Himalayas; behind an enormous waterfall; a remote island.

Naturally, a secret headquarters is well-defended. In addition to standard security devices (often tuned to have lethal effects) and guards from the mastermind's private army, a secret headquarters's security may include things like deadly lasers, poison gas traps, and the like.

Most masterminds don't spend all their time at their secret headquarters — after all, before they spring their schemes, they appear to be nothing more than fabulously wealthy (if perhaps aloof and eccentric) men of society. Mansions, villas, and penthouses in the glittering cities and luxurious resort locales of the world are practically required for such a lifestyle, as are private jets and yachts to get from one house to another.

Private Army

Since a cinematic mastermind can't be everywhere at once, he usually has a secret army to help him conquer the world. His soldiers usually have their own uniforms, and wield the best weaponry he can buy or build. Part of the army is a corps of skilled scientists, engineers, and technicians who develop and maintain the mastermind's superweapons. The army also includes espionage agents who investigate and oppose the heroes while the mastermind is still developing his scheme.

Super-Weapons

Since you can't conquer the world with mere threats and bluster, the cinematic mastermind needs an ultra-weapon powerful enough to threaten entire governments (if not the world). Sometimes the weapon is designed not for direct attack, but to trick the world's powers into attacking each other — for example, the mastermind might use a high-tech plane to kidnap diplomatic delegations from the United States and China in the hopes of precipitating a war between those two nations. Others are true weapons: orbital lasers; special intercontinental missiles; plague bombs; tsunami generators.



COSTUMED CRIMINALS

In the vigilante crimefighting, Dark Champions: The Animated Series, and possibly even law enforcement subgenres, the heroes aren't necessarily the only ones who wear costumes. Their adversaries, be they mundane criminals or "villains" with superhuman powers, may also adopt outlandish garb as a way of distinguishing themselves from ordinary members of the underworld.

In some subgenres, particularly DC:TAS, costumed criminals tend to have "themes." If they have powers, those powers derive from some phenomenon or object that influences the villain's thinking and crimes. If they don't have powers, the costume, associated gadgets, and crimes the character commits revolve around some subject he obsesses over.

Example: Exposure to a biological weapon derived from serpent venom gave Karl Hasfeld strange powers — the ability to "see" heat patterns, immunity to virtually any form of poison, swiftness greater than human normal — and also affected his mind, making him twisted and cruel. He became the costumed criminal Serpentine, using his powers to steal and commit mayhem. Many (but not all) of his crimes involve serpents; for example, he might

use a plague of rattlesnakes to clear out a bank so he can rob it, or steal a jeweled cobra from the Egyptian display at a museum.

Example: After his career as an inventor failed to take off, William Starkey's mind went over the edge. He became obsessed with astrology, a subject that had long interested him. Using his technical skills to create a weapon he called his Star-Staff, he adopted the identity of the Astrologer and began committing robberies and other crimes. Most of his thefts are of objects associated with the stars, space, and fortunetelling (such as moon rocks, star sapphires, or antique tarot decks).

While they're unquestionably criminals, not all costumed criminals are quite as despicable as the average street crook. Some may have noble motivations or follow codes of honor; others go out of their way to eschew violence and avoid killing. But plenty of them are as cruel and ruthless as any other member of the underworld.

Costumed criminals aren't always skilled combatants. Some have few, if any, fighting skills, instead using hired thugs or high-tech weapons to oppose the PCs. Once the heroes make it through these obstacles to reach the costumed criminal, one punch is usually all it takes to knock him out.



ROBBERY CREWS

Action movies and novels often feature “crews” of highly-skilled robbers who pull off major heists. These are basically the same as the PC groups in a *Caper Hero* campaign, but they’re entirely criminal. As part of their professionalism, many of them are absolutely ruthless — they’ll kill victims or witnesses the instant it becomes expedient to do so, and perhaps even as a way of setting up their crimes.

What sets a robbery crew apart from the usual band of thugs and killers is their intelligence and high-tech savvy. These aren’t just smash-and-grab gangs, they’re groups of professional thieves who plan their jobs exquisitely. The scores they go after are worth at least several hundred thousand dollars, and targets worth tens of millions aren’t out of the question. Thanks to the high profits they make from these jobs, they can afford the best equipment for the next job — everything they need to make a robbery go without a hitch and deal with any opposition that arises.

Most robbery crews include some or all of the following members. Sometimes one member takes on two or more roles to minimize the risk of exposure (or, in game terms, to keep the crew from becoming so large it could overwhelm the PCs).

The Leader: This is the guy in charge of the operation. He’s got a well-rounded set of skills, coupled with intelligence, confidence, and a cool head in a crisis. He does most of the planning for the crew’s jobs, negotiates with fences and prospective employers, and so forth.

The Burglar: The Burglar is the team’s infiltration specialist — an expert at getting into places where he’s not supposed to be. Athletic, and often handsome, he possesses Skills such as Climbing, Lock-picking, and Security Systems.

The Computer Expert: Some robbery crews need a person who can work with computer systems, or even a full-blown hacker. He gets them information on potential targets, uncovers weaknesses in security nets, and so forth. If the team needs to work with a computer on-site to open a time-locked vault or get some valuable data from a hard drive, the Computer Expert is essential.

The Demolitionist: A robbery crew often needs an explosives expert. Depending on the job, the Demolitionist may have to blow open a safe or a door, destroy an overpass to stop pursuers, or the like.

The Driver: When a fast getaway is essential, the Driver takes over. Skilled at operating just about any type of land vehicle, he can drive with a speed and precision that leaves most cops in the dust. In some stories, he’s an all-vehicle expert, able to fly aircraft as well.

The Face Man: In crews that rely more on subterfuge and deception, the Face Man is a key player. An expert at disguises, impersonation, and confidence games, he distracts the target while his confederates learn what they need to know or steal what they came to get.

The Safecracker: No lock can foil the Safecracker for long. Whether it’s an ordinary door, a vault door, or something in between, given enough time and the right tools he can find a way to open it. In crews without a Burglar, he may in effect fulfill that role as well.

The Seductress: While most crews are all-male, some include a woman — a beautiful one who uses her feminine wiles to get close to the target and learn valuable information. She sometimes doubles as the Computer Expert, Driver, or Face Man.

The Weapons Man: Crew that are willing to resort to violence usually have at least one weapons expert on the team. You can identify him from his heavier body armor and larger (and more numerous) weapons. He also tends to be the biggest, most muscular member of the team.

SERIAL KILLERS

For years, serial killers have been the subject of a sort of morbid fascination on the public’s part. Novels, movies, and television shows such as *Red Dragon*, *The Silence Of The Lambs*, and *Profiler* have fed this interest, so it’s not surprising that serial killers often appear in *Dark Champions* scenarios.

Serial killers suffer from a condition known as antisocial personality disorder (or less formally as sociopathy or psychopathy; see below). They feel little emotion, view others as objects, don’t experience guilt or remorse, and can rarely be dissuaded by the possibility of punishment. Their murders, committed in part because they allow the killer to experience emotional/sexual feelings he rarely can, are horrific, involving sexual assault, torture, and mutilation. They murder again and again until caught, their crimes becoming more and more depraved and violent.

Most serial killers are white males in their 20s and 30s.

TYPES OF SERIAL KILLERS

The FBI divides serial killers into two groups — organized and disorganized — though like any other classification scheme, this one has its gaps and imperfections (for example, some serial killers are “mixed,” displaying traits of both categories). *Organized serial killers* are usually intelligent, seemingly normal men whose crimes derive from depraved, sadistic fantasies that sometimes have a twisted logic (for example, a particular killer’s victims may all part their hair a certain way). This “logic” may provide clues or other information to help the police (or PCs!) catch the killer. Organized serial killers plan their murders with care, bringing weapons and needed “equipment” (such as rope) with them. They pick victims by staking out or patrolling areas to find the type of woman they want, then get close to the victim and gain control of her with their verbal skills or ruses. After the murder, an organized killer hides the body and removes evidence (for example, by dismembering the corpse, making identification of it difficult). He may take “trophies,” such as jewelry or clothing, from the victim. The more killings an organized serial

CAUSES OF SOCIOPATHY

Experts have long speculated on the causes of sociopathy. Some causal factors may be biological, such as a “malfunction” of parts of the central nervous system that might otherwise inhibit the sociopath’s behavior. Others relate to family life — situations where a child suffers from emotional deprivation, parental rejection, and/or inconsistent punishment may contribute to the development of antisocial personalities. Sociocultural factors also seem to play a part (sociopathy is more common in lower socioeconomic groups, for example, and in areas where society’s values have broken down).

killer commits, the better he becomes at covering his tracks... but he may become overconfident as well.

A *disorganized serial killer* is motivated not so much by perverse sexual fantasies as by a deep-seated mental illness or delusion (such as believing he must drink others’ blood to sustain his own life). Extremely introverted, disorganized serial killers are so disturbed they cannot function normally in society. For example, they may be unable to drive, and their homes and personal effects are slovenly and in bad condition. They do not choose victims safely and logically; they’re more prone to take high-risk victims in quick attacks. The crime scenes they leave behind are chaotic, with no attempt to hide evidence; the victims are often mutilated, and in many cases the killer covers the victim’s face (to “depersonalize” her). If the killer takes a “trophy,” it’s usually some hair or a body part.

ANTISOCIAL PERSONALITY DISORDER

More commonly known as sociopathy or psychopathy, antisocial personality disorder has been described as the “prime criminogenic personality trait.” Three percent of American men and one percent of American women are thought to have sociopathic personalities.

The following traits characterize sociopaths:

- 1) They have average or even above-average intelligence. They do not usually suffer from delusions or similar irrational thought patterns.
- 2) They exhibit a great deal of superficial charm and friendliness, and often use this charm to get close to their victims and lull their suspicions. However, this outward affability masks several undesirable traits: a complete lack of deep and lasting emotion, including gratitude, sympathy, and compassion for others; manipulateness; untruthfulness and insincerity; and a “pathological egocentricity” and completely self-centered viewpoint that prevents them from seeing themselves as others see them.
- 3) They suffer from a deficient sense of emotions and arousal. In short, they feel much less, emotionally, than normal people do. They have a “hunger”

for stimuli that often turns them into thrillseekers, makes them get frustrated or bored easily, and causes them to do extreme things to achieve emotional arousal (for example, to kill for pleasure).

4) They feel no guilt or remorse for their deeds, nor any sense of shame. This prevents them from having any real conception of moral values or ethics. Even if they pursue what would be considered a “responsible” goal, they do so unethically. They also feel little anxiety, and can act coolly and calmly in situations where others would panic (in game terms, they have a higher than average PRE).

5) They cannot be conditioned or appreciate the long-term consequences of their actions. They live entirely for the moment and the stimulus it brings them, and are particularly prone to discount future events which may be bad or threatening. Thus, it’s almost impossible to deter them from crime with the threat of punishment, and even if they’re punished, they won’t learn anything from it or cease their behavior afterwards. Sociopaths reject authority and seem not to realize that rules apply to them. They also cannot take on responsibilities or exercise good judgment.

These traits combine to make psychopaths extremely prone to criminal behavior. Some become actively hostile and vicious, acting out their fantasies and impulses with senseless violence and depravity. However, they usually are *not* legally insane. They understand what they’re doing, and realize it may have bad consequences — they just don’t care. They value their own actions more than they fear punishment, and in many ways might simply be described as “evil.”

In game terms, you can represent antisocial personality disorder with any one of several Psychological Limitations, depending on exactly how you view the character in question. *Antisocial Personality Disorder* (Very Common, Strong or Total; 20-25 points) works fine, but others, including *Casual Killer*, *Loves To Kill*, or the like may also indicate a sociopath. Disorganized-type serial killers may have additional severe Psychological Limitations.

TERRORISM



Terrorists and their actions are a part of nearly every *Dark Champions* subgenre. In the wake of the September 11 attacks, terrorism has become an even more important, and emotional, topic in many campaigns.

The concept of “terrorism” is often considered difficult to define. For *Dark Champions* purposes, this definition suffices: a terrorist group is a non-governmental organization that illegitimately uses violence and intimidation (often directed at innocent civilians) in an effort to establish its opinions or ideology as dominant in a given society. Of course, it’s possible to debate just about every concept and word used in this definition, but for most campaigns it covers the subject properly.

ACTIVE TERRORIST GROUPS

The following terrorists groups are considered in existence and active as of 2004.

ABU NIDAL ORGANIZATION (ANO)

This several hundred members-large group is known by the name of its ruthless leader (which means “father of the struggle;” his real name is Sabri al-Banna). He died in August 2002 (whether his death was suicide or an assassination remains unclear). An extreme Palestinian organization, it violently opposes the more moderate PLO (in the past it has assassinated PLO officers, and has issued a death warrant for Yasir Arafat). It wishes to destroy Israel and establish a Palestinian state.

The ANO is one of the bloodiest and most successful terrorist organizations in existence. Its best known attacks are the September 1983 bombing of a Boeing jetliner (111 people killed), the December 1985 massacres at the Rome and Vienna airports, and the attempted bombing of the Heathrow Airport El Al counter in 1986. It may also have some connection to the Lockerbie airplane bombing. The group has been supported by Libya, Syria, and Iraq.

AL-AQSA MARTYRS’ BRIGADE

An offshoot of the Fatah organization founded in September, 2000 after the start of the second *Intifada*, the al-Aqsa Martyrs’ Brigade wants to create a Palestinian state in the West Bank and expel all Israelis. It has not specifically called for the destruction of Israel, but by 2002 had shifted from attacking only soldiers and settlers to acts against civilians in Israel. It has actually performed more attacks than either HAMAS or Palestinian Islamic Jihad, and has refused to abide by cease-fires those

groups have agreed to. Israel believes it has evidence that the PLO funds al-Aqsa, but the PLO denies this. Estimates place the group’s membership at a few hundred.

THE ANIMAL LIBERATION FRONT (ALF)

Started in Great Britain in the 1970s, this eco-terrorist group has spread to many other nations, including the United States. It commits criminal acts designed to protect, or further the “rights” of, animals. Primarily these include breaking into, vandalizing, and stealing from facilities that use animal testing procedures in the development of products for people, freeing “imprisoned” animals, and so forth. The authorities have also connected it to the firebombing of a circus trailer in New Jersey in 1999. According to some figures, ALF has caused as much as \$45 million in damage over the past ten years.

ARMED ISLAMIC GROUP (GIA)

This loosely-organized terrorist group seeks to replace the secular government of Algeria with a fundamentalist Islamic one. It attacks both government officials and soldiers, and innocent civilians; in December, 1997, the GIA reportedly massacred 400 Algerians in a small town in just a few hours. Crackdowns by the authorities have weakened it, allowing a similar organization, the Salafist Group for Call and Combat (GSPC) to become more prominent. Both groups are thought to have ties to Al Qaeda.

ARYAN NATION (AN)

This racist, anti-Semitic, right-wing American organization was founded by Richard Butler in the mid-1970s, and is also known as the Church of Jesus Christ Christian. Its general goal is the creation of a “racially cleansed,” all-white America. According to some reports, it once met with the Nation of Islam, a militant black organization led by Louis Farrakhan, to “divide up” the United States. The AN is also connected with the Aryan Brotherhood, a like-minded prison gang. It holds a convention every summer in Hayden Lake, Idaho.

In 2000, a jury gave a multimillion dollar award to a woman and her son who were attacked by Aryan Nation members outside the group’s Idaho headquarters. As a part of this award, the group’s compound and intellectual properties (including its name) were sold to the two plaintiffs after Butler filed for bankruptcy. Today, Ray Red-faeirn is the group’s leader.

TERRORIST GROUPS OF THE PAST

The following groups are no longer in existence and/or active, but were at some point during the latter half of the twentieth century. It's possible some of them might come back to life — either in the real world, or as part of your *Dark Champions* campaign.

ACTION DIRECTE (AD)

Known in English as Direct Action, this ultra-left wing French organization was founded in 1979 and had as its stated goal the replacement of the French government with a Marxist-Leninist one. (Some members seem to have held anarchist views as well.) Its acts have included all major forms of terrorism, such as assassination, bombing, and hostage-taking. Since 1987, most of its two to four dozen key members have been in prison, though they still have some supporters on the outside.

THE ORDER

Also known as the Brotherhood or the Brotherhood of Silence, this right-wing anti-Semitic organization planned to overthrow the United States government and establish an all-white state. Its members are in jail or dead (including founder Robert Matthews, killed by federal law enforcement agents during a December, 1984 shootout).

PUERTO RICAN INDEPENDENCE ORGANIZATIONS

Two terrorist organizations were associated with a movement for Puerto Rican independence during the 1970s and early 1980s. The first, the Armed Forces

AUM SHINRIKYO

The first terrorist organization known to have used weapons of mass destruction, the Aum Shinrikyo cult came to world attention in 1994 and 1995 when it used sarin gas to kill a total of 19 people and injure thousands more. Japanese authorities arrested many Aum followers, including founder Shoko Asahara. The group has since renamed itself Aleph, apologized for the attack, and promised to pay reparations, but Japanese officials still consider it as dangerous as ever.

Aum Shinrikyo has an estimated 1,500 to 2,000 followers (down from a peak of about 60,000), most in Japan and Russia. Its attacks have so far been confined to Japan. Many of its members are highly technically and/or scientifically proficient; its assets reportedly total about \$14 billion.

THE EARTH LIBERATION FRONT (ELF)

Founded in Brighton, England in 1992 by members of the Earth First! organization who refused to abandon ecoterrorism, this extremist environmentalist organization has spread to many other countries. The best-known of its ecoterrorist acts is the July, 1998 fire at a Vail, Colorado ski resort that caused \$12 million in damages.

ETA

ETA — *Euzkadi ta Askatasuna*, or Basque Fatherland and Liberty — is a terrorist organization in Spain with several hundred members. Its goal is the establishment of an independent Basque homeland in northern Spain. Since its founding in 1959, it has killed more than 800 persons in a multitude of attacks. In recent years, pressure from the Spanish government, a lack of support among the Basque populace, the IRA cease-fire, and restrictions placed upon its financial assets have hindered it significantly.

HAMAS

HAMAS, whose name is an acronym for an Arabic phrase that means Islamic Resistance Movements, has become one of the world's most infamous terrorist organizations in recent decades. It wants to expel the Israelis from Palestine and establish a separate Palestinian state. In recent years, some indications suggest HAMAS would accept an Israeli-Palestinian agreement it found acceptable. It has significant funding and many contacts throughout the world.

HAMAS's exact numbers are unknown, though some experts believe it has tens of thousands of supporters (in part because of its network of social services for Palestinians). It favors bombings, and has carried them out throughout Israel; in response, Israeli officials have assassinated many key HAMAS personnel.

HEZBOLLAH

Hezbollah (also spelled Hizballah, meaning "Army of God") is an Islamic fundamentalist organization whose goals include the destruction of Israel, the "liberation" of Jerusalem, and the establishment of an Islamic state in Lebanon. It has

strong ties to Iran, from whom it receives money and resources, and to Syria. Established in 1982, it's based in Beirut and is a party in Lebanese politics.

Hezbollah's attacks have killed hundreds of people. Some of the most infamous include the 1983 bombing of the American Embassy in Beirut and the 1985 bombing of the U.S. Marines barracks in Beirut.

THE JAPANESE RED ARMY (JRA)

This violent Communist terrorist organization wants to overthrow the Japanese government and foment a world Communist revolution. It acts as a terroristic mercenary group, performing terrorist acts for various nations and terrorists (such as Libya, North Korea, and the PFLP). It was responsible for, among other attacks, the May 1972 Lod Airport attack, the April 1988 bombing of a United States servicemen's club in Naples (at which time a JRA operative was arrested in New Jersey while carrying explosives), and a July 1988 attack on the U.S. Embassy in Madrid which involved rockets.

The JRA's founder and leader, Fusako Shigenobu, was arrested in 2000. As of mid-2004 the authorities estimate that no more than about six members of the organization remain at large.

THE KU KLUX KLAN (KKK)

The KKK is a far right-wing American white supremacist organization. It has many branches and factions, some of which commit terroristic acts against black communities or individuals.

KURDISTAN WORKERS' PARTY (PKK)

The PKK is a secular, left-wing organization dedicated to the creation of an independent Kurdish nation in lands now belonging to Turkey, Iraq, Iran, and Syria. Founded in 1974, it's best known for its 1984 guerrilla war against Turkey that resulted in approximately 35,000 deaths. Pressure from Turkish authorities transformed the PKK from a rural insurgent organization to an urban terrorist group in the early 1990s. After Turkish authorities captured the group's leader, Abdullah Ocalan, in 1999, the PKK halted its attacks and declared its intention to pursue its goals peacefully. It renamed itself KADEK, and then KONGRA-GEL. However, it has not disarmed, and most officials still regard it as a dangerous terrorist organization.

THE LIBERATION TIGERS OF TAMIL ELAM (LTTE)

The LTTE is a Sri Lankan organization dedicated to the establishment of an independent Tamil state on the island. Founded in the 1970s, in 1983 the LTTE launched a twenty year-long war of separatism that resulted in approximately 64,000 deaths and the displacement of as many as 1.6 million persons. As of 2004, the group controls parts of northern and eastern Sri Lanka, has its own army and navy (with a total of about 10,000 personnel), and possesses a significant arsenal that includes artillery and anti-aircraft weapons. It even has an elite force, the Black Tigers, whose 500 members carry out suicide attacks. In addition to its military operations, it's directed terrorist acts and assassination attempts

against Sri Lankan citizens and officials.

Since September 11, the LTTE's funding has decreased considerably, and it has entered into a cease-fire and peace talks with the Sri Lankan government. It seems to have softened its stance and indicated a willingness to consider an autonomous region within the Sri Lankan state. As of 2004, the outcome of the peace process remains uncertain.

PALESTINIAN ISLAMIC JIHAD (PIJ)

Founded in 1979 by Islamic radicals, the Palestinian Islamic Jihad (often referred to simply as Islamic Jihad) wants to destroy Israel and establish a Palestinian state. Its numbers are unknown, but suspected to be no more than approximately 250. Since the beginning of the second *Intifada* in September, 2000, its suicide bombings and other attacks have murdered more than 100 persons.

PALESTINE LIBERATION FRONT (PLF)

The Palestine Liberation Front has the same goal as the PIJ: the elimination of Israel and establishment of a Palestinian state. Since its founding in 1959, the PLF has gone through a long series of mergers and splits, the most important of which was a three-way splintering in the 1980s. The most important of the resulting factions was the pro-PLO one led by Abu Abbas, and it's this group's actions with which most Americans are familiar.

In 1985, four PLF terrorists hijacked the cruise ship *Achille Lauro*, in the process killing an American citizen and securing the release of Abu Abbas from an Italian prison. The PLF was quiet throughout the 1990s, but became active again during the *intifadas*, using hanggliders, hot air balloons, and even seaborne assaults to attack Israel. In 2003, American forces captured Abu Abbas in Baghdad; how this will affect the PLF remains to be seen.

The PLF has close ties to the PLO, but no known relationship with Al Qaeda (whose attacks it has condemned). It has approximately 300-500 members. It formerly received most of its funding from Iraq; where it will get its money since the toppling of the Saddam Hussein regime remains unknown.

PALESTINIAN LIBERATION ORGANIZATION (PLO)

This well-known terrorist alliance is dedicated to the establishment of a Palestinian state in the Middle East and the destruction of Israel. It is led by Yasir (or Yassir) Arafat and is a coalition of Palestinian groups rather than a single organization. Arafat's primary command is the subgroup Al Fatah. In the past, the PLO received support from the Soviet Union, various Arab nations, and the People's Republic of China.

Despite splintering into numerous organizations in the 1980s and 1990s, the PLO remains powerful and influential; Arafat effectively dominates the affairs of the Palestinian Authority, which helps the Israeli government control the West Bank and Gaza Strip. In December, 1998, Arafat renounced terrorism for all PLO organizations, though it remains to be seen how long the renunciation will last or how effective it will be.

POPULAR FRONT FOR THE LIBERATION OF PALESTINE (PFLP)

Founded in 1967 by Dr. George Habash, the leftist PFLP wants to destroy Israel, replace it with a socialist Palestinian state, and end American influence in the Middle East. Headquartered in Syria, it was extremely active in the 1970s, participating in airplane hijackings and instigating the 1972 attack on Lod Airport by four members of the Japanese Red Army.

In 2000, Habash handed leadership of the organization, which currently has approximately 800-1,000 members, to Abu Ali Mustafa. Mustafa was killed by Israeli rockets in 2001 in retaliation for PFLP car bombings and other attacks. Ahmed Saadat succeeded him, but was captured by the Palestinian Authority in 2002. The PFLP has threatened more attacks if the PA does not release him.

A PLFP splinter group, the PFLP-General Command, is even more violent; it split from the PFLP in 1968 due to what it perceived as the PFLP's willingness to negotiate with Israel. According to some sources, members of the PLFP-GC were responsible for the bombing of Pan Am Flight 103 in December, 1988.

AL QAEDA

The most infamous terrorist group in the world due to its attacks on the World Trade Center and Pentagon on September 11, 2001 and a Spanish train station in 2004, Al Qaeda is actually a sort of "umbrella" organization that both carries out its own attacks and provides support and training to like-minded groups. Its goal is the establishment of a worldwide Islamic regime, and it sees the United States as the greatest obstacle to achievement of that goal. It attacks not only American and Western targets, but the governments of Muslim countries it deems "non-Islamic."

The leader of Al Qaeda, Osama bin Laden, became involved in the struggle against "the infidel" during the Afghan resistance to the Soviet invasion in the 1980s. There he paid for the transportation and training of as many as 60,000 guerrillas. In 1988 he broke from his Afghan allies, whom he believed had "limited vision," to found Al Qaeda and carry on the fight against non-Muslims on a worldwide scale. After a brief return to his native Saudi Arabia, he moved to Sudan, but moved back to Afghanistan in 1996 at the behest of the Sudanese government. There he allied with the Taliban and established terrorist training camps and other support structures that ultimately led to the 1998 bombings of U.S. embassies in Kenya and Tanzania, the 2000 attack on the U.S.S. *Cole* in Yemen, and the September 11 attacks. Since then the American military presence in Afghanistan has destroyed Al Qaeda's presence there, forcing it to become more decentralized and mission-driven; as of mid-2004, bin Laden himself remains at large. Attacks around the world have been linked to Al Qaeda, and it remains a significant threat to the United States and Western civilization.

The exact size of Al Qaeda and extent of its resources remains unknown. It probably has at least

Continued from last page

Of National Liberation (FALN), was responsible for the bombing of five New York City banks in October 1974. It's also known for its unsuccessful attempt to use helicopter gunships to break its leaders out of Leavenworth prison in June, 1986. The second, the *Ejercito Popular Boricua*, was more popularly known as the *Macheteros*. This violent organization mainly attacked American personnel in Puerto Rico, and in 1981 blew up 11 planes at a Puerto Rican Air National Guard base. The capture of members of both groups in the 1980s has virtually ended their terrorist activities.

THE RED BRIGADES (BRIGATE ROSSE)

A left-wing Italian organization founded in 1969 and with roots in the Italian Communist Party, the Red Brigades was once a powerful organization, with as many as 500 full-time members and possibly thousands of supporters throughout Italy. Its most infamous acts were the 1978 kidnapping and murder of former Italian prime minister Aldo Moro and the kidnapping of Brigadier General James Dozier. Arrests in the late 1980s seem to have crippled the organization; at present it's estimated to have no more than about 50 members, and has not been involved in any terrorist activities in years.

THE REVOLUTIONARY ARMED TASK FORCE (RATF)

This American group was said to be the military branch of the May 19 Communist Organization (an American Communist terrorist group with links to

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other Communist terrorists). It was formed by various members of the Black Panthers, WUO, Black Liberation Army, and other American left-wing terrorist organizations with the goal of fomenting leftist/Communist revolution in the United States. It was supposedly destroyed by the manhunt following its October 1981 armored car robbery in New York.

THE WEATHER UNDERGROUND ORGANIZATION (WUO)

Also known as the Weathermen, this group was primarily active from the late 1960s until 1979; its goal was more or less the same as the RATE's. That year several members, including leader Bernardine Dohrn, turned themselves in to the authorities, while other members opted to remain terrorists and helped found the RATE.

a few thousand members, plus thousands more associated personnel. It has connections to many other terrorist organizations all over the world, and maintains numerous business fronts and other sources of income.

REAL IRISH REPUBLICAN ARMY (RIRA)

Founded in 1997-98 by hardliners within the Irish Republican Army (IRA) who objected to the IRA's cease-fire and engagement in a peace process with Great Britain, the RIRA remains an active terrorist organization dedicated to derailing the peace process and expelling the British from Northern Ireland. In 2001, British authorities captured the RIRA's leader, Michael McKevitt, and in 2002 McKevitt and forty other imprisoned RIRA personnel declared that the group was dissolved. Not all members obeyed, however, and RIRA attacks have continued since then. Estimates place the group's strength at 100-200 members.

According to some sources, the RIRA has received some support from American sympathizers. It may have bought advanced military weapons in the Balkans and engaged in drug trafficking to fund its "crusade."

Prior to 1997, the IRA itself was a well-known terrorist organization whose goal was the same as that of the RIRA. Based in Dublin, it restricted its activities, such as bombings and attacks on British soldiers, to Ireland itself (primarily in Northern Ireland, particularly Belfast). One of its factions or offshoots, the Provisional IRA (PIRA) or "Provos," engaged in terrorist acts in Britain and Europe as well as Ireland. The PIRA was generally the more violent of the two factions. Some reports indicated that the IRA/PIRA, which received a lot of support from Irish-Americans, was involved in gunrunning and drug trafficking in the United States as a way of raising money.

THE RED ARMY FACTION (RAF)

This German Communist group, a successor to or also known as the Baader-Meinhoff Gang, is small, with only about 10-20 members. However, it's extremely violent and dedicated to bringing about a Marxist-Leninist revolution, and has survived the arrests of many of its leaders. The Soviet Union and various Eastern Bloc states, as well as Libya, have supported it, and it has extensive ties to other European terrorist organizations. It mainly targets American interests in Europe, and it plans its bombings and other attacks to cause maximum deaths and injuries.

THE REVOLUTIONARY ARMED FORCES OF COLOMBIA (FARC)

Formed in 1964, the *Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia* is a Marxist terrorist organization dedicated to establishing a Communist state in Colombia. Funded largely by sales of cocaine, it has as many as 18,000 armed soldiers and controls as much as forty percent of Colombian territory. It has committed numerous terrorist acts in Colombian cities it does not control, and has been known to target United States citizens as well. While FARC does not seem to have any ties to foreign governments, it has links to the IRA, which may have provided it with explosives training.

SENDERO LUMINOSO

"The Shining Path" is an extremely violent Maoist group based in Perú and dedicated to founding a Maoist regime there and ending foreign influence in the country. Since its founding in the late 1960s, it has been responsible for 30,000 murders, if not more. Like FARC, it gets much of its funding from narcotics trafficking.

The Peruvian government captured Sendero Luminoso's founder and leader, Abimael Guzman, in September, 1992. Guzman's call for a cease-fire was only obeyed by one faction of SL. While the organization was relatively quiet throughout the 1990s, recent years have seen something of a resurgence in its activities. As of 2004, the best estimates place its membership in the 400-500 range.

chapter eight:



RUNNING THE GAUNTLET

**GAMEMASTERING
DARK CHAMPIONS**

CREATING A CAMPAIGN



Chapter One reviewed the major *Dark Champions* subgenres, discussing how to establish *Dark Champions* campaigns to emulate them and how to introduce the elements and features of the genre into your games. This chapter delves into more detail on the subject of GMing *Dark Champions* — everything from how to set up and manage a campaign to how to create enjoyable and memorable adversaries and NPCs. Gamemasters interested in further advice about GMing in general can also consult the GMing sections of the *HERO System 5th Edition, Revised, Champions*, and other *HERO System* genre books, and plenty of generic references on the art and science of GMing roleplaying games. Even though those sources aren't specific to *Dark Champions*, many of the suggestions and ideas they contain apply to any *HERO System* campaign.

CHARACTER GUIDELINES

The first thing to consider, usually even before you set pen to paper to create your *Dark Champions* world, is the nature and power of the PCs. As the protagonists of the campaign, the characters who occupy center stage all the time, the PCs have a greater effect on the game than any other factor.

The player characters' level of power, and thus the type of characters you can expect players to create, depends largely on how many Character Points the players build them on. A game where you allow players to build 200- or 250-point characters provides you with a wider range of PC types and abilities than one with 100- or 150-point characters — but it's also likely to increase any problems you may have challenging the PCs and maintaining game balance. When deciding how many points PCs can start with, you should consider the following issues:

SUBGENRE

First, what subgenre(s) does your campaign emulate? Some of them (“realistic” spies or soldiers, for example) work best with low-powered characters, while others (many “cinematic” games) need higher-powered PCs to get the right “feel” for the campaign. These are just guidelines, though — there's no reason you can't have high-powered PCs in an otherwise “realistic” campaign.

HEROES VERSUS THE WORLD

How do you want the PCs to compare to the world around them? Low-powered heroes may have trouble dealing with street thugs, security guards, and similar adversaries. On the opposite end of the spectrum, some powerful heroes may be able to affect the course of entire nations or regions. If the PCs can easily dispense with everyday opposition, that colors their perception of the world and influences their role within it.

Think about the types of adventures you want to run and what you expect the PCs to do over the course of the campaign. That tells you a lot about the type of PCs that best fit your game. For example; if you plan for a mostly urban-based vigilante campaign that focuses on organized crime, corruption in city government, and the like, you want your PCs to regard the average street criminal as a threat — if the heroes are significantly more powerful than that, your scenarios won't pose much of a challenge to them. While any one PC should be more powerful and skilled than any one typical thug (they are the heroes of the story, after all!), two or three thugs should probably be a match for a PC. On the other hand, a campaign of more epic scope or globetrotting adventure may require PCs of greater competence and ability.

POWER LEVELS AND EFFECTIVENESS CEILINGS

You should decide whether you want to impose restrictions on the amount of power, CV, Skills, and the like that characters can have. Characters built on large numbers of points may not be nearly as powerful as those points imply if you limit what they can spend points on. As mentioned on page 9, what matters for a *Dark Champions* campaign is not the amount of points involved, but what characters can buy with them.

In a *Dark Champions* context, point ceilings — restrictions on how many Active Points a power or ability can have — usually aren't appropriate. While it's possible to restrict the Active Points in weapons or characters' super-skills, in most cases that's neither necessary nor “realistic.” Powerful weapons are readily available to most *Dark Champions* PCs because they exist in the real world and gamers know they exist, so imposing artificial restrictions on the “power” of weapons usually harms the campaign's “feel.” A better solution is to find plausible in-game reasons to restrict characters' access to equipment (see page 264). Similarly, many super-skills and like abilities, while powerful, also tend to be heavily Limited, making them less

problematic than their Active Points might otherwise indicate.

Effectiveness ceilings — restrictions on characters' CVs, DEXs, Skill rolls, Combat Skill Levels, DCs, or the like — are more common in *Dark Champions* games than point ceilings. An effectiveness ceiling helps you control the PCs' overall power, making it easy for you to know what can challenge them and what can't. It also encourages characters to broaden and diversify their abilities, since the ceiling stops them from spending all their Experience Points on the same things game after game. But effectiveness ceilings can lead to problems of their own. First, they may restrict the types of weapons characters can use (since simulating some weapons properly requires a lot of DCs), and that may not make sense, "realistically." Second, over the course of a long campaign, you may soon wind up with a lot of characters who look identical to each other, or who try to find ways around the effectiveness ceiling even when those ways make no sense given their character concepts. You may need to increase the ceiling slowly over the course of the campaign, at least in one or two areas for each character type (for example, maybe you allow martial artists to buy more DEX and SPD than other characters can, and gun experts more Range Skill Levels).

Normal Characteristic Maxima

Intertwined with the concept of effectiveness ceilings are the Normal Characteristic Maxima rules, which impose a sort of ceiling on how many points characters can spend on Characteristics. See page 58 for further discussion of the effect of Normal Characteristic Maxima and how you can vary it to achieve the appropriate level of power for PCs in your campaign.

The Arms Race

Weapons and fighting skills are a prominent part of the *Dark Champions* genre. It's not uncommon for an "arms race" to develop in the campaign sooner or later. The players start trying to get more and bigger weapons for their characters, and they cry foul when the GM doesn't reward them with "treasure" in the form of sniper rifles, grenades, combat helicopters, and so on. Some of them even go to the trouble of buying extensive contacts in the black market for arms and military equipment just to give them a source for all the neat toys they want to buy.

There isn't necessarily anything wrong with this — after all, the "toys" are one of the fun aspects of the *Dark Champions* genre. But the arms race becomes a problem when the PCs acquire so much military hardware that they have little difficulty defeating their opposition. All good stories involve a challenge of some kind that the main characters have to overcome. If your *Dark Champions* PCs can cut through legions of thugs and criminals without breaking a sweat because they've got a minor arsenal's worth of weaponry, there's no challenge for them, and therefore everyone has less fun. Dealing with this conflict — wanting to give the characters more "toys," but not so many that they wreck the game — is one of the hardest things for *Dark Champions* GMs to do.

Some suggestions to help you reduce or eliminate this problem:

Give the characters "toys" with limited uses: Giving the characters an unlimited supply of grenades can easily unbalance a campaign. Giving them half a dozen grenades that they have to save for only the most crucial situations is fun.

Give the characters "toys," but minimize their opportunities to use them: In comic books and action movies, sometimes the most powerful characters are trapped in situations where they can't use their full power — so they have to think their way out. In a *Dark Champions* setting, you can give the characters new and powerful weapons, but then limit their chances to use them. For example, you might let the PCs get their hands on a high-powered sniper rifle, but decrease their chances to make sniping attacks on their enemies.

Give them "toys," but don't let them use them for very long: By incorporating the Resource Points rules into the game, you can give characters major weaponry for a while, then take it away from them — someone steals it or destroys it. Since the characters don't lose the Resource Points (just the weapon), they can create or find other equipment to make up for the loss.

Substitute equipment damage for character damage: When a character takes major damage from an enemy's attack, have that attack damage or destroy a weapon or other piece of equipment, rather than the character. You might even give the player a choice between character damage and equipment damage — a player who doesn't want to give up his character's gear can always opt to have his character take the actual damage. Similarly, you can have NPC attackers target the PCs' weapons.

Limit the characters' ability to build or acquire weapons and gadgets: If the PC group includes one or more characters who are skilled weaponsmiths, or who have extensive contacts in the arms market, you may have a harder time controlling the arms race. Limiting or forbidding these sorts of abilities, while sometimes an extreme solution, helps to keep a lid on the problem.

And don't forget — the bad guys can have powerful "toys," too. Anything the PCs use against their enemies, their enemies can use against them (though this also gives the PCs an opportunity to get those weapons by defeating their foes). Pointing this out to the PCs may cause them to rein themselves in voluntarily.

EXPERIENCE POINTS AND CHARACTER GROWTH

You should also consider how, and how fast, you want the characters to grow in competence and power. If you're planning a long-term campaign with frequent game sessions and generous Experience Point awards, building PCs with a relatively small amount of Character Points doesn't cause as many problems, since the players know their characters will become more powerful at a fairly steady

pace. On the other hand, if you can't run game sessions on a regular basis, or you prefer to control character growth by minimizing the number of Experience Points you award, it may work better if the PCs start out fairly powerful. Otherwise they're likely to become aggravated when they constantly run up against situations their characters *should* be able to cope with, but can't because they don't yet have the points to buy all the Knowledge Skills, Talents, and abilities they should have based on character conception.

Generally speaking, a *Dark Champions* character built on, say, 150 Character Points plus 150 Experience Points tends to be better developed than a starting character built on 300 Character Points. The latter character probably has a larger attack, or more attacks, but the experienced character is more well-rounded as a person. The gradual acquisition of Experience Points leads to different spending patterns than giving a player a large lump of Character Points to spend all at once. Starting at relatively lower power levels, but building over the course of the campaign, may be the best approach for many *Dark Champions* games.

Paranormal Abilities In Dark Champions

One of the principal differences between *Dark Champions* and *Champions* is what types of paranormal and superhuman powers and phenomena exist. In a *Champions* game, virtually any sort of power is available — characters can fly, shoot beams of energy from their eyes, read and control minds, teleport, walk through walls, you name it. Aliens, medieval wizards, and beings from other dimensions frequently cross paths.

But *Dark Champions* games are different. Grounded, at least theoretically, in a game world which is not greatly different from the “real world,” they usually don't feature the powers and ultra-high technology that *Champions* games do. In all but a few subgenres (primarily *Dark Champions: The Animated Series*), allowing *Dark Champions* characters to purchase “pure” superpowers destroys the ambience of the genre — the “feel” you expect the game to have.

But it's possible to envision *some* paranormal abilities and phenomena in *Dark Champions* games. Many gamers don't want to play in an entirely “realistic” world where nothing out of the ordinary exists or occurs. As the GM, your task is to define what paranormal abilities are appropriate for your campaign. Some — self-powered Flight or Desolidification, for example — are clearly out of bounds. Others — slightly enhanced senses, a few extra inches of Leaping — may not cause problems. But there's a large middle ground where the issue becomes murkier. Some GMs might allow certain superpowers, some might not, depending on their conception of “Dark Champions” and their individual campaigns.

The Evil That Men do

Paranormal powers are generally more appropriate for villains and NPCs than for player characters. The PCs are the central figures in any campaign — all of the action revolves around them. If you let them have superhuman powers, those powers become a major part of the campaign, and affect many aspects of it that would ordinarily remain untouched.

Villains and NPCs, on the other hand, are transient aspects of a campaign. They appear briefly, then get killed, go to prison, or simply fade into the background until they have another plot ready to spring on the unsuspecting city. Giving an adversary a paranormal ability or two doesn't have nearly as great an affect on the campaign setting as the same power would in the hands of a PC. And a person with a paranormal ability makes an interesting change of pace and a tough opponent for non-superpowered PCs.

Plausible Deniability

Powers work better in *Dark Champions* games when you can plausibly explain them as “normal” phenomena, or when there's no tangible evidence of their existence. The television show *The X-Files* demonstrates just how far you can go with this sort of thing. Even though the main characters encounter something unusual or paranormal in nearly every episode, they never obtain any concrete proof: their witnesses die or become insane; physical evidence is destroyed, lost, or confiscated by superior officers and never seen again; various scientific explanations (diseases, mental problems, marsh gas, odd chemicals) are offered to cover up the true nature of a paranormal event; or something that seems paranormal turns out to be perfectly mundane (morbid or horrifying, to be sure, but still non-paranormal).

The same rule applies to gaming campaigns. If no one can prove that paranormal powers and phenomena exist, you can throw them at the players without doing much damage to the “feel” of the genre and the average NPC's view of the world. Maybe magic works, and certain people are powerful wizards — but if only the PCs know this for sure, and scientists can explain any “odd” incidents as mass hallucinations or biological warfare accidents, “reality” doesn't warp too much. This is another reason why you generally shouldn't let PCs have paranormal abilities — if they have them, they'll use them, and the more they're used, the harder it becomes to hide them or explain them away.

TYPES OF PARANORMAL ABILITIES

Here's a general classification of the types of paranormal powers and how you can use them in *Dark Champions* games.

Ch'i Powers

Ch'i powers — amazing abilities displayed by martial artists — are discussed at length in *The Ultimate Martial Artist* and *Ninja Hero*. Leaving aside the wondrous and utterly implausible abilities seen in the wilder martial arts films, many *ch'i*

powers are acceptable in *Dark Champions* campaigns. In fact, many of them have been demonstrated on film or “live” by martial artists in the real world. If they exist in the real world, they certainly exist in the world of *Dark Champions*.

Magic

Magic and mystical powers of the sort depicted in most comic books and Fantasy novels and games — flashy, powerful, quickly-cast spells — are entirely inappropriate for *Dark Champions* campaigns. But not all magic works like that. Some magic is dark, brooding, mysterious, and deadly — perfect for *Dark Champions*, especially if you’re running a Monster Hunters campaign or the like.

Here’s how magic should work in *Dark Champions*:

It should be complex and difficult to use: Rather than just shouting out a few words, the *Dark Champions* mystic has to spend hours meditating, or must engage in elaborate preparations — in other words, bringing his abilities to bear takes effort. Often it also requires a lot of time, and the assistance of others (*i.e.*, it’s “ritual magic”). For example, performing a human sacrifice is a classic type of preparation required for spells of black magic.

It should be unreliable and dangerous: *Dark Champions* magic is not foolproof; it often fails to work. In *HERO System* terms, you can represent this with Limitations like *Activation Roll*, *Concentration*, and *Requires A Skill Roll*. Furthermore, *Dark Champions* magic is often as dangerous to the user as to his target — magical backlashes may occur, summoned demons may turn on their summoners, and so forth. Limitations such as *Side Effects* represent this. Be creative with Side Effects and other problems associated with magic; a tricky, long-lasting curse of some sort is a lot more fun than a simple Drain STUN.

It should be mysterious: Very few people can successfully practice magic; for every true wizard there are dozens of charlatans or people who *think* they’re wizards, but actually have very little idea what they’re doing (or about the consequences of their actions!).

It should be dark and evil: The “good guys” rarely use magic. It’s a tool of evil men, those who scheme and plot in the shadows instead of facing their opponents in a “fair” fight. Even PCs who study magic and mysticism should recognize that using it puts one’s soul in peril, and that it’s a tool they should turn to with the greatest reluctance.

You should impose similar standards on innately magical creatures, such as werewolves and vampire characters (if you allow them to exist at all). These types of characters fit into many *Dark Champions* games very well — they’re dark, moody, mysterious creatures of the shadows, and usually quite dangerous. They’re especially effective if experts have developed quasi-scientific, pseudo-realistic rationales for their abilities.

Psychic Powers

Comic book- style mental powers have no place in *Dark Champions*; they ruin the feel of the campaign. But just like magic, in small doses and with “dark” effects and feel, psychic abilities may be appropriate for modern-day action-adventure stories. Here are some guidelines:

They should be low-powered and/or of limited use: Except in rare instances, psionic abilities should be low-powered (usually no more than 30-40 Active Points) and heavily Limited; Activation Roll, Concentration, Extra Time, Gradual Effect, Increased Endurance Cost, Requires A Skill Roll, and Side Effects are all good restrictions. You might grant exceptions for high-powered abilities that are even more Limited (such as mind transference).

They should rarely, if ever, be usable in combat: *Dark Champions* mental powers are not the sort of “battle psionics” common to comics and science fiction. Rather, they should remain in the “background,” ready for out of combat uses (such as interrogating a suspect), or should be so slow-acting and subtle that they’re of no use in combat. They may have minor combat uses, but by and large, they’re not intended for fighting.

They should be dark and dangerous: *Dark Champions* mental powers should have a negative effect not only on the character’s targets, but on the characters themselves. People with mental powers often become insane (even sociopathic), or suffer from delusions or similar problems. The victims of mental powers may also experience minor long-term effects.

Superpowers

“Pure” superpowers — the innate, easily-used, high-powered superhuman abilities displayed by the typical *Champions* character or described in *The UNTIL Superpowers Database* — are completely inappropriate for *Dark Champions*.

Technology

Obviously, any technological item available in the real world is available to *Dark Champions* characters. You may want to take this principle one step further — anything that *could* be built in the real world (assuming the resources and motivation existed) is acceptable in the world of *Dark Champions*, regardless of whether it currently actually exists in the real world. In some instances this may even extend to devices which are slightly beyond the true cutting edge (for example, the technology to create “super-soldiers” via sera and armor implantation). The line of demarcation depends on your preferences and the “feel” you’re trying to create for your campaign.

Generally, comic-book supertechnology — laser pistols, teleportation devices, skintight non-motion-impeding bullet-resistant impact-absorbing body armor, personal jetpacks, powered armor, and so on — is totally inappropriate for *Dark Champions* games. Modern technology can do some amazing things, but not *that* amazing. Some subgenres, such as *Dark Champions: The Animated Series*, may relax this restriction a little.

CAMPAIGN TONE

A campaign's *tone* refers to its morality, realism, and outlook, and the importance of the player characters.

MORALITY

Establishing the proper moral tone for your *Dark Champions* campaign may be the single most important thing you can do to define the game for your players. Because they so often deal with matters of life and death, action heroes need to know exactly where they (and the campaign world) stand, ethically speaking.

Most *Dark Champions* campaigns tend to favor a “shades of grey” approach to moral tone. Even if the PCs are *usually* sure about who's a good guy and who's not, they can't always be certain. The possibility exists that a best friend could actually be an enemy agent, that the criminal they're stalking is an undercover cop, or that their superiors lied to them to justify a morally questionable mission. In some campaigns, such as highly “realistic” espionage games, the PCs may feel they can't trust *anyone* — not even each other!

On the other hand, a more “black and white” approach is appropriate for some campaigns and subgenres. After all, not every GM or player wants to deal with moral issues at the gaming table — some are just looking for action and excitement! In these games, telling the good guys from the bad guys usually poses no problem whatsoever. Most

Dark Champions: The Animated Series campaigns, and many vigilante crimefighter games, adopt this style of play.

Of course, you can shift between types of morality if you want to. Even the lightest-hearted campaign may feature a traitor or NPC of dubious morality from time to time, and sometimes in even the darkest games the moral questions have crystal-clear answers.

Hope In The Face Of Despair

One of the central themes of *Dark Champions* is brave men attempting to hold back the darkness — to prevent evil and corruption from overcoming that which is good and innocent in society. In other words, the PCs should be a force for hope, standing firm in the face of despair and evil. They shouldn't be glorified thugs with greater firepower, crushing anyone who gets in the way of their “fun.”

It's not always easy to convey this feeling to the players. As they participate in adventure after adventure, they may start to wonder if they're making any sort of a difference. After all, won't a new crimelord replace the one they just took down, or a new enemy threaten the security of their nation? The betrayals and setbacks and double-crosses they experience may lead them to believe that they can't save anyone, regardless of how hard they try. In short, the bitterness and despair of the world may rub off on them. The ones who start their careers angry and cynical may even *like* that.

You should make sure the PCs realize they can and do make a difference. They need to have



long-lasting or permanent triumphs, both with individuals and with organizations (and/or society as a whole) to validate their existence as heroes. Not every game will involve a permanent solution to some problem, but at least some games should. *Dark Champions* games shouldn't descend into simple struggles for survival, where morality is meaningless and there's no real purpose to the characters' actions beyond self-gratification and profit.

A Spark Of Heroism

Similarly, you should make sure all PCs, no matter how dark the campaign, have some redeeming features and spark of heroism. There are plenty of cruel, selfish bastards running around in the world, but few (if any) of them become heroes. Being a hero means looking beyond one's self to see and solve problems in the world at large. Even in a dark game, the PCs should be better than the average person, and that doesn't just mean in terms of their strength or ability to aim a gun — it means *morally* as well.

A character's morality is the key to motivating him and getting him involved in what's going on in the campaign. Completely introspective characters, or ones motivated only by money, desire to relieve ennui, or hunger for power can be almost impossible to weave into the tapestry of a campaign. A character who won't risk his life to save the little old lady who wandered out into the street in front of a speeding bus is a character you don't want in your campaign — working him into the game will be like pulling eyeteeth. Characters who can't see beyond themselves, beyond their own thoughts and desires, are death to any vibrant, active *Dark Champions* campaign.

What a GM really needs, even in a dark campaign, is PCs who leap to meet a challenge, do a good deed, or accomplish something worthwhile — heroes, in other words. Even if the PCs go about this in dark ways (like shooting gang punks or a dictatorial government's goons), they're still taking part in something worth doing.

While every PC should have a moral code, they don't all have to have the *same* moral code. In fact, moral conflict is a staple of the genre. Characters may want to accomplish the same things, but they may have very different reasons for wanting this, and very different means of accomplishing it. For example, think of two vigilantes, both equally interested in stopping crime. One will be brutal and vicious if he must, but has sworn he will never knowingly or deliberately take a life. The other carries more guns than your average battalion of soldiers and thinks nothing of shooting criminals in cold blood. Both of these characters are motivated by a distinct morality, and both fit well into a *Dark Champions* campaign — but will they see eye to eye on everything? Don't bet on it. And it's that sort of conflict that makes *Dark Champions* so interesting.

REALISM

The issue of how "realistic" a *Dark Champions* campaign should be is one of the trickiest you'll grapple with as a GM. On the one hand, the

modern-day action-adventure genre takes place more or less in the "real world" — not in a Fantasy realm, on some distant planet, or in a world where superhumans are commonplace. That creates certain expectations of "realism" that you have to maintain. Guns and gear have to behave like we expect them to behave. Criminals stick to relatively plausible schemes. Anti-gravity technology doesn't exist.

But at the same time, the action-adventure genre is often "romantic" in the dramatic sense of the term: unrealistic, given to the outrageous and improbable in the name of storytelling, excitement, and fun. Some types of *Dark Champions* games — cinematic spies or Hong Kong movie-style cops, for example — don't worry so much about how many bullets a gun has or whether a criminal mastermind can build an orbital headquarters. But even in these games there are limits; characters don't have hovercraft, magic wands, or laser pistols.

The Limits Of "Realism"

Regardless of what level of "romantic action" you choose, do your best to avoid the perils of letting "realism" dominate the game. Nothing's more likely to bring a game session to a screeching halt than a debate over whether the *HERO System* rules "realistically" or "properly" simulate how a particular type of gun or ammunition works, or just how powerful a *Los Angeles*-class submarine should be in game terms. Remember, roleplaying games are about simulating *dramatic realism*, not true "realism," so don't let concerns about being "realistic" derail your fun.

OUTLOOK

What sort of overall perspective does your campaign have — optimistic or pessimistic? In the former, the PCs can generally expect things to turn out right, and they know there's always *some* hope for victory or success even when things seem darkest. In the latter, the PCs have to face up to the cold, hard realities of life: things don't always go their way, they can't always overcome the odds, and whether they succeed or fail is entirely up to them (and, perhaps, luck).

In *Dark Champions*, a campaign's outlook usually depends on its subgenre — the more "cinematic" the game, the brighter the outlook for the PCs. In some ultra-"realistic" espionage and military campaigns, PCs can rarely expect things to go their way 100%, but in cinematic games usually everything turns out all right in the end — and the hero gets the girl to boot!

IMPORTANCE OF THE HEROES

Last, but perhaps most crucially, how important are the PCs? Obviously in any campaign the characters are the focus of the story, but how important are they *within the campaign world*? Can they affect the outcome of major events, such as wars (be they cold or hot)? Does the fate of the world rest on their shoulders? In part, this may relate to the subgenre of the campaign, or the characters' level of power or backgrounds — a highly-trained elite soldier or spy is more likely to find himself in a position to save the world than an urban vigilante.

CAMPAIGN THEME

The *theme* of a campaign is the underlying subject or focus of all the adventures. It isn't strictly necessary to have one, but a campaign without a theme may seem disconnected and unfocused. For example, a vigilante crimefighters campaign may focus on the theme of "Justice." Over the course of the campaign, the PCs may encounter many different characters and situations, triumph over adversity, suffer setbacks. But regardless of the type of adventures they or the outcome of those adventures, the underlying theme remains the same: the heroes have to keep striving to serve Justice, and part of that service is defining what Justice is.

It's possible to have more than one theme in a campaign. Adventures can cycle among a couple of different underlying subjects — the adventures of a group of Special Forces soldiers could alternate between preserving the good and the ramifications of power. You shouldn't get carried away with multiple themes, though, since having too many isn't much better than having none at all.

Be careful not to confuse theme with message. "The effects of guns on society" is a theme; "guns are bad" is a message. You can return to a theme, look at it from various angles, and develop it in depth. But once you've stated a message, the only thing to do is state it again.

Common themes in *Dark Champions* include:

JUSTICE AND LAW

The fundamental question at the heart of many vigilante crimefighting and law enforcement campaigns is this: what is Justice? Trying to decide what's just, and what's unjust, and how the characters' actions serve the goal of promoting Justice, can be infinitely fascinating. And the corollaries — How far should one go to serve Justice? Does the law represent Justice? Do the ends really justify the means? Does a person have the right to take the law into his own hands? Can imperfect Man know perfect Justice? — are equally intriguing.

MONEY

In some *Dark Champions* campaigns, it's all about the bucks. The characters' role in life is to accumulate as much lucre as they can, however they can, and often without worrying about the morality or implications of their actions. This is a common theme for *Caper Hero* campaigns, but it may also be the focus of mercenary-oriented Military Action games and the like. And of course, even in a high-toned crimefighting or espionage campaign, the characters may sometimes need a suitcase full of c-notes to finance their missions.

PATRIOTISM

What the theme of Justice is to vigilante crimefighting, Patriotism is to many Military Action and Espionage games. Characters in these games usually serve a particular government, nation, or similar cause. How far should they go in its service? Can a character serve and uphold the ideals of a nation by violating those ideals to pro-

tect it? What happens to a character who loses the faith, or discovers the nation he has served so well and so long has betrayed him or left him to die?

POWER

The theme of power raises the issue of what types of power exist, and how people use them (or should use them). In most *Dark Champions* campaigns, this refers to governmental power, or law enforcement power. This theme potentially raises all kinds of juicy questions. What forms of power exist? What are the proper uses of power? Who should wield power? What should people do when someone uses power improperly? Does power corrupt? Caveat: Plato asked these same questions thousands of years ago in *The Republic*, and no one has ever definitively answered them.

PRESERVE THE GOOD

In many *Dark Champions* campaigns, the dominant theme is: how can the characters preserve that which is good and worthy, and what sacrifices must they make to do so? Of course, this requires you to define for the players (or for them to decide for themselves) what is "good," and thus worth preserving, but usually that's not difficult. The threat to the good is usually obvious — a crimelord, a Communist or Nazi regime, a tyrannical dictator, or the like. This theme only works well in games with "black and white" morality; it's hard to preserve the good if the characters don't know what "the good" is.

CAMPAIGN TYPES

After, or at the same time as, choosing a theme, you need to decide on the type of campaign you want to run. Often one decision leads to another; an Espionage game probably focuses on themes of Patriotism, Power, and/or Preserving The Good, not on Justice or Money.

Subgenre

Chapter One describes the various *Dark Champions* subgenres. Each subgenre has benefits and drawbacks from a gaming perspective; keeping these in mind as you create a campaign should let you maximize the former, and minimize the latter.

VIGILANTE CRIMEFIGHTING

Vigilante crimefighting lies at the heart of the *Dark Champions* genre, since it can incorporate virtually any sort of character or adventure from the genre as a whole. In much the same way that *Champions* can feature characters with Fantasy or Science Fiction backgrounds (even though Fantasy and SF don't feature superheroes), a group of vigilante crimefighters could include a costumed vigilante, an ex-Green Beret, a former (or current!) field agent for the CIA, and a (reformed?) cat burglar. This gives you unparalleled flexibility when it comes to designing adventures and adversaries for the PCs.

On the downside, crimefighting campaigns tend to be more limited in scope than many other *Dark Champions* subgenres. Characters usually stick to a single urban setting, and may not have any easy way to visit other places. If you consider this a problem and want to avoid it, make sure at least one character has an accessible means of transportation (such as a private jet), then pit the characters against international criminals and crime groups as much as against local crooks.

CAPER

Caper campaigns offer an interesting change of pace from the usual *Dark Champions* approach — instead of being the “good guys,” the characters are criminals (albeit kind-hearted, nonviolent ones). Some gaming groups find this refreshing and fun. However, *Caper Hero* doesn’t always make for a good long-term campaign, since every adventure tends to be the same: find a target; study the target; take down the target. Instead, *Caper Hero* may work better as a short-term campaign (one spanning a few game sessions at most), or as an interesting interlude for another type of *Dark Champions* campaign. For example, maybe a team of PC spies has to pull a caper to obtain stolen blueprints from an enemy intelligence agency.

DARK CHAMPIONS: THE ANIMATED SERIES

For many gaming groups, DC:TAS is the perfect mix of *Dark Champions* elements. The PCs don’t have superpowers (or at best only possess minor paranormal abilities), but they fight crime in a world where some of the villains might, and where the technology isn’t necessarily restricted to what exists in the real world. Furthermore, they get to act like hardnosed vigilantes, but don’t have to worry about the messy ethics of killing criminals.

On the other hand, this mix of elements and attitude may make your job as GM a little more difficult. Your villains have to act more or less like real criminals, but they can’t get too violent and vicious or you’ll ruin the game’s Silver Age-y patina. In a genre that at least pays “lip service” to the concept of “realism,” this may not seem “realistic” at all. If you can cope with (or even prefer) this sort of disconnect, DC:TAS may be the perfect subgenre for you to run.

ESPIONAGE

Espionage is the favorite *Dark Champions* subgenre for many gaming groups. It allows for the widest possible scope of adventure — a spy might have to go just about anywhere or do just about anything on his missions (and the fact that the locales he most often adventures in are glamorous ones doesn’t hurt). If the group wants a little more “realism” or darkness, you can hew more toward gritty John Le Carré-style stories; if they prefer drama and over-the-top action, take James Bond as your model.

On the other hand, the potential breadth of an Espionage game may create more work for you. Instead of focusing your campaign creation efforts on a single city, you have to know about the world as a whole. What nations exist, and what are they currently up to? Are there any wars going on (and if so, between who and over what)? Which intelligence agencies are the main players in the Great Game, and what alliances and rivalries exist between them? In short, an Espionage game may require a lot more “prep work” than other types of *Dark Champions* games. Depending on how you plan your campaign, you may be able to do the work piecemeal, preparing only what you need for a given scenario and gradually weaving it into a whole.

LAW ENFORCEMENT

Law enforcement games are often like Vigilante Crimefighting campaigns, but with an important twist: the characters fight crime *within* the law, instead of outside it. This adds entire dimensions to the story that Vigilante Crimefighting lacks. For example, take the issue of police procedure. How closely do the characters follow procedure in their adventures? If they’re willing to violate procedure to make an important “bust,” are they likely to get in trouble for it (and if so, what are the consequences)? Similarly, because the PCs are part of an organization rather than a group of vigilantes, they have to deal with departmental politics, bothersome superiors, corruption in the force, and so on.

The potential drawback to Law Enforcement campaigns is their relatively narrow focus. Cops have just one job — protecting the public — and can only do it within a limited jurisdiction. Rarely, if ever, can they travel to other places in pursuit of a suspect or to track down a clue. Unless the campaign is completely cinematic, they have to make *some* effort to follow procedure, and that may become tiresome. One possible solution to these problems is to make the group of PCs some sort of “interdepartmental task force” so that (a) the characters can come from just about any law enforcement organization, not just one, and (b) the group as a whole has much broader jurisdiction and freedom to act than a group of ordinary cops or FBI agents.

MONSTER HUNTERS

In most respects, a Monster Hunters campaign resembles a DC:TAS game. The characters are (or usually are) relatively restricted (they’re typically more or less normal humans with weapons and gear), but their foes are not. The introduction of monsters, mysticism, and ancient prophecies can provide an element of “spice” that a campaign involving purely mundane foes lacks.

But this also requires you to do more work to define the background and history of your setting. Why is it that monsters and magic exist? Have they always existed? Who else knows about them? You also have to create the monsters the heroes hunt and slay, though *The HERO System Bestiary* and *Monsters, Minions, And Marauders* can take some of that burden off your shoulders.

Campaign Subject

In most cases, the subgenre of a *Dark Champions* campaign describes the subject of that campaign: vigilante crimefighters fight crime; spies gather intelligence; soldiers conduct combat missions against the enemy. Here are a few more subjects that might influence more than one type of campaign.

POLITICS

Not all *Dark Champions* adventures have to involve excitement and intrigue of the physical sort. Instead, the characters might find themselves embroiled in diplomatic or political situations. This occurs most frequently in Espionage games where characters often mingle in diplomatic circles, but it could affect many other types of characters — the actions of soldiers or law enforcement agents often have significant political ramifications. You might even want to make politics a central feature of the campaign. For example, maybe the PCs are an elite search-and-rescue team that answers directly to the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the Secretary of Defense, or the President. For a more unusual type of “political intrigue” campaign, maybe the PCs *are* the Joint Chiefs of Staff, or the President and his staff.

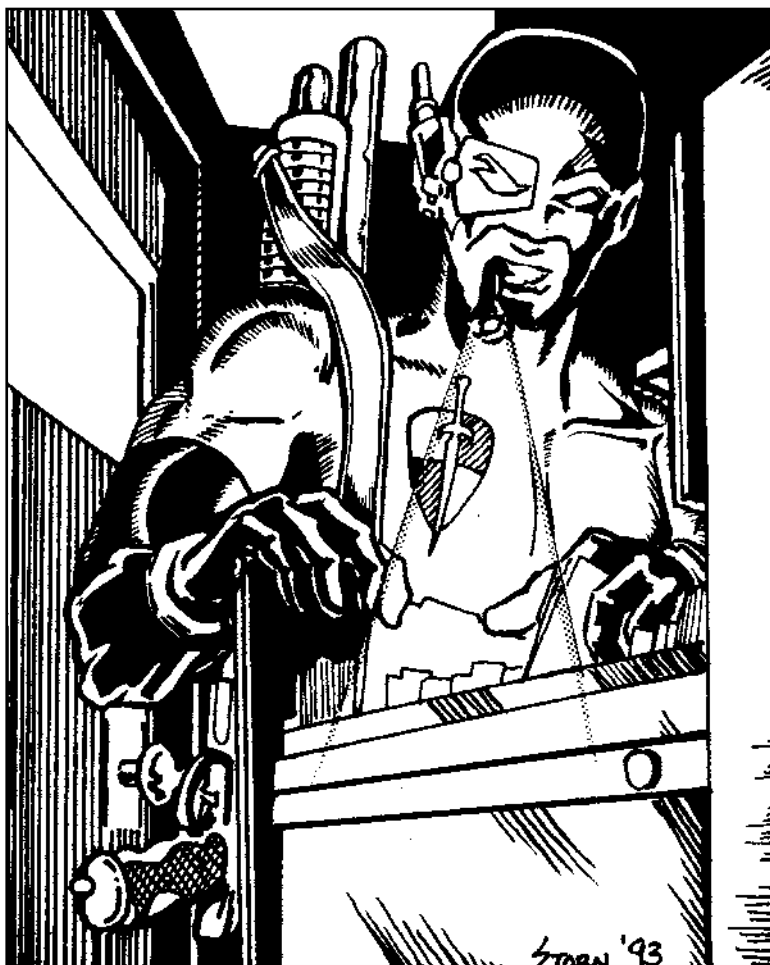
REBELLION

One possible focus for a Military Action campaign is to make the PCs rebels against an unjust government. Rather than fighting on behalf of a recognized regime, they're outcasts struggling to free their nation from oppression and injustice. This allows you to control the PCs in the same way you would if they were Navy SEALs or the like, but also restricts the type of equipment they have available (since guerrilla warriors rarely have the budget for, or access to, the latest military systems). It also raises questions of Justice and Patriotism: what actions can the characters legitimately take to triumph without descending into terrorism or oppression themselves?

WAR

Another option for a Military Action game is all-out war. Rather than going on special ops missions and the like, the PCs are soldiers who sometimes fight pitched battles. They might be the crew of a tank, a squad of infantrymen trapped behind enemy lines, a specialized commando unit, or any other similar group of fighting men. Countless war movies and novels offer plenty of inspiration and ideas.

Military campaigns have several advantages for *Dark Champions*. The heroes go where they're ordered, and can only have the equipment issued to them... but they know the adventure begins when they get to the mission zone. However, the players may start wishing for variety (which you can provide with “R&R” trips or temporary assignments), and the emphasis on combat means players who like wargaming have fun and those who don't loathe this kind of campaign.



SPECIAL OPS/MILITARY ACTION

A Special Ops/Military Action campaign offers many of the same benefits and drawbacks Espionage games do: characters can go just about anywhere and perform many different kinds of missions, but that means you have to prepare for that breadth and depth.

Similarly, Military campaigns, like Espionage and Law Enforcement, make the characters a part of a larger organization. You can use this to keep the PCs in line, make them go where you want to go, and prevent them from having equipment you don't want them to have: their commanding officers give them orders, and they have to obey them; and sometimes the budget won't let the organization buy the world's best sniper rifle just because the PCs want one. But once again, you may have to do some advance work to flesh out the organization so it remains consistent and logical throughout the campaign.

TECHNOTHRILLER AND WEIRD CONSPIRACY

The good and bad points of a technothriller game or weird conspiracy campaign depend on the basic subgenre on which you overlay those elements. If it's a Military Action game, it functions like one; if it's an Espionage campaign, the characters have to cope with the potential pitfalls of being spies as well as the problems of advanced technology or UFOs.

RUNNING THE GAME



Your job as GM doesn't end when you create your campaign and develops the setting. Quite the reverse: now you have to actually run the games while your players enjoy what you've created... and help you flesh out your quasi-fictional universe.

ADVENTURE STRUCTURE

There are two main approaches to adventure design: plotted and unplotted. In a plotted adventure, you have a specific story in mind, which the PCs follow to the climax. In an unplotted adventure, there is no plot, merely a situation; what happens depends entirely on the PCs' actions. Each method has its advantages and disadvantages.

PLOTTED ADVENTURES

Plotted adventures have the great advantage of a satisfying story structure. The action builds from the hook to the climax, encounters exist to provide tension or move the story along, and the heroes are at the center of events. You can use all the tricks developed by writers over the past three millennia: foreshadowing, suspense, conflict, jump cutting, catharsis. You can borrow plots and plot ideas from a vast array of sources, from Shakespeare to Larry Bond. You can tailor the opposition to the characters' power level and personalities.

On the downside, plotted adventures can become too rigid in structure — you know where you want the story to go, so you force the heroes to go there. Players may feel you're railroading them, or that their actions don't really have an effect. If they suspect you'll let them succeed regardless of what they do (because story progression requires it), the story loses all suspense and drama — the players start to use "metagame thinking" to deduce the plot and figure out what their characters should do, rather than acting as their characters would behave in that situation.

To avoid the problem of "railroading," plan out several possible resolutions for the adventure (and for each major scene within the adventure) depending on what the characters do. If the story involves discovering a plot to assassinate the President, the climax might consist of a battle with the killers or impersonating the President. But no matter how many options you prepare, be ready to abandon all of them when the players think up something you didn't. The most profound truth in gaming is "the players never do what you expect."

UNPLOTTED ADVENTURES

Unplotted adventures, by contrast, have no set storyline. You merely establish a situation and let the players determine the action. The situation can be dynamic or passive. In a dynamic situation, things happen and it's up to the players to cope with them — the enemy is attacking, counterintelligence agents are closing in on the PCs, or the like. A passive situation is one in which things are stable (at least until the PCs show up) — the Soviets are encroaching in Afghanistan, a robbery crew is taking down scores on the south side of town. In either case, if there are villains, they follow whatever motives you wish to give them, rather than filling the role of Antagonist in a story. The World exists, running along on its own, and the PCs must make their own decisions about what to do and how to do it.

Unplotted adventures have the advantage of feeling realistic — after all, the real world doesn't neatly follow classical dramatic structure, and every person is an NPC to other people. They give the players a great deal of influence over the course of the adventure, and let them choose to do what they enjoy. If you've prepared your campaign well, unplotted adventures are a good way to show off the scope and depth of your *Dark Champions* setting.

But unplotted adventures have their own disadvantages. Often the action becomes just a series of combats or short-term missions. In a dynamic situation, the players may find it frustrating to be at the mercy of events. The need to either create new encounters on the fly or prepare a vast amount of background and NPCs which you may never use might overwhelm you. Finally, the structure of unplotted adventures can be unsatisfying — the heroes may overcome the main opposition early and spend the rest of their time mopping up underlings, or they fail to acquire crucial information or gear and end up outclassed at the climax.

Plotted and unplotted adventures aren't completely incompatible. Characters may start out in a seemingly unplotted situation, but encounter various hooks for stories. Depending on which ones they follow up, they can get involved in plotted stories. In the course of going through those story plots, they exist in an unplotted environment, so if they diverge from the story they don't wander off into "blank hexes."

Plotting

The most dependable basis for an adventure plot is the tried and true three-act structure, familiar from classic plays, comic books, films, and almost every other type of story. The first act is the adventure hook, in which the heroes become involved in the story and encounter initial obstacles. The second act presents more obstacles for the heroes to overcome (often with an intriguing twist or turn of events), and the third act is the climax and resolution of the story.

THE FIRST ACT: ADVENTURE HOOK

Adventure hooks come in various forms. The simplest is to have an NPC hire or order the heroes to do something — “After you arrive for the meeting, the Colonel shows up and explains the mission to you.” That’s a standard hook for all sorts of *Dark Champions* stories; it’s quick and gets the story moving. Alternately, someone can beg the heroes for help — if they’re properly heroic, how can they resist? And of course, the actions of an enemy can draw the heroes into an adventure. Many James Bond movies begin this way — a cinematic mastermind launches Stage 1 of his plot, and away the story goes.

Some adventure hooks are situational; almost any circumstance the PCs find themselves in can draw them into an adventure. Being out of money means the heroes need to find a way to earn some cash, so they respond to a mysterious rumor of “help wanted.” The heroes are caught in the crossfire when two rival street gangs battle for “turf.” Ready, set, go!

Finally, objects often serve as adventure hooks. A cryptic clue or message can draw the heroes into danger; Alfred Hitchcock loved that method in his films. Another useful Hitchcock hook is “The MacGuffin.” A MacGuffin is an object of value or importance to someone. If the heroes have the MacGuffin (or if someone thinks they have it), then all sorts of trouble results from other people trying to buy, steal, or destroy it. The *Red October* submarine in *The Hunt For Red October* serves as a sort of MacGuffin.

Sometimes the adventure hook is not the same as the ultimate goal of the adventure itself. Many times the heroes get involved because they think they understand what’s going on, and then learn better and must change their goals as a result of events in the story. As an example, suppose the CIA hires a party of mercenaries to run a search-and-rescue op to recover some diplomats lost in the jungle when their plane crashes. The hook is their mercenary contract. But before they get to the diplomats, a mole in the agency betrays them to the enemy. Suddenly, the goal is no longer accomplishing the contract, but escaping from jail and getting revenge. When they find the mole, they learn he was working for a mysterious patron of his own, so now they have to find that person and discover what’s really going on.

THE SECOND ACT: OBSTACLES

The second act of an adventure focuses on obstacles the heroes must overcome. Obstacles are many and various, but fall into three main categories.

Foes

The first are actual *foes* — people or things specifically trying to make the heroes fail, or do them harm. If the foe wants to kill the heroes or stop them from accomplishing their goal, he’s a villain. If he just wants to beat them to the goal, or surpass their accomplishments, he’s a rival. Finally, there are adversaries — people whose goals are opposed to the PCs’ plans even if they aren’t aware of them. (In this context, *HERO System* Hunteds can qualify as either adversaries or villains, but Rivals are usually rivals.) For example, suppose the heroes in a *Caper Hero* game have to steal a valuable artifact from a museum. Villains include people who want to stop the PCs from succeeding (the museum’s ruthless and arrogant head of security, for example), rivals include people who want to steal the artifact first, and adversaries include the cops who don’t know about the current scheme but want to arrest the PCs for other crimes.

At times friends can be foes, if they don’t agree with the goal the heroes are pursuing, or have been duped into believing the heroes are a danger. A friend may even betray the PCs. Sometimes friends are correct, and it’s the heroes who’ve been duped.

Features Of The Setting

The second type of obstacles the heroes must face are *features of the setting* which would exist regardless of the heroes’ actions, such as natural obstacles and mysteries.

Natural obstacles include hostile weather, sheer distance, dangerous terrain, hungry animals, deadly security devices, and the like. Society’s impediments — laws, regulations, restrictions, social customs, prejudices, and the like — also qualify as natural obstacles. Obviously, natural obstacles arise primarily in uncivilized areas, while social barriers come into play in populated settings.

A mystery is either something the heroes must solve to continue toward the goal, or the key to the goal itself. Sometimes mysteries (or puzzles) are features of the setting, and sometimes they’re the work of the party’s opponents, but they all have a common feature: the characters must solve them by thinking rather than force (although sometimes the solution involves a particular use of force). In situations with changing goals, solving a mystery may finally point the heroes at their ultimate objective. Regardless of the type of puzzle, you should make it fair and logical, since the players have to solve it. An unfair puzzle just makes them angry.

Internal Obstacles

A final kind of obstacle lies within the heroes themselves — *internal obstacles*. Overcoming personal flaws, sacrificing something for the greater good, or learning a lesson are all obstacles, often more difficult to surmount than any street gang or enemy platoon. In game terms, Disadvantages such as Dependence, DNPC, Enraged/Berserk, Psycho-



logical Limitation, and perhaps Rivalry often represent internal obstacles. An honorable man who must break his word to achieve his goal faces an internal obstacle; so does a devious one who has to trust others to succeed. You should tailor the internal obstacles to the players: some players routinely sidestep their characters' Psychological Limitations if they can manage an EGO Roll, while others want to remain true to the characters they create.

THE THIRD ACT: CLIMAX AND CONCLUSION

Once the characters have surpassed or neutralized all the obstacles, the story proceeds to its *climax*, in which the heroes confront the main villain or surmount the ultimate barrier to reach their goal and win the reward. The goal may not be the one they originally signed up to accomplish, but it's the one that concludes this particular adventure.

Climaxes should be, well, climactic. This is the time for you to "blow the budget" and strive to make everything as tense and impressive as possible. If the heroes must foil the villain's plans, put a time limit on them and create all kinds of distractions. If they fight the villain directly, set the battle in an exotic or impressive location — a skyscraper rooftop, a cinematic mastermind's lair, or the like. Since this is a roleplaying game, an exciting setting is no more expensive or difficult to arrange than a boring one.

Even if it isn't full of physical action, try to make the climax tense and dramatic. If the heroes have to prevent a war or persuade someone, set the scene right on the edge of disaster — the rebel army is only minutes away from attacking

the heroes' camp, and they have to convince the rebel commander right now that they aren't the ones who've been trapping and slaughtering rebel soldiers. If a judge is sentencing the PCs, crucial evidence should arrive after the opposition has presented seemingly iron-clad arguments against the heroes... and just in time to save them from prison.

CLASSIC DARK CHAMPIONS PLOTS

Here are capsule descriptions of several different types of plots which occur frequently in modern-day action-adventure stories:

Crisis Management

This plot starts the character off at "ground zero" when some emergency or disaster (usually a crime or terrorist incident) occurs. The basic feature of this plot is that the character was in the wrong place at the wrong time (at least as far as the criminals/terrorists are concerned), and there's no way out except through the bad guys. He must defeat the criminals/terrorists, rescue hostages or other innocent victims, and get to safety.

The best feature of this type of scenario is that the character rarely has his weapons and equipment with him — he has to "improvise" and fall back on his Skills rather than just gunning down all the bad guys and walking away. For Crisis Management adventures, you need a relatively small area thoroughly mapped out (such as a skyscraper or a Boeing 747), several enemies fully written up and properly armed, and a relatively detailed plotline or timeline of events.

RANDOM PLOT GENERATOR

Sometimes you need a plot in a hurry, or maybe just some way to generate ideas to kick-start your imagination. For those times, here's a *Dark Champions* Random Plot Generator. Start by rolling a Hook, then determine the Goal and the Obstacles standing in the way. For more complex plots, roll for multiple Goals: the first is what the PCs think they're doing, and then they discover their real goal later.

HOOK (ROLL 1D6):

- 1 Client (NPC who asks or begs the party to do something)
- 2 Clue (message or information which inspires the party to act)
- 3 Enemy (NPC or other threat which menaces the party)
- 4 MacGuffin (PCs acquire an object of great importance to someone)
- 5 Patron (NPC who hires or orders the party to do something)
- 6 Situation (Some event happens which requires the party to react)

GOAL (ROLL 2D6)

First Die	Second Die	Result	Suggestions
1-3	1	Acquire Something	Military prototype, blueprints, microfilm
1-3	2	Capture Someone	Enemy commander, enemy spy
1-3	3	Defeat an Enemy	Enemy army, an assassin
1-3	4	Destroy Something	Weapon of mass destruction, organized crime group
1-3	5	Escape from a Place	Prison, behind enemy lines
1-3	6	Learn a Secret	A mole in the agency, a criminal's Secret Identity
4-6	1	Prevent a Disaster	Dissemination of Top Secret information, terrorist act
4-6	2	Rescue a Captive	Hostage, unjustly-imprisoned man
4-6	3	Solve a Mystery	Murder, theft, conspiracy
4-6	4	Survive the Environment	Desert, jungle, mountains
4-6	5	Travel to a Place	Meeting point behind enemy lines, bad side of town
4-6	6	Win a Battle	Versus an enemy army, a legal battle, a turf war

OBSTACLES (ROLL 1D6 FOR THE NUMBER OF OBSTACLES, THEN 1D6 TO DETERMINE THE NATURE OF EACH):

- 1 Adversary (someone whose goals bring him into conflict with the PCs)
- 2 Friend (a DNPC or someone normally friendly, opposed to the party for some reason)
- 3 Nature (hostile features of the setting, creatures, and so forth)
- 4 Rival (an existing rival or someone who wants to achieve the same goal ahead of the party)
- 5 Society (the authorities, the culture, laws, infrastructure, and so forth)
- 6 Villain (someone who specifically opposes the PCs)

Example: *Steve needs a plot idea for a Dark Champions adventure for his Special Ops campaign. He starts by rolling the Hook, and gets a 2: a Clue. For the Goal he decides to roll twice, and gets 6, 5: Travel to a Place, and 6, 6: Win a Battle. He rolls for the number of Obstacles and gets 3; the specific ones are 5: Society, 1: Adversary, and 2: Friend.*

Now Steve has to put these pieces together. Two of the Obstacles — Adversary and Friend — fit together well, so he decides to discard the Society element. By combining those two Obstacles with the two Goals (Travel and Battle), he quickly conceives of a basic plot: the PC team is assigned to guard a CIA field agent who's going to lead them to an enemy encampment, where they have to fight a battle against the enemy force and seize their information and weapons. However, the agent has his own agenda — while he has nothing against most of the team, he carries a bitter grudge against one member (for some reason Steve will choose for best dramatic impact) and wants to arrange things so that PC dies during the fight. (Alternately, Steve might make the agent a double agent working for a third party — a group of mercenaries that wants to steal the data the enemy has before the PCs get their hands on it — but that may make the agent too much of a Villain rather than a Friend.)

Gang War

Two major underworld entities — typically two gangs or organized crime groups — have gotten involved in an underworld war, and the PCs have to stop it (or maybe just want to take advantage of it). The trick to this scenario (or, more often, story arc within the campaign) is that you have to give the PCs some reason to become directly involved (such as innocents who may be caught in the crossfire) — otherwise, they'll probably sit back and let the bad guys kill each other off. You also need to keep careful track of the events in the “war” so you can determine what each side does next, how many men and resources the combatants have left, and so forth.

Hunting Trip

This plot involves someone hunting for or attempting to assassinate someone else. The PCs may be the hunters, the hunted, or a third party trying to protect the hunted and stop the hunter. Typically the hunter's goal is to kill or destroy the target, but it might be slightly different — to kidnap the target or recover some object, for example. Hunting Trip works well in conjunction with Revenge!

Hunting Trip plots are easy for you to run — all you really need is a complete write-up of the hunter or hunted (depending on the PCs' role in the scenario) and some sort of idea of where and in what sequence the two enemies encounter each other. You can easily recycle some locations from other scenarios instead of creating all-new ones, if you want.

Infiltration

The PCs have to get into a highly-guarded area, usually to obtain something or kill someone. They must wade through security devices and hordes of lesser foes before reaching their goal, then survive one last battle with the main enemy before they achieve their end. Alternately, they have to get in, do the job, and get out without being detected or leaving any traces. This is the standard scenario for *Caper Hero* games, but the characters' motivations may not be theft — they might want revenge on someone, or maybe an old friend has recruited them to help him get inside for some reason.

Preparing for an Infiltration adventure takes some time. You need to map the location to be infiltrated thoroughly, and make extensive notes about security devices and procedures. You should also prepare character sheets for significant enemies.

The Mission

In campaigns where the PCs belong to a larger organization, such as Espionage, Law Enforcement, and Military Action, the easiest way to hook the PCs into an adventure is for their superior officers to order them to go on a particular mission. Their commander can also restrict the methods they can use, the type of equipment they carry on the mission, and so forth.

The New Kid In Town

This sort of plot is a staple of stories involving vigilantes or “renegade cops.” The PCs stumble across a major crime figure or criminal operation that’s just come to the campaign city (or which has secretly operated under the characters’ noses for some time). The PCs have to investigate this new threat, then deal with it. Contacts and new-found friends provide assistance and information to the characters, but some of them may be injured or killed along the way. You need to have the main villain and his organization written up in enough detail that you can answer the players’ questions about them, plus a good explanation for why the PCs have never stumbled across this man or his organization before.

Revenge!

Most GMs combine this plot with another plot, but you don’t necessarily have to. It begins when something disastrous happens to a PC: his family is killed before his eyes; a crimelord captures his partner and tortures the partner to death; and so forth. The characters make it their mission in life to get appropriate revenge.

This plot works better if the target is a single person or a small group; if it’s a large group, such as the Mafia, it makes a better element of a character’s background (or perhaps a campaign-defining story arc). To run it, you need detailed descriptions of the target of revenge so you know how he reacts, what resources he can call upon to oppose the PCs, and so forth.

DEALING WITH DISCONNECTS

Many ideas that work perfectly well in fiction are less successful in roleplaying games. A game is not a movie or a book, so different dramatic rules apply. *Dark Champions* stories and settings come with a complete set of booby-traps and pitfalls waiting to snare unsuspecting GMs.

CAUTIOUS COMBATANTS

In action movies and books, heroes are daring — they take chances, they risk death to end a fight quickly so they can get to their ultimate goal. They don’t take foolish gambles, but they’re not cautious by “realistic” standards. In a *Dark Champions* campaign, characters often act in the opposite way: they proceed with great caution, looking for every possible piece of cover or other advantage, and they don’t use Combat Maneuvers that impose too many penalties.

If that’s not to your taste — if you want faster-paced combats and daring action — you need to convince the players you won’t severely penalize their characters for taking “dramatically appropriate” actions. Chapter Four has many suggestions for alternate or additional rules to make your gunfights and battles more exciting.

DEDUCTION

In mystery stories and suspense thrillers, the characters always figure out the mystery eventually; some characters, such as Sherlock Holmes, are known primarily for their deductive abilities. In game terms, the *Deduction* Skill simulates this — but since it’s not much fun to have a character roll dice and then tell him the answer if he succeeds, many GMs prefer that the players deduce the solutions to mysteries themselves. However, unlike fictional detectives, players aren’t necessarily skilled at solving mysteries — they buy Deduction for their characters specifically because they want to play a character who’s better at solving mysteries than they are.

The key to resolving this problem is to combine the two methods. Allow *some* Deduction rolls, but instead of giving out fully-formed answers, just provide snippets of information or suggestions. That way the players can reach the correct conclusion themselves. And if one of the players happens to suggest the right answer but no one realizes he’s right, you can point out to the players that “Tom’s answer sounds pretty good to you” or the like. After all, fictional characters instinctively seem to realize when they’ve hit upon the right answer, so game characters should, too.

KILLING THE ENEMY

Four-color *Champions* campaigns feature villains who always escape, either from the PCs or from jail, to return another day for a crack at Our Heroes. Sometimes even villains long thought dead “come back to life”! This happens in *Dark Champions* games much less frequently, because *Dark Champions* characters routinely use deadly force. This may put a lot of strain on you, forcing you to create new villains frequently and making it difficult (at best) to develop any long-standing adversarial relationships in the campaign. But you can’t just stop the PCs from killing their foes; that’s one of the features of the genre.

Many GMs don’t worry about this, since they enjoy creating new villains. If it causes you problems, try to create enemies who are just collections of equipment and/or skills that many people could use and learn. The heroes may kill or imprison Caliber, but then someone else can take up the guns and the name and become Caliber II.

KILLING THE HERO

Enemies aren’t necessarily the only characters who get killed in *Dark Champions* campaigns. Given the amount of lethal force used in most games, and the lack of any “instant healing” resources in the modern-day action-adventure genre, sometimes PCs find themselves on the wrong end of a gun and wind up dead.

The threat of dying has to be a part of the campaign — without it, the heroes will think they’re invincible, and the verisimilitude suffers. Instead, you have to manage your combats properly so death is a *possible* consequence, but not a *likely* one. Know how much Resistant Defense your PCs have, and be prepared to change die rolls or take other steps to keep the game from becoming *too* lethal.

RUNNING SOLO ADVENTURES

Solo games have a lot to recommend themselves as an adjunct to an ordinary *Dark Champions* campaign. They have enormous potential for in-depth character development. The PC has your undivided attention, so he can do things that he could never do with a group (such as tackle an old nemesis or go undercover for a long time). This also gives you the opportunity to design an adventure tailored to that one character's strengths and weaknesses, rather than having to account for all the members of a group. For example, running a group scenario where an assassin tries to kill one PC is difficult, since a lone assassin rarely poses a problem for several trained heroes. But that would make a *great* solo adventure.

On the other hand, since there's only one player involved, you have to create an adventure that appeals to him. If he likes combat-oriented missions, give him one; don't try to force him to think his way through an investigation-based scenario. Moreover, remember that you and the player will focus entirely on each other. If the player's uncertain of what to do, he can't turn to the other players for advice or assistance; if you're not prepared to deal with detailed questions, the game breaks down immediately.

You've also got to prepare yourself to deal with unexpected turns of events. What if the hero gets Stunned or Knocked Out? He doesn't have any friends to get him to safety, but you don't want to just

SEND IN THE MARINES!

In games where the PCs belong to a larger organization (*i.e.*, most Espionage, Law Enforcement, and Military campaigns), the question often arises: if things are so desperate, why not bring in the Army (or the SWAT team, or the like)? Why rely on a small group of characters, however highly-trained they may be, when the government can call in massive amounts of "reinforcements"? Unlike in Fantasy, where characters can be "fated by prophecy" to resolve some crisis on their own, typically one *Dark Champions* character is as good as another...

...at least in theory. In reality, there are lots of reasons you can devise why a small PC team makes more sense than massive military force. They include:

Time pressure: Mobilizing even a small military force takes time — and the larger the force, the more time that's needed. Then the force has to get to the location of the crisis. In short, there isn't always time to call in the Marines. Sending in a small, highly mobile, highly skilled force often makes more sense than waiting for a large-scale attack — sometimes a larger group can't get the job done in time.

Financial pressure: The more people the government sends to deal with a crisis, the costlier it gets. Sometimes the organization may not have enough money to launch a full-scale assault.

Secrecy: For many missions, it's important that neither the target nor the public know what's going on (at least not until the mission is completed, and possibly not ever). A small group can operate in secrecy or near-secrecy. Mobilizing a large force isn't something that can be hidden in this day of satellite reconnaissance and 24-hour news channels.

Politics: Sending in a large military or police force has political ramifications. For example, it may be tantamount to declaring war, or it may make the mayor look like a reactionary or a racist. Rather than risk political damage, the person in charge uses a smaller, less politically sensitive force to get the job done.

Send In The Sniper Rifles!

A related problem that arises in organization-oriented games is this often-heard question: "If this mission is so important, why won't they give us all the equipment we want? They want us to have the best chance to succeed, don't they?"

Again, this sounds good in the abstract. All other things being equal, a government would equip its special operatives with anything and everything they needed for a mission, ranging from cutting-edge prototype weapons to the best medicines available. But in reality, there are lots of reasons why this might not happen in the game (besides the meta-game reason of preserving game balance):

Expense: The better and more sophisticated the gear, the more it costs. Most large organizations have budgets and strict limits on what they can

spend. Shelling out \$5,000 for a Walther WA-2000 sniper rifle isn't a good decision in most administrators' eyes when there's a "nearly as good" model available for only \$1,000.

Availability/time pressure: In many missions, time is of the essence. Most organizations don't keep one (or more) copies of every possible piece of equipment available; they only have what they commonly need on hand. The PCs may not have the time to wait for the quartermaster to ship them the items they want.

Weight: On some missions, the PCs can only take what they can carry themselves. Some commanders prefer for their forces to travel light.

Logistics: Sometimes it's not possible to get the gear the characters need to where they need it. Sneaking military-grade weapons through Customs is difficult (at best). Furthermore, sometimes problems arise during transport — gear (or the vehicle carrying it) can be lost or damaged, for example.

Departmental regulations: The organization's rules may forbid characters to take certain types of equipment on certain types of missions. "This is a standard Class C stakeout, so you'll only be issued handguns. No, Kozlowski, you can't take an assault rifle."

SOLO HEROES

Many action-adventure movies and stories feature a single hero. Gaming, on the other hand, is a social activity that usually involves a group of heroes. Unless you want to run the campaign as a series of solo missions, you need to find a way to integrate teams of heroes into the framework of the *Dark Champions* stories you want to tell.

Fortunately, this is easy — while many action heroes are solos, there's plenty of precedent for groups of *Dark Champions* PCs to work together. If the characters work for an organization (such as the military, an intelligence agency, or a police department), grouping them into a squad or mission team is practically a requirement. If they're freelancers, their employer might bring them together, or they may have a shared past or run a business as a group.

SPLITTING THE PARTY

A situation common to all roleplaying is when the PC group has two things to do and the players decide to split up. In films and fiction it's easy to cut back and forth between two groups of characters, because fictional characters don't get bored waiting for their turn to do something. In roleplaying, the characters have players who get fidgety when they're "off camera." This is especially problematic when you have to keep one group's actions secret from the rest of the party, so you and some players go off to another room or pass notes.

The best way to deal with a split party situation is not to let it happen. If that's not possible, keep the separation as brief as you can. If one group's activities don't involve any conflict or roleplaying, summarize it briefly and keep the focus on the more interesting events encountered by the others. You can put aside secret exchanges that only involve

a few players for later — unless the events would have an immediate effect, you and the players involved can resolve it after the others go home, or by e-mail. If you can't avoid a prolonged separation, let the players of "off stage" characters control NPCs or villains.

DISADVANTAGES AND HOW TO USE THEM

Stories are about characters, and roleplaying game adventures are no exception. Characters, of course, have personalities — flaws and quirks and personal goals. In the *HERO System*, you represent these with characters' Disadvantages, particularly Psychological Limitations, Rivalries, and Hunteds. You can use the Disadvantages of your PCs to enrich the game in a number of ways. They provide plot hooks, distractions, sources of conflict, and ways to link the party together. And of course, all the motivations below may apply to villains just as well as heroes.

DEPENDENCE

If even one PC in the campaign has a Dependence (almost certainly an Addiction), that gives you an ideal hook to drag him (and thus his friends) into adventures — no character wants to suffer through the pain, humiliation, and loss of abilities that withdrawal entails. The character's struggle against his Addiction could become a tense and dramatic subplot, as he slowly but surely, an Experience Point or three at a time, buys the Disadvantage off.

DEPENDENT NPC

DNPCs are always reliable plot hooks, either because they get into trouble or danger, or because someone asks them for help in a difficult situation. However, the lethal nature of many *Dark Champions* campaigns may result in higher-than-normal rates of DNPC deaths, which may make keep players from wanting to take this Disadvantage. Since it's so useful and fun, you may want to consider some sort of "gentleman's agreement" with the players, in which you promise not to kill or seriously injure DNPCs (or at least, unless the injury is somehow directly the PC's fault).

Of course, for some campaigns, DNPC may not be an appropriate Disadvantage at all. If the PCs are soldiers or spies who travel around the world constantly, a DNPC may not hinder them enough to qualify as a Disadvantage. Alternately, you might require them to apply the -5 "limited to a certain geographical area" modifier from Hunteds to the value of the DNPC. You could even increase the value of the modifier to -10 (or more), if necessary.

HUNTED

The saga of a man on the run has a long history in fiction and makes a natural plot hook (or even campaign theme, if the PCs are all bounty hunters). It also works in the other direction: the heroes can track a wily foe who continually evades

them. The best *Dark Champions* Hunter-Hunted situation allows for frequent flight and escape, which requires proper design of both the PC and the Hunter. Both parties need the ability to travel without restriction; if the campaign takes place entirely in one city, the PCs can't just uproot their lives to pursue their old enemy General Vezchenko. On the other hand, if the campaign involves a lot of traveling, don't let the PCs choose Hunters tied to a particular location unless the events of the story bring the heroes back to that place frequently. (Alternately, the "Floating Hunted" rules on page 101 may let you overcome this problem.)

Even when the Hunters are not close on the heroes' trail, the simple fact of having to keep moving and keep hidden provides a continuing distraction and source of conflict. Non-Hunted PCs may resent having to live the life of fugitives to help a friend, and may even have genuine conflicts of loyalty between the desire to obey the law and the desire to help a comrade unjustly accused.

As the old adage has it, "the enemy of my enemy is my friend," and being chased by the same people is a good way to link the characters in a campaign. They may not like each other, and they may disagree frequently... but they know they have to work together to stay ahead of their common foe.

PHYSICAL LIMITATION

Physical Limitations aren't common in *Dark Champions*, where most characters tend to be athletic and physically competent, but they crop up occasionally: soldiers who've lost an eye or limb in battle; a computer hacker who's confined to a wheelchair; and so forth. Physical Limitation works best as a story hook if the character's motivated to seek out a cure (assuming a cure is possible) or to get revenge against whoever caused the injury (see *Moby Dick* for a non-*Dark Champions* example).

Within an adventure, the heroes' Physical Limitations can cause interesting problems to overcome. On the other hand, while in fiction a character's Physical Limitations provide a fertile source of dramatic conflict, this doesn't hold true in roleplaying games. Since the player who designed the character wants him to have that Physical Limitation, the character lacks resentment or anger over his handicap (unless the player is very good at roleplaying).

PSYCHOLOGICAL LIMITATION

"Psychological Limitation" really just means "motivation." To turn a Psychological Limitation into a plot hook, simply put the character into a situation in which achieving his goal comes into conflict with his personality traits. This is, by the way, the quick and easy formula for most fiction of the past thousand years. Hamlet's goal is revenge. His Psychological Limitation is *Needs To Be Sure He's Doing The Right Thing*. The result is a pile of bodies on the stage at the end of the play.

Things become even more interesting when one character has two Psychological Limitations that conflict. For example, suppose a soldier is a *Patriot*, but is also *Devoted To His Friends*. What

Continued from last page

kill him, either. As you design your scenario, try to anticipate as many of these problems as possible and have a solution ready (such as the enemy wanting to take the character hostage instead of killing him).



happens when his friends need help, but helping them is contrary to the interests of his country? He has to decide what's most important to him... or perhaps find a clever way out of the dilemma.

If an enemy knows the heroes well enough, he can turn their Psychological Limitations against them. If greed grips their hearts, he may simply bribe them to look the other way while he continues his criminal enterprises. If one of the PCs fears rats, his captors can torture him by locking him in a rat-infested cell.

Even if overcoming the heroes' Psychological Limitations isn't the main plot engine of the adventure, character traits can still distract PCs and create subplots. Again, simply create situations which set off the heroes' Psychological Limitations and enjoy the fun. Will the lecherous good guy interrupt the adventure to go on a date? Can a Casual Killer refrain from using lethal force when it's necessary to capture prisoners to interrogate?

Heroes with conflicting Psychological Limitations can create lots of juicy roleplaying opportunities, although at times this may go over the line into "constant intra-party bickering." A scenario that challenges the heroes to find a solution all of them can accept is entertaining; a scenario in which someone's character has to violate his beliefs leaves at least one player unhappy.

Naturally, people with similar desires or beliefs work together well. Groups of terrorists share the same fanatical belief; a team of heroes might come together out of love of country or devotion to a common patron.

REPUTATION

Reputations are a natural source of distractions during adventures. Just as the heroes are closing in on their quarry undercover, someone recognizes one of the PCs and the whole op is blown... or at least suffers a significant setback. Reputation serves as a source of character conflict when an individual's Reputation doesn't match his real personality or abilities. What if a character who's known as a "hotshot pilot" doesn't know that much about flying, and can't save his friends when they're counting on him to fly them to safety?

RIVALRY

Rivalries serve as a perennial source of distraction during adventures as characters compete with each other to have the most romantic conquests, pass tests by the widest margins, or score the first kill on a mission. This kind of distraction becomes a plot element if the heroes spend so much time sabotaging or one-upping each other that their enemy gets away.

Building an adventure on a Rivalry usually means coming up with a plan the Rival has to embarrass or harm the heroes, and then letting them either counter it or get themselves out of trouble. More subtly, a Rival's plot could involve the heroes in something bigger, something the Rival didn't know about, so the two sides have to suspend their feud for a while until they defeat the greater menace. For an interesting change of pace, maybe two NPCs' Rivalry creates a situation the PCs have to deal with — or get themselves out of the middle of.

VILLAINS AND NPCs



One of the most important aspects of any scenario is the villain(s) — the adversaries and enemies the characters encounter or pursue during the course of the game. Closely related to the villain are the NPCs: other characters the PCs encounter who may be helpful, hostile, or annoying. A good villain or NPC can make a lackluster scenario enjoyable, and a poor one can diminish the impact of an otherwise wonderful adventure.

VILLAINS

When you think of Dark Champions, often you think of the villains as much as you do the heroes — characters like the Joker, Hannibal Lecter, Ernst Stavro Blofeld, Hans Gruber, and their ilk. A good villain makes a good story. The reader may not care much about the heroes, but everybody loves to root against a good villain. This isn't limited to *Dark Champions*: Lucifer in Milton's *Paradise Lost* is by far the most striking character in the whole epic poem.

In a *Dark Champions* game, the PCs' adversary often drives the plot, and consequently should be more than just some game stats on a sheet. What makes a good villain? What makes a good *Dark Champions* villain?

Villain Qualities

In *Dark Champions* (and other genres, for that matter), good villains have certain qualities that set them apart.

COMPETENCE

The best villains in fiction are competent, often extraordinary in their abilities. They are powerful, clever, and subtle; overcoming them is a worthwhile challenge for the good guys. A villain who isn't competent or powerful isn't very interesting. But of course, "power" doesn't necessarily mean sheer muscle or available firepower. A weak but clever opponent who can maneuver the heroes into a situation where they can't use their superior abilities is just as powerful as one who can bat them aside with casual ease.

Exactly how powerful the villain is depends on the campaign's scale and tone, the abilities of the PCs, and the role you intend for the villain. Role is perhaps most important. What part will the villain play in the campaign? Is he the Big Bad Guy behind

all the heroes' problems? In that case he must be powerful indeed, with underlings and henchmen who can each serve as the main villain of adventures themselves. If he's one of those henchmen, then the villain should be only slightly more powerful than the heroes. If he's only a one-shot opponent in a casual encounter, he can be the same level or even weaker than the PCs.

MENACE

Just being powerful doesn't make a good villain. Blue whales are immensely powerful animals, but nobody's afraid of them because they're shy and don't harm humans. A villain requires credible menace: the heroes must believe he's not only able, but willing, to cause harm.

The best way to create this sense of menace is to give the villain the chance to demonstrate his power without directly harming the PCs. This may involve nothing more than a visible demonstration of the villain's power — such as giving the characters a glimpse of his private army — or you could have him take action against someone other than the PCs. For example, he could harm a character's DNPC, kill a favorite NPC, or reveal information to the characters that makes it plain he could attack them at any time.

SYMPATHY

The best villains have a streak of humanity — or at least some admirable traits. They may be people the heroes might have been friends with in other circumstances, or at least enemies they can maintain a grudging respect for. Otherwise, they're just cardboard cutouts; it's not hard to hate, or oppose, someone who's unlikeable and villainous in all aspects. For example, the DC Comics villain Two-Face, who's constantly struggling with his good and evil natures and offers some hope of possible redemption, has more depth and is more interesting than the one-dimensional Joker.

MOTIVATION

Hardly anyone gets up in the morning and says "How can I be evil today?" Even the worst villains justify their own actions to themselves. The motives of villains are the same as those of most people: they want things (desire); they fear things (fear); and they believe things (conviction).

Wanting something is easy to understand. Everyone wants something. Villains may be motivated by a desire for wealth, lust for the opposite sex, a simple urge to survive, or even love for another person or being. Sometimes a villain's desires aren't quite normal — twisted sexual urges, mad plans to conquer the world, or the obsessive

pursuit of some object. But other villains can have quite prosaic desires, such as revenge.

Fear is another powerful motive. Most living things fear death, most humans fear poverty and hardship, a ruler might fear losing power, a bigot fears and hates members of another race, an official in a tyrannical regime might fear the consequences of failure. Even the most powerful villain can still have fears: the Soviet Premier commands mighty armies, but still fears the actions and power of the United States (and vice-versa!). Often people (not just villains) take great risks to avoid or overcome the things they fear; as long as the consequences are not as bad (in their opinion) as the thing they fear, it's a rational choice.

Finally, most humans have beliefs about right and wrong. Even villains do, although their beliefs may not match everyone else's. People often endure great danger and make tremendous sacrifices in the name of what they believe in; villains may do the same.

These three motives can feed on and strengthen one another. A villain who's greedy for wealth may also fear losing his property and sources of income, and may believe he's doing the right thing by stimulating economic growth and providing employment.

The motives for villains are not necessarily different from those of heroes. What separates heroes from villains is how they try to achieve their goals. Bringing unity and peace to the world is a noble goal. Exterminating all other races is not a heroic way to accomplish it.

In some campaigns, the distinction between the heroes' motives and those of the villains is all but invisible. *Caper Hero* characters are criminals; so, in the eyes of the law, are vigilante crimefighters.

Villain Archetypes

Chapter Seven covers some of the major enemies that *Dark Champions* characters face. Here are a few more examples of archetypical adversaries.

THE AMORAL MERCENARY

It's not uncommon for *Dark Champions* characters to fight mercenaries, or even to *be* mercenaries. What sets this type of merc apart is his completely amoral nature. He has no scruples about breaking his contract if he gets a better offer, torturing and raping civilians, and using unnecessary levels of force. Rather than hunt down a target and dispatch him in a professional manner, the Amoral Mercenary simply firebombs the whole town, caring nothing for the innocents he sacrifices to serve his own purposes.

Useful Features: Provided he's low-key enough to hide his evil nature at first, the Amoral Mercenary may be someone the characters can initially identify with — a soldier like themselves, trying to get by — which lets you lull them into a false sense of security. An Amoral Mercenary with highly marketable skills could wind up serving different commanders, turning up against the heroes when

they least expect him. If necessary, the characters may be able to buy the Amoral Mercenary off, and dire events might motivate him to join forces with the PCs against some menace which threatens the free enjoyment of their wealth. An Amoral Mercenary usually cuts and runs when the situation looks hopeless, which may give you the opportunity to use him again.

Potential Problems: The major difficulty with a mercenary villain is that sufficiently wealthy heroes can just buy him off; GMs who don't like this should beware (or change the Amoral Mercenary slightly so that the one thing he *won't* do is break a contract). Unless the Amoral Mercenary is powerful, or protected by a heavy helping of Combat Luck or GM's fiat, keeping him alive to bedevil the PCs again and again may prove difficult.

Variations: By leaving out the "Amoral" part, you can create a Mercenary who's somewhat more likeable — or perhaps even serves some noble purpose. To really surprise the PCs, have the Amoral Mercenary become devoted to a cause (such as a Tyrant) so that they can't buy him off... but keep his sadistic streak.

THE ASSASSIN

This character is a killer for hire, or sometimes for a political cause. He doesn't commit other crimes (except as incidental to his "hunts"); he's a trained murderer, not a saboteur or thief.

Assassins come in many varieties. Some are skilled professionals, others little more than masochistic thugs with a veneer of sophistication. Some prefer weapons, others like to use their bare hands. Some are vain, leaving an "ego signature" of some sort to identify their kills, while others prefer to leave as few traces as possible.

The deadliest assassin is usually the trained professional killer. He may be an ex-espionage agent, a member of a secret organization devoted solely to committing assassinations, or an individual trained in the arts of death. But regardless of where or how he got his training, his skill and ruthlessness should not be underestimated.

Professional assassins tend to have lots of Combat Skill Levels with weapons and other attacks, useful Skills like Stealth and Bribery, and other abilities related to their chosen profession of killing. (They rely on other criminals for services such as preparing forged documents.) Cruder assassins usually have several Skill Levels in one or two attacks of choice, and few if any Complementary Skills.

Useful Features: Assassins make wonderfully stark opponents — it's kill or be killed, with little chance of a less extreme outcome. Since they usually operate by themselves, locating them may not be possible, so the characters can't interrupt their plans in advance: it all comes down to that one chance to stop the assassination from taking place.

Potential Problems: An assassin may be *too* good at his chosen profession, making it difficult for the PCs to oppose him without suffering severe casualties. On the other hand, as a single person facing

a team of action heroes, the assassin may not be opposition enough — he may have to hire mercenaries or other helpers to distract the PCs so he can do his job.

Variations: Some assassins serve a particular cause (such as driving invaders from their homeland, or supporting a political belief), which makes them more fanatical (but possibly also easier to catch, since fanaticism is a weakness as much as a strength).

THE CORRUPT COP

Although he's sworn to protect the citizenry, in reality the Corrupt Cop is in it for himself. He takes advantage of his position to extort bribes and freebies from businessmen, to make money by colluding with drug dealers and other criminals, and to push people around. If he has a run-in with the PCs, he'll probably take an instant dislike to them because of their moral superiority and do his best to make their lives hell.

Useful Features: The Corrupt Cop makes an interesting foil for many PCs, particularly vigilantes, because he's their diametric opposite: he represents the law but doesn't uphold it; they break the letter of the law to uphold its spirit. And since he has the resources of the force behind him, he's not easily disposed of. In a long-term campaign, it's possible the PCs can find a way to reform the Corrupt Cop, which makes for great roleplaying.

Potential Problems: Since a Corrupt Cop can't cloak himself in the protection of the police department 24 hours a day, he may be too vulnerable a target for some PCs. All they have to do is wait until he gets home and attack him when he's not ready for trouble. To compensate for this, try to arrange his home so that it's difficult to sneak in on him — even giving him a loud dog might do the trick.

Variations: Some cops are corrupt for specific, understandable reasons — such as the need to pay for a loved one's surgery. Other sympathetic Corrupt Cops may have gotten in over their heads early in their careers and now desperately want a way to get back on the straight and narrow. In campaigns that don't feature many cops, you can replace the Corrupt Cop with the Corrupt Soldier, or the like.

THE GANG BOSS

A Gang Boss leads an organized crime group of some sort. Mafia *capos*, yakuza *oyabuns*, the leaders of Chinese tongs, and the heads of street gangs all fall into this category.

Gang Bosses generally fall into one of two categories. The first is the Boss who's old, weak, or cowardly, and thus not fit to fight. This type of Boss leads his organization through respect, cunning, contacts, and personal power rather than his ability to physically destroy his rivals. Although not a direct danger, this type of Boss has plenty of guards and lots of influence in both the underworld and regular society, making him as dangerous as any warrior. The non-fighting Boss usually has Skills and Perks like High Society, Knowledge Skills, Contacts, and lots of Money.

The second type of Boss is just the opposite. A skilled combatant of some sort (or maybe just an extremely brutal and vicious fighter), he leads his organization not only through respect and wit but his ability to personally enforce his orders. This sort of Boss usually sacrifices some of the Perks and Skills the other type of Boss has in favor of Skills like Martial Arts, Weapon Familiarities, Stealth, and so on.

Useful Features: Either type of Gang Boss represents one of the ultimate opponents in a *Dark Champions* game — an adversary the PCs face only after neutralizing his copious resources and defeating his underlings. Given his power, he may be able to avoid prison, or find ways to take vengeance on the PCs by proxy even if they kill him.

Potential Problems: The first type of Boss may seem too weak to some PCs, while the second type may be too tough for all but the most experienced characters to combat. The death of the Gang Boss may cause ripples throughout the campaign underworld that have unintended consequences... particularly if the PCs deliberately try to exploit the chaos.

Variations: Instead of leading an organized crime group, the Gang Boss may head some other type of organization. He might be an illegal arms dealer with a cadre of salesmen and guards serving him, or a spymaster with a network of informants spanning the globe.

THE GANG LIEUTENANT

The Gang Lieutenant is the Gang Boss's right hand man, chief underling, or the like. His actual title — captain, underboss, *consiglieri*, vice-chairman — varies from organization to organization.

Like Gang Bosses, there are two main types of Gang Lieutenants. The first is the "bookkeeper." He has no combat Skills to speak of, but is a master administrator who runs the organization in a smooth, efficient manner. He can obtain or arrange anything. Bookkeeper Lieutenants have Skills like PS: Administrator or SS: Accounting, dozens of Contacts in the underworld and normal society, Streetwise, Knowledge Skills of the underworld, and so forth. This type of Lieutenant could work for either type of Boss.

The second type of Lieutenant is the "enforcer." He usually works for the first type of Boss; his presence and combat Skills (Martial Arts, Combat Skill Levels, and so on) make up for the Boss's lack of combat prowess. Depending on the organization, this type of Lieutenant might just be a fairly skilled fighter (someone capable of winning your average barfight or gun battle), or he might have enough skill to take on the entire group of PCs.

Useful Features: The Gang Lieutenant makes an excellent second-tier opponent. Defeating him is a good intermediate goal for a PC team trying to take down an entire organization; it's a test of the heroes' mettle and a sign that they're getting close to the group's leader. If the heroes defeat the Gang Boss but leave the Lieutenant alive, the Lieutenant can become the new Gang Boss.



Potential Problems: The PCs may try to do an end run around the Gang Lieutenant to get to his Boss quickly. If possible, prevent this through proper planning and scenario manipulation — it's not very dramatic. If you can't stop it, have the Lieutenant hit the PCs "from behind" at the worst moment for them.

Variations: Instead of a Lieutenant, you could make this character any sort of secondary figure in an organized crime group — a Red Pole enforcer for a Triad, the don's favorite up-and-coming made man in a Mafia family, and so forth.

THE THIEF

Also known as the Cat Burglar, this character specializes in "impossible" thefts and burglaries. His skill at getting into guarded, locked areas, bypassing security devices, and then vanishing without a trace is legendary. If there's a fabulous treasure under lock and key somewhere in the campaign city, rest assured the Thief probably has plans to obtain it.

Some Thieves are flamboyant and flashy, willing to attempt the impossible and leaving an ego signature to prove they did it. Other, less showy Thieves carefully plan all the details of their thefts and go to great lengths to conceal their involvement with the whole affair.

Crucial Skills for a Thief include Acrobatics, Breakfall, Climbing, Lockpicking, and Security Systems. Others, such as High Society and Gambling, are useful but not necessary.

Useful Features: The Thief may prove to be an excellent ally of the PCs... for a time. If they need someone whose infiltration skills are unmatched,

they can hire him to do the job. The odds are, though, that he's on the lookout for a chance to betray them and take all the loot.

Potential Problems: Most Thieves have few, if any, combat skills, so they're not a match for even a single PC, much less a team. The challenge lies in defeating them through skill and wit, which may not appeal to some gamers.

Variations: Rather than stealing through agility, the Grifter uses his personal charm and wits to steal through deception and misdirection. Whether he's a street hustler or a long con operator aiming at the "big score," he's an intriguing adversary for the PCs.

THE TYRANT

A Tyrant is, of course, a powerful government leader who uses his position to oppress his subjects, victimize the weak, and enrich himself. From Papa Doc Duvalier, to Idi Amin, to Saddam Hussein, modern history is replete with such figures, and turning them into villains in a *Dark Champions* campaign of international scope is child's play.

Tyrants command vast armies and fleets, but tend to remain in well-protected areas until the final battle with the heroes. The PCs may have to fight through numerous obstacles and encounters before coming face-to-face with the Tyrant.

Useful Features: Giving evil a face and a name solves the problem of how to defeat an entire nation or army — cut off the head and the body dies. A colorful Tyrant can be whimsical, or motivated by love or revenge. If the heroes learn something about the Tyrant's personality and blind spots, they may be able to fool or outmaneuver him.

Potential Problems: A Tyrant who's too villainous risks becoming implausible. If President-for-Life Mobesu casually kills underlings who fail him, why haven't his underlings conspired to overthrow him? If he slaughters all of his subjects, he won't have much to rule over.

Variations: An hereditary government might have a whole family of Tyrants, all busily scheming against each other for the throne and thus offering plenty of opportunities for wily heroes to divide and conquer. A more sympathetic Tyrant (for example, one who genuinely wants to help his impoverished, beleaguered people) may become a foe the heroes can respect, albeit grudgingly. Sometimes the Tyrant turns out to be nothing but a puppet of some even bigger and badder opponent. For a more scaled-down Tyrant, you could use the "Napoleon on Elba" option of a former ruler scheming to regain power.

THE WARPED VIGILANTE

This character is a vigilante who doesn't fight for Justice. Usually, this means he's gone over the edge and decided that anyone who stands in the way of his war on crime (*i.e.*, the police, the PCs, and so forth) is a "criminal" who deserves nothing but death. Other types of Warped Vigilantes might be true vigilantes who've been drugged, brainwashed, or tricked into acting improperly, a vigilante who fights crime indiscriminately (for example, who blows up an entire bus to get one criminal), or a vigilante who targets non-criminals (such as homosexuals or members of a particular race).

Useful Features: Because the Warped Vigilante is like the PCs (at least a little), he may be able to identify with them, making him a cleverer, more dangerous foe. By holding him up to the PCs as a dark mirror of themselves, you may be able to make them consider their motivations and behavior more carefully.

Potential Problems: The Warped Vigilante regularly uses lethal force, and probably won't hesitate to employ deadly weapons against the PCs, possibly resulting in PC fatalities. As a single character (in most cases), he doesn't pose much of a threat to a team of heroes; the challenge lies more in finding him than fighting him.

Variations: In a campaign with a more "four-color" outlook, such as some Dark Champions: The Animated Series games, *any* vigilante may be seen as a "warped" vigilante who must be captured and confined. Vigilantes have a lot of potential as villains for these campaigns. First, they're different from the usual world-conquering master villains the PCs so often encounter. Even though the vigilante is a crimefighter like the PCs, his methods of crime-fighting are so repulsive to them that they'll have no qualms about going after him.

Second, using vigilantes as villains offers the GM a way to introduce issues of morality and methodology into the game. Maybe the vigilante can sway some of the PCs to his way of thinking, at least temporarily. At the very least, he should make the

PCs *think* about what they do, and why they do it. This is especially effective if you force the PCs and the vigilante to work together (typically because the vigilante has information or other resources the PCs need, and refuses to provide any help unless he can take part in the mission). Naturally, while they're working together, the PCs are probably planning to catch the vigilante when the mission ends, while the vigilante's setting up his escape....

NON-PLAYER CHARACTERS

The world isn't divided evenly into heroes and villains. Most people in a campaign setting are simply non-player characters — NPCs.

In most cases what you need for a good, enjoyable NPC is a realistic, well-developed character. But that isn't always true. Realistic, well-developed NPCs tend to take over the story, leaving the heroes as spectators. It's actually more effective to keep many of your NPCs one-dimensional, but make them into memorable one-dimensional characters. Give them a distinctive habit or a manner of speaking for the heroes to remember. Players often forget NPC names, but they recall "the guy with the Irish accent" or "the man with the purple backpack."

Nonplayer characters have the same motivations as villains — desires, fears, and beliefs — and these motives provide a good way to give them a little personality. The PCs can bribe a greedy security guard, but one who's scrupulously honest reacts poorly (to say the least) to bribe offers. Obviously, not every NPC needs to be this well-developed, but it's worth coming up with one or two motivations for any NPC the heroes directly interact with.

Important NPCs need as much care and feeding as villains — a hero's DNPC, Rival, or Hunter should have some independent goals and a recognizable identity. Dependent NPCs usually are nice people (though one can have a good deal of fun with a hero who feels protective of a cranky or irritating NPC). Rivals should have a mix of good and bad traits, and above all should be competent enough for the Rivalry to mean something — if the hero always wins, it's scarcely a Rivalry.

If a hero is Hunted, the GM should give some thought to the motives of the Hunters. This is true even if it's a large organization. *Why* is the CIA watching the character? What do they want to find out? Even when the Hunter is a group, it's useful to give that group a face in the form of a "case officer" or some other member of the group who is the one the heroes have the most dealings with. For example, every time the enemy soldiers confront the heroes, they're led by a scar-faced old vet named Major Rodriguez. Other soldiers may track the PCs, ambush them, or attack them, but it's Rodriguez who leads the attacks, who tries to capture the PCs and interrogate them, and so on.

NPC Archetypes

These are some standard character types who turn up again and again in *Dark Champions* stories. You can use them as-is, or play against the stereotype by creating NPCs very different from these.

THE BUREAUCRAT

Since *Dark Champions* PCs often have to deal with large organizations and governments, it doesn't take long for them to run into the Bureaucrat — a government official who wields some sort of administrative authority. In most *Dark Champions* stories, Bureaucrats fall into two camps: corrupt and incorruptible. The former take bribes, skim tax money for themselves, and otherwise work the system for their own benefit; the latter have nothing to do with any untoward activity and would report corruption to their superiors if they discovered it. More Bureaucrats tend to fall into the "corrupt" category, since they make for better stories, but by no means all do.

Variations: Guards and sentinels often fall into Bureaucrat-like roles, especially in large cities. They're responsible for inspecting cargoes, deciding who to admit into the building without a search,

and so forth. They're just as likely to take bribes as true Bureaucrats — perhaps moreso due to the conditions they have to tolerate on the job.

THE LIKEABLE CROOK

Most criminals are detestable scum, but occasionally one comes along with style. Try as they might, the PCs can't entirely hate him, even when he robs them blind — something about his manner and the way he conducts himself elicits at least a little admiration. He may be a highly-skilled cat burglar, a suave con man, or a deft pick-pocket, but regardless of how he steals, he does so with panache.

Variations: Instead of a Likeable Crook, the party may encounter a Likeable Assassin. Though it's harder to create a ruthless killer the PCs can also respect, he may have a code of professionalism they can identify with, or even work solely for causes they support (such as a particular government). The Likeable Spy may be even more fun, since he can drag the PCs into all sorts of adventures.

THE UNDERWORLD ARMORER

When the PCs need just the right weapons and gear, but don't have the time to build it or acquire it on their own, they turn to the Underworld Armorer. A black market arms dealer (and possibly weapons engineer), he can provide them with whatever they need... for a price. Since he deals in such valuable items, and usually has lots of cash around, the Underworld Armorer protects himself very well with guards and security systems.

Variations: Instead of being an arms dealer, the Underworld Armorer may be an Underworld Weaponsmith instead — all he can do is build new weapons and gear for the PCs, he can't obtain illegal weapons for them. Alternately, he may be an Underworld Arms Dealer, with lots of sales contacts but no engineering skills.

THE UPTIGHT COMMANDER

The bane of renegade cops and wisecracking soldiers everywhere, the Uptight Commander lives to see that everyone does things "by the book" and with the utmost efficiency. He can't stand free-thinking, freewheeling characters (*i.e.*, most PCs), and does his best to make their lives miserable. He writes them up for every single rules violation, busts them down the ranks, and gives them the worst assignments.

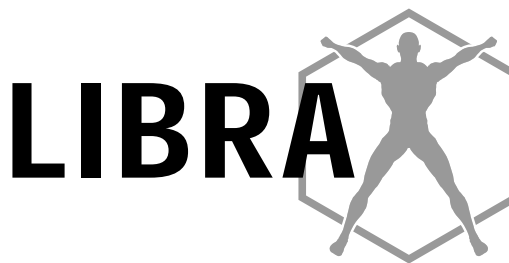
Variations: Instead of being Uptight, the commander may be Corrupt. He sees the PCs as an obstacle to his plans, so he wants to dispose of them or drive them away as quickly as possible.



chapter nine:



LIBRA



Membership: Sarge, Blade, Hammer, Knockout, Shadow

Background/History: Battered and bleeding from a gunshot wound to the leg, he stumbled through the door of his Riverside safehouse. Patching up the wound was a painful chore, but he got it done as he had so many times before. All part of the job.

But what about next time? he thought as he lay in bed, waiting to drift off to sleep under the relaxing effects of the painkillers. *Body armor's not perfect. Sooner or later, one of those shots is going to hit something that can't be fixed. Who'll protect Hudson City then? Not softhearted heroes like DarkAngel, that's for certain.*

When he woke up the next morning, he realized what he needed: a corps of soldiers, trained and indoctrinated by him personally, to carry on the fight when his time was past. He didn't like the idea of working with others, but his preferences had to give way before the need to fight crime and defend Hudson City from evil men — everything else was secondary. Slowly but surely, he began looking for men and women with the perceptions and drive he needed.

Tom McCarthy served his country well and truly as a Special Forces soldier... only to return home and find out there were just as many evil, dangerous people on the streets of his hometown as there were in any of the hellholes he'd fought in around the world. Not one to sit idly by when he could do something to stop it, he was about to begin a career as a solo vigilante when he was recruited into LIBRA.

Roberto Morenos grew up in the Hispanic slums of Hudson City, running with gangs and selling drugs. A chance encounter with an old man opened his eyes to the evil he was doing, put him on the path of righteousness, and made him determined to save society from people like the gangster he used to be.

Charles Jackson wanted to go to college, but his family couldn't afford it, so he joined the Marines instead. He served a tour of duty as an EOD specialist, then left the military to join the HCPD bomb squad. The corruption he saw on the force disgusted him, and his quest to find better ways to protect the people of Hudson City from crime eventually led him to LIBRA.

Barbara Cox's career as a fashion model was violently cut short at the hands of a stalker who beat her and crippled her sister. Abandoning her former profession, she threw herself into the study of forensics, determined to become a medical

examiner, FBI agent, or someone else who could make a difference. She soon found herself fighting crime just like she'd wanted to... but in a totally unexpected way.

Jerry Manowitz was a highly-decorated cop with a reputation for ignoring procedure in his quest to do his job the way he thought it should be done. Eventually he went too far in the eyes of the department, and was let go after an "excessive force" incident. Soon he was offered an opportunity to put his crimefighting skills to work in less conventional ways.

One by one, the Harbinger gathered these people, and others, to him. Trained in his twin disciplines of forensic combat and forensic philosophy, they became the core of the new army of Justice he envisioned, codenamed LIBRA.

Group Relations: The five main members of LIBRA generally get along together well; they have a camaraderie born of intensive training and fighting together against some of the most vicious criminals in Hudson City. Where rifts exist between them, they're the result of the Harbinger's efforts to bend them to his way of thinking. While all of them want to fight crime and protect the innocent — that's what being a vigilante is about, after all — each of them approaches the subject from his or her own perspective... but Harbinger wants them to adopt *his* perspective. Some of them have (to one degree or another), while others haven't, and the resulting differences of opinion sometimes cause tension or disputes.

Tactics: The members of LIBRA have trained extensively in the tactics of investigating and fighting criminals in the modern urban environment — what they call "forensic combat." Each member of the group is well-versed in a variety of weapons, investigative procedures, and the like; between them, the five possess most of the skills and abilities they need to conduct their missions. They "double up" on crucial skills as much as possible in case one of them can't do his job due to injuries or death. Most of them also have other Skills learned during military tours of duty, their careers on the police force, or the like.

Team Equipment: All members of LIBRA carry certain standard equipment in addition to their favored weapons and gear. They have grey uniforms they wear underneath dark grey body armor made of a special fiber called DefTex. They also have special communications headsets (defined as HRRP with Concealed -3, though for some missions they forego the viewscreen and restrict themselves to audio communication only).

Campaign Use: How you use LIBRA depends mainly on your PCs' attitudes toward, and approach to, crimefighting. If they share the general LIBRA vigilante philosophy, the team can become a valuable ally in the war on crime. While LIBRA won't reveal its secrets (including the location of its training camp outside Hudson City), it offers all the assistance it reasonably can. In turn, it will call on the PCs if it encounters a situation it can't handle by itself.

On the other hand, if the PCs don't share LIBRA's outlook — for example, if they're DC: TAS characters with Codes Versus Killing — then LIBRA becomes an antagonist. It's a "noble" opponent in many ways, since ultimately the two groups share the goal of protecting the innocent, but an enemy nevertheless because the members of LIBRA kill criminals. While they won't use lethal force against costumed heroes or innocents, they'll do everything else they can to keep from being captured.

Neither the public nor the underworld is aware of LIBRA's connection to the Harbinger... yet. He wants the team to develop a reputation on its own, not piggyback onto his (for better or worse).

SARGE					
Val	Char	Cost	Roll	Notes	
15	STR	5	12-	Lift 200 kg; 3d6 [3]	
15	DEX	15	12-	OCV: 5/DCV: 5	
16	CON	12	12-		
12	BODY	4	11-		
18	INT	8	13-	PER Roll 13-	
10	EGO	0	11-	ECV: 3	
20	PRE	10	13-	PRE Attack: 4d6	
10	COM	0	11-		
6	PD	3		Total: 14 PD (8 rPD)	
4	ED	1		Total: 12 ED (8 rED)	
4	SPD	15		Phases: 3, 6, 9, 12	
6	REC	0			
32	END	0			
30	STUN	2		Total Characteristics Cost: 75	
Movement:		Running: 9"/18"			
		Swimming: 4"/8"			
Cost Powers		END			
<i>Martial Arts: Commando Training</i>					
	Maneuver	OCV	DCV	Notes	
3	Aikido Throw	+0	+1	3d6 + v/5, Target Falls	
4	Boxing Cross	+0	+2	5d6 Strike	
4	Karate "Chop"	-2	+0	HKA ½d6 (1d6+1 with STR)	
4	Kung Fu Block	+2	+2	Block, Abort	
6	<i>Strong Runner: Running +3" (9" total)</i>				1
2	<i>Strong Swimmer: Swimming +2" (4" total)</i>				1
Perks					
4	Contacts: 4 points' worth, in the Special Forces				
4	Fringe Benefit: Military Rank				
5	Fringe Benefit: Security Clearance				
5	Improved Equipment Availability: Military equipment				
Talents					
3	Resistance (3 points)				
Skills					
4	+2 OCV with Colt M16A2				
3	+1 with Commando Training				
6	+2 with Climbing, Stealth, and Tracking				
3	Climbing 12-				
3	Combat Driving 12-				
2	CK: Hudson City 11-				
2	KS: Green Beret History And Traditions 11-				
2	KS: The Hudson City Underworld 11-				
2	KS: The Military/Mercenary/Terrorist World 11-				
2	KS: U.S. Army History And Customs 11-				
2	Language: Spanish (fluent conversation)				
2	Navigation (Land) 13-				
3	Paramedics 13-				
2	PS: Green Beret 11-				
2	PS: Instructor 11-				
3	PS: Mission Planning And Logistics 13-				
2	PS: Soldier 11-				

- 3 Stealth 12-
- 8 Survival (Desert, Mountains, Temperate/
Subtropical, Tropical) 13-
- 3 Systems Operation 13-
- 3 Tactics 13-
- 3 Tracking 13-
- 2 TF: Basic Parachuting, Advanced
Parachuting
- 7 WF: Small Arms, Bows, Grenade Launch-
ers, General Purpose/Heavy Machine Guns,
Knives, Shoulder-Fired Weapons

Resource Points

- 7 Equipment Points: 95
- 0 Vehicle/Base Points: 10
- 0 Follower/Contact Points: 5
- 0 Miscellaneous Points: 0

Total Powers & Skills Cost: 125

Total Cost: 200

100+ Disadvantages

- 20 DNPC: Bob and Linda McCarthy (parents)
8- (Normal, Unaware of character's Social
Limitation: Secret Identity)
- 20 Hunted: Card Shark 8- (Mo Pow, NCI, Kill)
- 10 Hunted: HCPD 8- (Mo Pow, NCI, Watching)
- 10 Hunted: US Army 8- (Mo Pow, NCI,
Watching)
- 20 Psychological Limitation: Vigilante Mental-
ity (Common, Total)
- 5 Psychological Limitation: Meticulous Plan-
ner; Reacts Poorly To Unplanned Situations
(see text) (Uncommon, Moderate)
- 15 Social Limitation: Secret Identity (Tom
McCarthy) (Frequently, Major)

Total Disadvantage Points: 200

Background/History: Strong, tall, and smart, Tom McCarthy could have attended just about any college he wanted to after high school, but he felt a higher calling and decided to serve his country by joining the U.S. Army. His intelligence and skill made him stand out from the crowd, and he eventually underwent Ranger and Green Beret training. He spent several years with the Special Forces, successfully performing missions around the world in places like South America, Somalia, Afghanistan, and Central Asia.

Eventually he decided it was time to go home again and start a career — defense consulting or teaching at the War College, maybe. But when he

got back to Hudson City, he was shocked at what he saw. It hadn't been the nicest place in the world to grow up, nor the worst. But in the decade since he'd been away, it had gone downhill further than ever. Even in his relatively quiet Guilford neighborhood, no one walked alone at night, and his parents had been mugged or held up three times. Angered by the situation, but figuring he had to leave things to the cops, he did nothing.

Then his younger cousin Bobby was beaten and murdered by a gang. Unable to sit idly by while his family grieved and the cops professed their inability to find the kids who did it, Tom took to the streets. Through careful observation and a few well-placed payoffs, he found the killers — a group of gangbangers who'd been making trouble in the neighborhood for years. With grim determination, he sought them out and killed them one by one, feeling no more remorse than he had when taking out terrorists and insurgents.

For the first time in a long time, Tom felt like he had a purpose. Ridding the neighborhood of those killers resonated with him; he knew it was the right thing to do. He wanted to keep doing it, but he knew he lacked the skills — he was no detective. He decided to go ahead anyway, hoping he could learn enough on the job to keep himself alive and out of prison. Then he got the offer to join LIBRA, and jumped at the chance.

Personality/Motivation: McCarthy — or “Sarge,” as the others have codenamed him, since he's in command of most of their missions — is a tough, no-nonsense guy with years of combat experience. He's a meticulous planner and analyst who spends hours poring over mission briefings and planning assaults. While he's aware that no plan fully survives contact with the enemy, he does his best to prepare for every contingency. He doesn't always react well when a situation doesn't go as he expected — if an unforeseen turn of events occurs, he has to make an EGO Roll or spend one Phase studying the situation before he reacts. (The GM can waive this requirement in situations where Sarge has to act immediately to save someone's life, including his own.)

Sarge agrees pretty strongly with the Harbinger's methods and philosophy. At heart he's a military man who sizes up a situation, judges the right and wrong of it, and takes swift, decisive action to correct the wrongs. This sometimes causes friction with Knockout and Blade, who aren't quite so ruth-

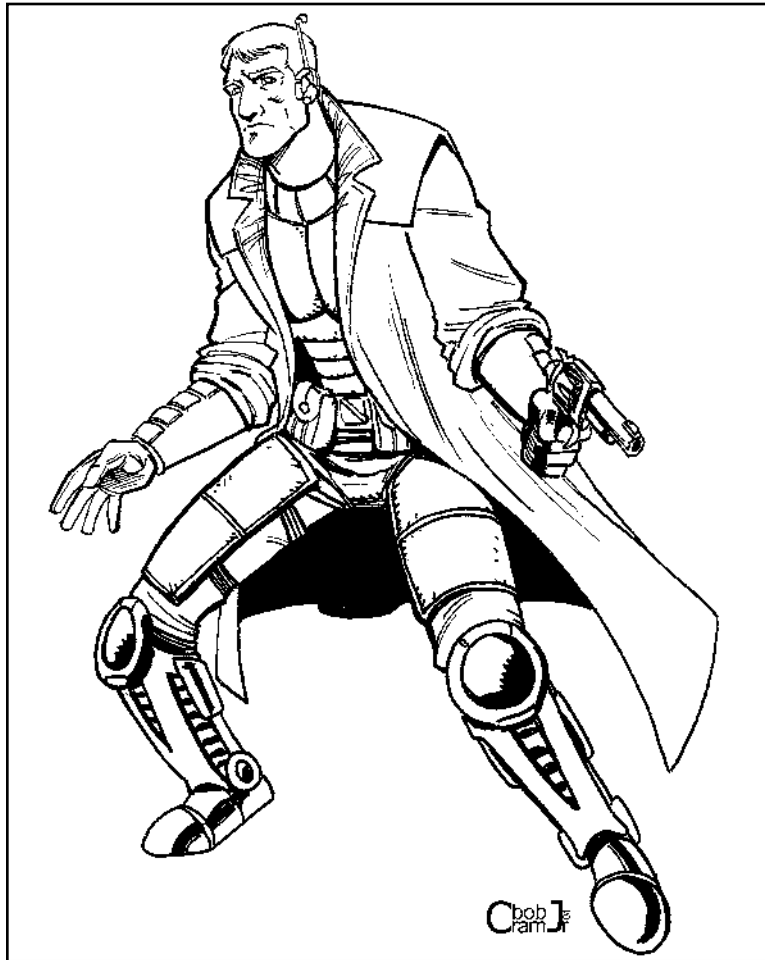
SUGGESTED EQUIPMENT

Weapon		OCV	RMod	Dam	STUN	Shots	STR Min	Notes
Linebaugh 475	+0	+0	2d6+1	1d6	5	10		
Colt M16A2	+2	+1	2d6	1d6	30	13	2H, AF5, FS	
Frag grenades	0	0	2½d6	0	2	RBS	Explosion	
Concussion grenades	0	0	(8d6)	—	2	RBS	Explosion	
Combat knife#	0	—	1d6-1	0	—	6	Can Be Thrown	

Armor: DefTex body armor (DEF 8 on a 14- Activation Roll, plus polyethylene plates providing +3 DEF on Hit Locations 10-11 [including the sides])

Gear: LIBRA communicator, gas mask, nightsight goggles (Gen 2)

Clothing: LIBRA uniform



less. He's also had some difficulties getting the team to obey his orders with the military precision he expects.

Quote: "OK, squad, let's do this one by the numbers!"

Powers/Tactics: Sarge brings to the LIBRA team his extensive military training as a Ranger and Green Beret. He's the team's wilderness survival and operations expert, skilled at tracking, climbing, orienteering, and living off the land. He's equally adept at small-unit tactics. On the downside, he hasn't yet learned the equivalent skills for surviving the city streets (*i.e.*, Streetwise). He still has to rely on his teammates and mission briefings for that sort of information... though he's working hard to break that dependency.

Sarge favors large-caliber revolvers, which he feels give him more control over his shots, and reliable assault rifles such as the Colt M16A2 or Steyr AUG. In combat he prefers to remain back a little from the main action so he can observe and

give orders to maximize his teammates' effectiveness. He usually hugs cover and uses his assault rifle to lay down Suppression Fire or pick off targets of opportunity.

Campaign Use: As the leader of the LIBRA team, Sarge is most responsible for the team's actions, and his attitude usually controls how the team reacts to the PCs. If he likes the heroes, everything's fine; if he doesn't, or he's suspicious of them for some reason, tensions rise.

Sarge has maintained his connections with the military, and could even be re-activated for a special assignment of some sort (probably one related to a mission he performed as a Green Beret). This might entangle the team in an adventure away from Hudson City.

Sarge is pretty tough already, but if you want to make him tougher, expand his Skills so that he's already acclimated to the street. You could also give him more Martial Maneuvers (or Extra Damage Classes),

and/or improve his Combat Skill Levels so they apply to more attacks.

Sarge won't Hunt specific criminals or other characters unless ordered to do so.

Sarge has no criminal record, though his fingerprints and DNA are on file with the Army. The police suspect him of involvement in the executions of the gangbangers who killed his cousin, but they have no proof and the investigation's at a standstill (though a couple of detectives still keep an eye on him).

Appearance: Sarge is a white male about six feet tall with short blond hair and a hatchet nose. He's got a sort of no-nonsense look about him most of the time, revealing how seriously he takes his work. He usually wears his grey LIBRA uniform with dark grey body armor, kneepads, and the like, covering it all with a tan trenchcoat.

BLADE

Val	Char	Cost	Roll	Notes
10	STR	0	11-	Lift 100 kg; 2d6 [2]
20	DEX	30	13-	OCV: 7/DCV: 7
14	CON	8	12-	
13	BODY	6	12-	
13	INT	3	12-	PER Roll 12-
10	EGO	0	11-	ECV: 3
15	PRE	5	12-	PRE Attack: 3d6
12	COM	1	11-	
5	PD	3		Total: 9 PD (4 rPD)
5	ED	2		Total: 9 ED (4 rED)
4	SPD	10		Phases: 3, 6, 9, 12
7	REC	4		
28	END	0		
25	STUN	0		Total Characteristics Cost: 72

Movement: Running: 9"/18"

Cost Powers **END**

Martial Arts: Dirty Infighting

	Maneuver	OCV	DCV	Damage/Effect
4	Block	+2	+2	Block, Abort
4	Disarm	-1	+1	Disarm, 20 STR to Disarm roll
4	Eye Gouge	-1	-1	Sight Group Flash 4d6
4	Kidney Blow	-2	+0	HKA ½d6 (1d6 with STR)
4	Low Blow	-1	+1	2d6 NND(3)
4	Punch	+0	+2	4d6 Strike
1	Use Art with Short Blades			

6 *Strong Runner:* Running +3" (9" total) 1

Perks

- 10 Contacts: 10 points' worth, among Hispanic street gangs
- 5 Improved Equipment Availability: Military equipment

Talents

- 4 *Blademaster:* HKA +1d6 with Short Blades (HTH)
- 16 Crippling Blow
- 4 *Knifethrower:* HKA +1d6 with Thrown Blades

Skills

- 9 +3 with Short Blades HTH
- 8 Targeting Skill Levels: +4 OCV versus Hit Location Modifiers with Thrown Blades
- 3 Climbing 13-
- 3 Combat Driving 13-
- 3 Fast Draw (Blades) 13-
- 2 CK: Hudson City 11-
- 3 KS: The Hudson City Gang World 12-
- 2 Language: English (fluent conversation; Spanish is Native)
- 1 Lockpicking 8-
- 3 Persuasion 13-
- 2 PS: Gangbanger 11-
- 1 Security Systems 8-
- 3 Stealth 13-
- 3 Streetwise 12-
- 3 WF: Small Arms, Blades

Resource Points

- 9 Equipment Points: 105
- 0 Vehicle/Base Points: 10
- 0 Follower/Contact Points: 5
- 0 Miscellaneous Points: 0

Total Powers & Skills Cost: 128

Total Cost: 200

100+ Disadvantages

- 15 DNPC: Juanita Hernandez (girlfriend) 8- (Normal, Unaware of character's Social Limitation: Secret Identity)
- 20 Hunted: Card Shark 8- (Mo Pow, NCI, Kill)
- 10 Hunted: Latino Lords 8- (As Pow, Kill)
- 15 Psychological Limitation: Vigilante Mentality (Common, Strong)
- 15 Psychological Limitation: Wants To Save Gangbangers From The Streets (Common, Strong)
- 15 Social Limitation: Secret Identity (Roberto Morenos) (Frequently, Major)
- 10 Social Limitation: Criminal Record (Occasionally, Major)

Total Disadvantage Points: 200

Background/History: Roberto Morenos grew up in the Hispanic slums on the south side of Hudson City. He got involved with street gangs at an early age, and it wasn't long before he was a full-fledged

SUGGESTED EQUIPMENT

Weapon	OCV	RMod	Dam	STUN	Shots	STR Min	Notes
Combat machete	0	—	1d6+1	0	—	8	
Combat knife#	0	—	1d6-1	0	—	6	Can Be Thrown
Throwing knives	0	0	1d6-1	0	6	RBS	AF3
Throwing stars	0	0	½d6	0	20	RBS	AF5
Colt 2000	+1	+1	1d6+1	1d6-1	15	10	Silencer (-3)

Armor: DefTex body armor (DEF 4 on a 14- Activation Roll, plus polyethylene plates providing +3 DEF on Hit Locations 10-11)

Gear: LIBRA communicator, gas mask

Clothing: LIBRA uniform

gang member, making money by selling drugs and committing robberies. Skilled with knives, he earned the nickname “Blade.”

One day he and some other gangbangers confronted an old man on the sidewalk, planning to steal his wallet and rough him up a little. Rather than cower in fear like most of their victims, the old man stood up to them, even hitting one of them with his cane. Without warning, one of Roberto’s friends shot the old man, and the gangbangers fled... all except Roberto. Something about the man’s defiance had impressed him. He got the injured man to a hospital; in exchange, the old man didn’t tell the cops Roberto was part of the gang.

After the old man got out of the hospital, Roberto began helping him out around his apartment until he was fully healed. The old man taught him about literature, and the history of his people, and how destructive gangs were. It all awakened something in Roberto. He realized he’d been a fool — that he ought to be helping people, not victimizing them.

To his own surprise, Roberto began volunteering with a gang outreach program, trying to help other gangbangers leave the street behind the way he had. Before long he had a full-time job with the program and was feeling pretty good about things... but it wasn’t enough. Persuading gangbangers to give up the life wasn’t going to solve the gang problem — he was also going to have to do something to stop gangs from hurting other people.

He began spending his nights on the streets, using his skills and smarts to stop gang trouble before it arose. Eventually this brought him to the Harbinger’s attention, and that in turn led to an offer to join LIBRA.

Personality/Motivation: Blade has gone from being an amoral, self-serving “gangsta” to someone who’s dedicated to improving his community and saving other people from the streets — or from the dangers of the streets, as the case may be. He approaches his job with enthusiasm and confidence, though he’s had as many failures as successes. That just makes the successes all the sweeter.

Blade is less ruthless than most members of LIBRA. He’s willing to kill when he has to — he knows sometimes there’s no other way, and he’s fully aware of just how much some people deserve to die — but he’d rather find a “better” solution. After all, he’s living proof that people *can* walk away from crime and reform, and when possible he wants to give others the same chance he got.

Quote: “Don’t make me turn you into a pincushion. Put down the gun and walk away from this. Don’t throw your life away over a few bucks.”

Powers/Tactics: Unlike the other members of LIBRA, who prefer guns or similar weapons, Blade favors knives, daggers, and throwing stars. His main weapons are two “combat machetes” he developed himself, but he carries a couple of fighting daggers and over two dozen throwing knives and stars. The latter he can throw in groups of three to five if necessary. As a backup weapon he’s got a silenced 9mm semiautomatic.



Whenever possible, Blade prefers to rely on his stealth and speed in combat, taking advantage of cover in the process. If he thinks the person he’s fighting is “salvageable,” he’ll try to disarm them or go for incapacitating shots to the arms, shoulders, and legs.

Campaign Use: Blade, like Knockout, provides a minor note of dissension within the LIBRA ranks. He favors non-lethal solutions in many situations, which may conflict with Sarge’s plans or Hammer’s and Shadow’s methods.

To make Blade a more dangerous combatant, give him more knife-related Combat Skill Levels or abilities (such as Two-Weapon Fighting), or perhaps increase the damage of his blades by 1 DC. To weaken him, remove his Targeting Skill Levels and reduce his DEX to 17.

Blade won’t Hunt specific criminals or other characters unless ordered to do so.

Blade has an extensive juvenile criminal record for drug dealing, assault, attempted murder, burglarly, and armed robbery (though the most recent of the charges is several years old). His fingerprints and DNA are on file with the HCPD.

Appearance: Blade is a young Hispanic man about 5’9” tall, with a toned, athletic build. In addition to a veritable arsenal of throwing blades, he carries several fighting daggers and two “combat machetes” (as he calls them). He wears less body armor than the rest of the team, preferring to remain unencumbered and mobile.

HAMMER

Val	Char	Cost	Roll	Notes
18	STR	8	13-	Lift 300 kg; 3½d6 [4]
16	DEX	18	12-	OCV: 5/DCV: 5
20	CON	20	13-	
16	BODY	12	12-	
14	INT	4	12-	PER Roll 12-
10	EGO	0	11-	ECV: 3
20	PRE	10	13-	PRE Attack: 4d6
10	COM	0	11-	
8	PD	4		Total: 17 PD (9 rPD)
6	ED	2		Total: 11 ED (9 rED)
3	SPD	4		Phases: 4, 8, 12
8	REC	0		
40	END	0		
35	STUN	0		Total Characteristics Cost: 82

Movement: Running: 7"/14"

Cost	Powers	END
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10	<i>Brawler:</i> HA +3d6; Hand-To-Hand Attack (-½)	1
15	<i>Shrug It Off:</i> Physical Damage Reduction, Resistant, 50%; Requires A CON Roll (-¾), Character Must Be Aware Of Attack (-¾)	0
2	<i>Strong Runner:</i> Running +1" (7" total)	1

Perks

4	Contacts: 4 points' worth, in the Marines
5	Improved Equipment Availability: Military equipment

Skills

10	+2 with Ranged Combat
1	Combat Driving 8-
1	Criminology 8-
7	Demolitions 14-
3	Electronics 12-
3	Interrogation 13-
2	CK: Hudson City 11-
2	KS: Criminal Law And Procedure 11-
2	KS: The Law Enforcement World 11-
2	KS: The Military/Mercenary/Terrorist World 11-
2	KS: U.S. Marines History And Customs 11-
1	Lockpicking 8-
2	PS: EOD Officer 11-

2	PS: Marine 11-
1	Security Systems 8-
3	Stealth 12-
3	Streetwise 13-
3	Tactics 12-
6	WF: Small Arms, Grenade Launchers, General Purpose/Heavy Machine Guns, Knives, Shoulder-Fired Weapons

Resource Points

21	Equipment Points: 165
5	Vehicle/Base Points: 20
0	Follower/Contact Points: 5
0	Miscellaneous Points: 0

Total Powers & Skills Cost: 118

Total Cost: 200

100+ Disadvantages

15	DNPC: Daniqua Gregson (girlfriend) 8- (Normal, Unaware of character's Social Limitation: Secret Identity)
20	Hunted: BATF 8- (Mo Pow, NCI, Capture)
20	Hunted: Card Shark 8- (Mo Pow, NCI, Kill)
20	Psychological Limitation: Vigilante Mentality (Common, Total)
10	Psychological Limitation: Prefers The "Military Solution" (Common, Moderate)
15	Social Limitation: Secret Identity (Charles Jackson) (Frequently, Major)

Total Disadvantage Points: 200

Background/History: Charles Jackson grew up in one of Hudson City's poorer neighborhoods, but thanks to his stern and loving parents, he avoided the gang scene and stayed out of trouble. He graduated high school with excellent grades and wanted to attend college, but his family couldn't afford it. He joined the Marines instead, planning to go to school with GI money after his tour was up. But it turned out he enjoyed military life and stayed in much longer than he expected. He proved to have a talent for demolitions work and heavy weapons.

After he left the Marines, Jackson came back home and joined the Hudson City Police Department's bomb squad. He liked the work, but soon became disgusted with the corruption and incompetence he saw throughout the department. *There've got to be better ways to protect folks, he thought.*

SUGGESTED EQUIPMENT

Weapon	OCV	RMod	Dam	STUN	Shots	STR Min	Notes
Desert Eagle	+1	+0	2d6+1	1d6	9	13	
Colt M16A2	+2	+1	2d6	1d6	30	13	2H, AF5, FS
USAS-12	+0	+0	2½d6	1d6	28	13	2H, AF5, LR(50")
Grenade Gun	+0	+0	2½d6	1d6	40	16	AF3, Explosion
Combat knife#	0	—	1d6-1	0	—	6	Can Be Thrown

Armor: DefTex body armor (DEF 9 on a 14- Activation Roll, plus polyethylene plates providing +3 DEF on Hit Locations 10-11 [including the sides])

Ballistic face shield (DEF 3, only protects Location 4 from the front)

Gear: LIBRA communicator, gas mask, nightsight goggles (Gen 2), one block of plastique, demolitions kit

Clothing: LIBRA uniform

One day he witnessed a mugging while he was off duty. He chased down the perpetrator, caught him, and returned the victim's purse to her. Suddenly it hit him: *I can do this all the time* — that's a better way to protect people. Since the cops weren't getting the job done, he'd "help out" on the side.

For several months Jackson labored to clean up the streets, but he soon realized the task was beyond him — he lacked the training, weapons, and resources he needed. And that's when he was approached about joining LIBRA.

Personality/Motivation: Jackson — or Hammer, as his teammates call him — is a pretty simple and straightforward guy. The way he sees it, there's Good and Evil, right and wrong, and it's an honest man's job to support what's Good and right, and fight what's Evil and wrong. The depths of the Harbinger's "forensic philosophy" are lost on him, but the basics of the message speak to him profoundly.

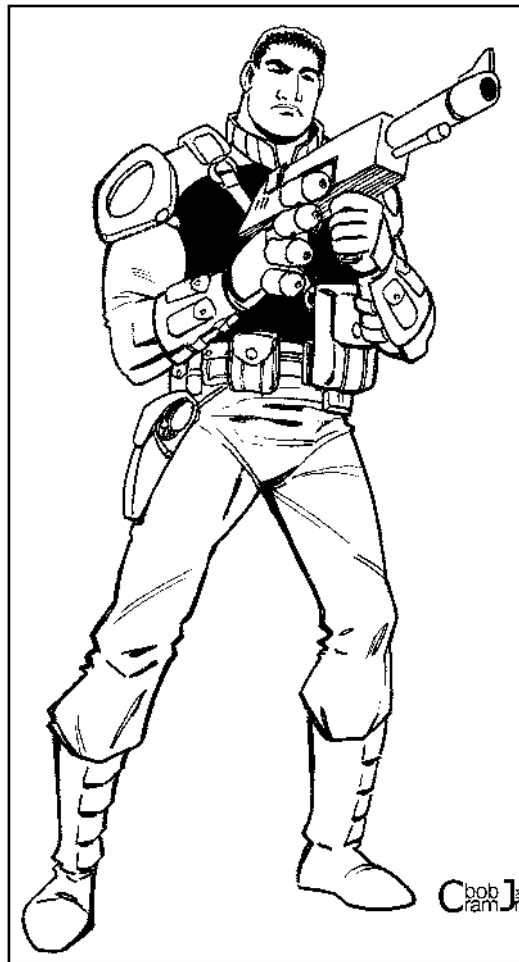
Hammer has a reputation for being quick to use force, and it's true he usually prefers the "military solution" (as he puts it) to anything else. A few times he's blown up the group's target when it would have been better to keep the victim alive for interrogation.

Quote: "One helping of cover fire, comin' up!"

Powers/Tactics: Hammer is the biggest, strongest member of LIBRA; he wears the heaviest armor and carries the heaviest weapons. His preferred weapon is his Grenade Gun, which he and Sarge developed. It's a man-portable automatic grenade launcher that fires 40mm grenades from a 40-round belt (or a 10-round magazine). He prefers fragmentation grenades, but can substitute any other type of 40mm grenade if necessary. When grenades aren't appropriate, he falls back on his assault rifle or automatic shotgun (which he loads with slugs).

In battle, Hammer takes point, using his heavy weapons to wreak havoc among the enemy, blast holes in walls, and so forth. Out of combat, he's the team's demolitions expert, and can set or defuse just about any type of bomb.

Campaign Use: Hammer is the "brick" of LIBRA — the strongman who can brawl with the best of them and carry the big guns. This makes some of his opponents underestimate his intelligence, but he's as smart and quick-witted as any of his teammates.



If you want to make Hammer tougher, emphasize his "brickness" — increase his STR and defenses, and perhaps give him some appropriate super-skills or Heroic-level "brick tricks." To tone him down a bit, replace the Grenade Gun with a normal one-shot grenade launcher, and reduce his Characteristics slightly.

Hammer won't Hunt specific criminals or other characters unless ordered to do so.

Hammer has no criminal record, but his fingerprints and DNA are on file with the Marines and the HCPD.

Appearance: Hammer is a large, muscular black man about 6'2" tall. He carries his unique Grenade Gun and a wide variety of 40mm grenades; for his backup weapon he favors an assault rifle or a combat shotgun... or both. He wears the standard LIBRA grey uniform and dark grey body armor.

KNOCKOUT

Val	Char	Cost	Roll	Notes
10	STR	0	11-	Lift 100 kg; 2d6 [2]
14	DEX	12	12-	OCV: 5/DCV: 5
13	CON	6	12-	
10	BODY	0	11-	
20	INT	10	13-	PER Roll 13-
10	EGO	0	11-	ECV: 3
15	PRE	5	12-	PRE Attack: 3d6
16	COM	3	12-	
4	PD	2		Total: 12 PD (8 rPD)
4	ED	1		Total: 12 ED (8 rED)
3	SPD	6		Phases: 4, 8, 12
5	REC	0		
26	END	0		
25	STUN	3		Total Characteristics Cost: 48

Movement: Running: 6"/12"

Cost Powers END

Martial Arts: Aikido

Cost	Maneuver	OCV	DCV	Notes
4	Dodge	—	+5	Dodge all attacks, Abort
4	Escape	+0	+0	+15 STR vs. Grabs
3	Hold	-1	-1	Grab Two Limbs, +10 STR for holding on
4	Joint Lock/Throw	+1	+0	Grab One Limb; 1d6 NND(1); Target Falls
5	Redirect	+1	+3	Block, Abort
3	Takedown	+1	+1	STR Strike; Target Falls
3	Throw	+0	+1	STR + v/5; Target Falls

Perks

- 6 Contacts: 6 points' worth, in the modeling/entertainment industry
- 5 Improved Equipment Availability: Military equipment
- 5 Money: Well Off

Skills

- 6 +2 with Criminology, Deduction, and Forensic Medicine
- 3 Acting 12-
- 3 Computer Programming 13-

- 3 Concealment 13-
- 7 Criminology 15-
- 3 Deduction 13-
- 3 Disguise 12-
- 1 Electronics 8-
- 7 Forensic Medicine 15-
- 4 Forgery (Documents, Money) 13-
- 3 High Society 12-
- 1 Interrogation 8-
- 2 CK: Hudson City 11-
- 2 KS: Card Shark 11-
- 3 KS: The Hudson City Underworld 13-
- 3 KS: Organized Crime 13-
- 1 Lockpicking 8-
- 3 Persuasion 12-
- 1 Security Systems 8-
- 3 Seduction 12-
- 3 Stealth 12-
- 3 Streetwise 12-
- 4 WF: Small Arms, Knives, Grenade Launchers
- 3 Scientist
- 1 1) SS: Arson/Explosion Investigation 11-
- 1 2) SS: Bloodstain Interpretation 11-
- 2 3) SS: Chemistry 12-
- 1 3) SS: Fiber/Hair Analysis 11-
- 1 4) SS: Firearm Ballistics 11-
- 1 5) SS: Serology 11-

Resource Points

- 28 Equipment Points: 200
- 0 Vehicle/Base Points: 10
- 0 Follower/Contact Points: 5
- 0 Miscellaneous Points: 0

Total Powers & Skills Cost: 152

Total Cost: 200

100+ Disadvantages

- 20 DNPC: Morena Cox (younger sister) 8- (Incompetent, Unaware of character's Social Limitation: Secret Identity)
- 20 Hunted: Card Shark 8- (Mo Pow, NCI, Kill)
- 10 Hunted: HCPD 8- (Mo Pow, NCI, Watching)
- 15 Psychological Limitation: Vigilante Mentality (Common, Strong)
- 20 Psychological Limitation: Protective Of Innocents (Common, Total)
- 15 Social Limitation: Secret Identity (Barbara Cox) (Frequently, Major)

Total Disadvantage Points: 200

SUGGESTED EQUIPMENT

Weapon	OCV	RMod	Dam	STUN	Shots	STR Min	Notes
H&K P7M13	+1	+0	1d6+2	1d6-1	13	9	PR
Mossberg 590	+0	+0	2½d6	1d6	9	12	2H, AE1, LR(20"), RR, RP
Grenade Launcher	0	0	110 STR	1	8		

Armor: DefTex body armor (DEF 8 on a 14- Activation Roll, plus polyethylene plates providing +3 DEF on Hit Locations 10-11 [including the sides])

Gear: LIBRA communicator, gas mask, criminalistics kit (+2 to roll)

Clothing: LIBRA uniform

Background/History: There was a time when Barbara Cox had it all — beauty, money, fame. She was an up-and-coming fashion model and actress who'd achieved notable success in the industry at an early age. She was poised to break into the *really* big time... but unfortunately, one person took too much notice of her too early. She attracted the attention of a particularly depraved stalker — one who was too smart to do anything so extreme that she could get a restraining order against him. She began taking self-defense and firearms courses, just in case — but to no avail. The stalker kidnapped her and her sister Morena. After shooting Morena, he began to beat Barbara to death with his bare hands. Fortunately, someone heard her screams in time to summon the police, who killed the stalker and took the two women to the hospital.

Morena survived, though she suffered severe impairment as the result of her brain injury. Barbara wasn't in danger of death, but her good looks — and career — were ruined. The plastic surgeons performed a miracle, restoring as much of her beauty as they could, but between the change in her appearance and the post-traumatic stress she suffered, working in the public eye was out of the question.

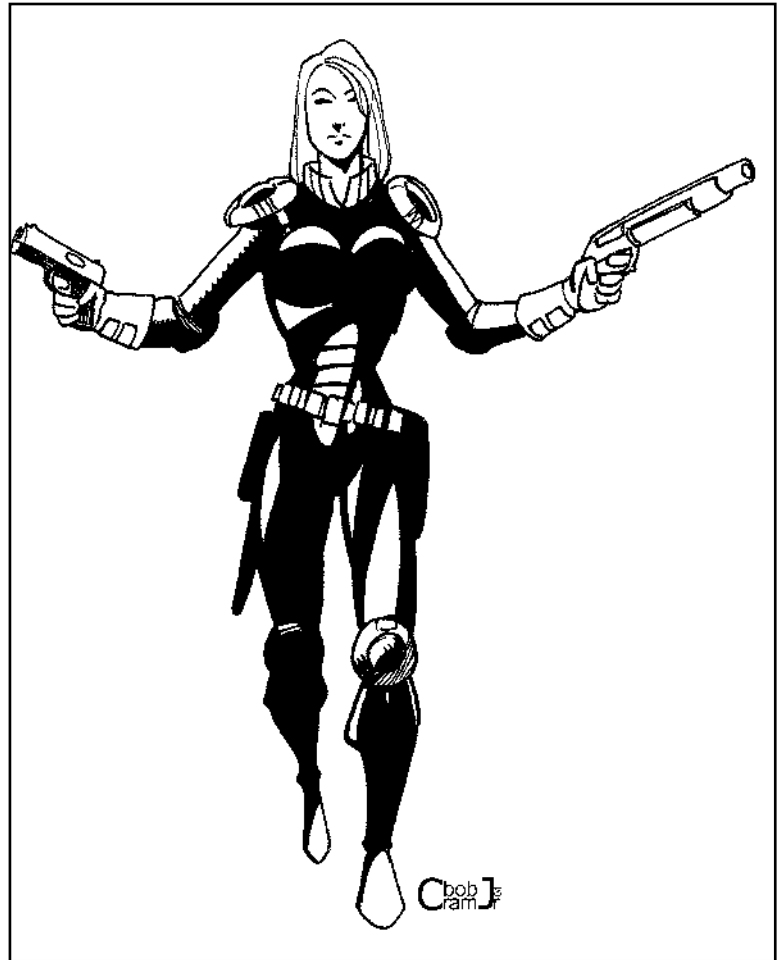
Seeing her former life for the vapid waste it was, Barbara decided to do something to prevent people from becoming crime victims — or at least to help catch the victimizers. Discovering an interest in criminalistics and forensic science, she threw herself into studying. She thought maybe she could become an FBI agent or a medical examiner.

Unbeknownst to Barbara, her aptitude for forensic matters attracted the attention of the Harbinger of Justice. When he began to form LIBRA, Barbara was one of his first recruits — her combination of drive, scientific acumen, and social skills made her perfect for the group. Adopting a false identity, “Jesse,” she served as his point woman for recruiting still more vigilantes-in-training. She's considered the second-in-command of the team after Sarge.

Personality/Motivation: Compared to most members of LIBRA, Knockout is a gentle, merciful person. She's as dedicated to the idea of fighting crime as her teammates, but comes at it from a more defensive perspective. Her goal is to protect innocent people, and to stop criminals with minimal force. She'll kill if she has to, but if possible prefers to rely on her non-lethal weapons. This sometimes causes tension with Sarge and Shadow, who continue to try to sway her to their point of view.

Quote: “Hold on — I can resolve this without any gunplay.”

Powers/Tactics: Knockout's main weapon is a modified grenade launcher that fires 40mm grenades. She can fire any of the standard 40mm grenades listed on page 250-51 (including specialized rounds such as Smoke and Tear Gas), but her specialty is a knockout gas grenade:



Energy Blast 4d6, Area Of Effect (6" Radius; +1), Continuous (+1), NND (defense is Life Support [Self-Contained Breathing or appropriate Immunity]; +1) (80 Active Points); OAF (-1), Range Based On STR (-¼), 1 Continuing Charge lasting 1 Turn (-1¼). Total cost: 23 points.

On most combat missions, her typical grenade load is four fragmentation, four smoke, and eight knockout gas. She tailors the load for specific mission parameters.

Knockout's tactical role varies. She prefers to remain in the background, often near Sarge, firing her grenades wherever they can have the best effect. But sometimes the team needs her to lead the charge, opening up on the enemy with a few well-placed explosions before the other characters start shooting.

Campaign Use: To an even greater extent than Blade, Knockout is a voice of moderation within the LIBRA team. It's possible she might eventually “go solo” if the group's conduct becomes too much for her to handle — but she'd never betray the team.

Knockout's appearance today is significantly different from the look that made her famous — she's still beautiful, but most people would have a difficult time associating her with the model and actress she used to be. Still, it's possible someone might figure out who she is.

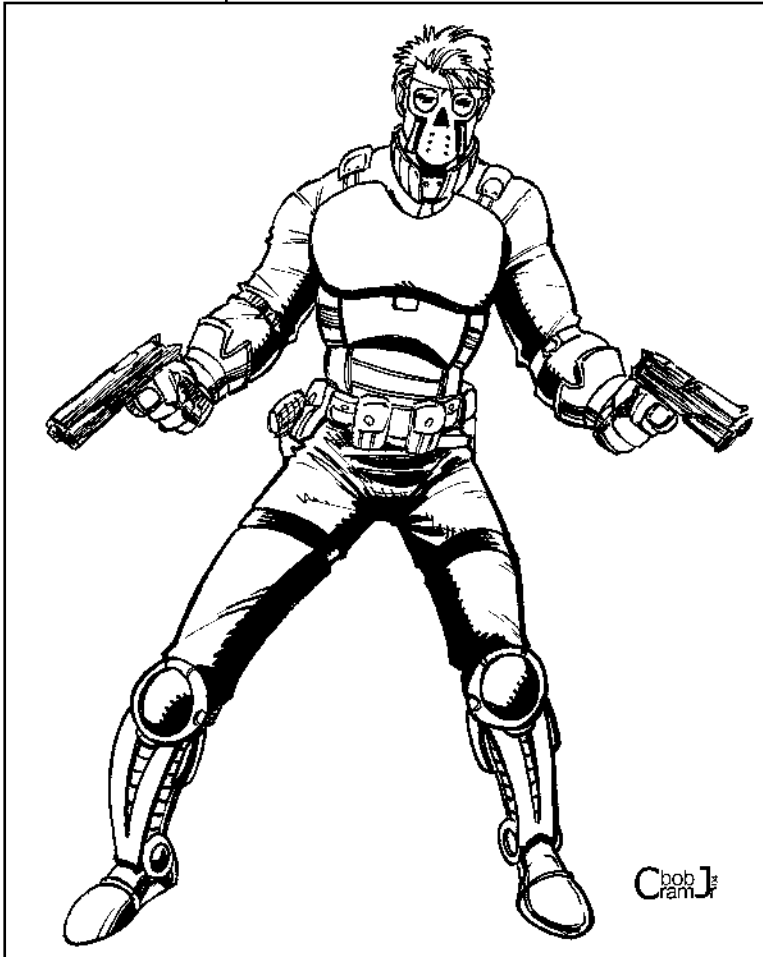
To make Knockout a tougher opponent, increase her combat abilities — give her some Combat Skill Levels with her weapons (and/or

some DCV Levels), increase several of her Characteristics, and so forth. To weaken her, get rid of her Aikido.

Knockout won't Hunt specific criminals or other characters unless ordered to do so.

Knockout has no criminal record. The police have begun to keep an eye on her because they've seen her near several crime scenes, but as yet they don't suspect anything.

Appearance: Knockout is a beautiful woman in her late 20s, about 5'6" tall with short blonde hair. In the field she wears LIBRA grey and a gas mask. When not dressed for combat, she looks a bit like Uma Thurman, though slightly broader-shouldered and more muscular.



SHADOW

Val	Char	Cost	Roll	Notes
15	STR	5	12-	Lift 200 kg; 3d6 [3]
18	DEX	24	13-	OCV: 6/DCV: 6
18	CON	16	13-	
13	BODY	6	12-	
15	INT	5	12-	PER Roll 12-
10	EGO	0	11-	ECV: 3
20	PRE	10	13-	PRE Attack: 4d6
10	COM	0	11-	
				Total: 14 PD (8 rPD)
6	PD	3		Total: 13 ED (8 rED)
5	ED	1		Phases: 3, 6, 9, 12
4	SPD	12		
7	REC	0		
36	END	0		
30	STUN	0		
				Total Characteristics Cost: 82

Movement: Running: 6"/12"

Cost Powers **END**
2 *Observant:* +1 PER with Sight Group

Perks

- 10 Contacts: 10 points' worth, in the HCPD and Hudson City criminal justice system
- 1 Fringe Benefit: Weapon Permit
- 2 Fringe Benefit: Concealed Weapon Permit
- 5 Improved Equipment Availability: Military equipment

Skills

- 12 +4 with Pistols
- 3 Climbing 13-
- 1 Combat Driving 8-
- 3 Concealment 13-
- 5 Bugging 13-
- 3 Bureaucratics 13-
- 3 Criminology 12-
- 3 Deduction 12-
- 1 Demolitions 8-
- 1 Electronics 8-
- 1 Forensic Medicine 8-
- 3 Interrogation 13-
- 3 CK: Hudson City 13-
- 2 KS: Criminal Law And Procedure 11-
- 2 KS: The Law Enforcement World 11-
- 7 Lockpicking 15-
- 2 PS: Police Officer 11-
- 7 Security Systems 14-
- 3 Shadowing 12-
- 3 Stealth 13-
- 3 Streetwise 13-
- 10 Two-Weapon Fighting (Ranged)
- 2 WF: Small Arms
- 2 Weaponsmith (Firearms) 13-

Resource Points

- 13 Equipment Points: 125
- 0 Vehicle/Base Points: 10
- 0 Follower/Contact Points: 5
- 0 Miscellaneous Points: 0

Total Powers & Skills Cost: 118

Total Cost: 200

100+ Disadvantages

- 5 Distinctive Features: scar on lower right jaw (Easily Concealed; Noticed And Recognizable)
- 20 Hunted: Card Shark 8- (Mo Pow, NCI, Kill)
- 10 Hunted: HCPD 8- (Mo Pow, NCI, Watching)
- 20 Psychological Limitation: Vigilante Mentality (Common, Total)
- 15 Psychological Limitation: Hot-Tempered (Common, Strong)
- 15 Reputation: brutal, racist cop, 11- (Extreme)
- 15 Social Limitation: Secret Identity (Jerry Manowitz) (Frequently, Major)

Total Disadvantage Points: 200

Background/History: He was able to keep his anger bottled up until he got home. Then he really let loose. The noise made the neighbors call the cops — just the sort of irony he didn't need.

He still could barely believe they'd actually fired him. Part of the settlement package, the Captain said. The guy you beat up gets an "undisclosed sum" of cash and you lose your job. At least he had the decency to hide his smirk until he thought Manowitz couldn't see him. Ten years in law enforcement, down the tubes forever.

"Excessive force." What a load of crap! The guy was a known violent felon and drug user, a five-time loser who by all rights should have been six feet under. He was selling drugs to kids, for God's sake, ten- and twelve-year-olds. So what if he'd hit the guy a few extra times when he arrested him? Okay, a few *dozen*, but the point remained that he ought to be in jail or dead, not out living high on the hog with taxpayers' money in his pocket while Manowitz was out of a job. *Hell*, he thought, *they oughtta give me another medal for it!*

He tried hanging out at his favorite cop bars, but it just wasn't the same. Everyone said they were glad to see him, but somehow there was a distance there, a gulf that hadn't existed before. He was just a civilian now. Pretty soon he found other bars to drink at. Eventually he settled on Jersey Jake's, off of South Lincoln. It wasn't too far from his apartment, it wasn't a meeting place for singles, it didn't have loud music, the jerk quotient was low. Most of the patrons

just kept to themselves, and that suited Manowitz fine. He could sit there and drink and watch the TV, maybe read the *City News* or the *Star-Gazette* if he felt like it, and nobody would bother him as long as he had a drink in front of him.

At that rate he was going to go through his severance pay fast, and he knew it even as he tried to forget his troubles with beer and old TV shows. But there wasn't any work he could do. There weren't any cop jobs, not for him. He thought about moving, but it wouldn't be any better anywhere else. Besides, he'd been in Hudson City ever since he was born, and he liked it. He snorted with disgust and turned his attention away from the television and back to his newspaper.

A couple minutes later, he realized someone was staring at him. He looked over and saw this woman, a brunette. She wasn't bad-looking. She had on jeans and a red blouse, and was wearing glasses.

"Hey," he said by way of introduction. "Do I know you?"

The woman sat down next to him, placing her purse on the bar near her left hand, and her drink nearer to him. "No, I don't think so. But I know you. Jerry Manowitz, right?"

Manowitz scowled. She must've recognized him from the pictures in the paper. "Yeah, that's me," he said resignedly.

"Thought so. Good." She motioned to the bartender to get him another beer.

"What's your name?" he asked.

"Jesse," she said. "I remember reading about you in the paper a while back."

"Yeah, well, we all get our fifteen minutes.

Thanks for the beer."

"No problem."

They sat there for a few minutes, not talking.

"So, what're you doing now?" she finally asked.

"Drinking."

"No, I mean, where are you working? Papers said the HCPD let you go."

"What do you care, lady? You think buying me a beer gives you the right to ask personal questions? You a reporter or something?"

"No, nothing like that. I know some people who could use a guy like you, that's all. Just wanted to see if you're interested."

SUGGESTED EQUIPMENT

Weapon	OCV	RMod	Dam	STUN	Shots	STR Min	Notes
Colt Anaconda	+0	+0	2½d6	1d6	6	11	Frangible ammo
Colt M1911	+1	+0	2d6-1	1d6	7	9	Laser sight
Glock 21	+0	+0	2d6+1	1d6+1	13	9	HP ammo, PR
SIG/SAUER P226	+1	+0	1d6	1d6-1	15	8	AP ammo
Frag grenades	0	0	2½d6	0	2	RBS	Explosion
Concussion grenades	0	0	(8d6)	—	2	RBS	Explosion
Combat knife#	0	—	1d6-1	0	—	6	Can Be Thrown

Armor: DefTex body armor (DEF 8 on a 14- Activation Roll, plus polyethylene plates providing +3 DEF on Hit Locations 10-11 [including the sides])

Ballistic face shield (DEF 3, only protects Location 4 from the front; also provides Sight Group Flash Defense [5 points])

Gear: LIBRA communicator, gas mask, high-quality lockpicks (+2 to rolls), Security Systems tools, bugs and bugging equipment

Clothing: LIBRA uniform

“Depends on what kind of work.”

“Well, that’s a little difficult to describe,” she said cooly as she rummaged around in her purse. “They call it forensic combat.”

“Forensic combat? Never heard of it — martial arts?”

“Not exactly. Here, take a look at this,” she said as she handed him a book she’d gotten out of her purse. It was a small, slim volume, hardbound in featureless black leather. On the spine there was a title stamped in gold: *A Manifesto Of Justice*. No author. He opened up the book and looked at the first couple of pages. Still no author.

“Who’s it by?” he asked.

“The people I work for. It talks about the kind of work they do. Tell you what, you read it and tell me whether the job would interest you at all. I’ll be here one week from tonight, okay?”

“Sure,” he said, figuring he had nothing to lose.

“See you in a week, then,” she said, then got up and left.

It wasn’t martial arts, that was for sure. The *Manifesto* was some kind of philosophy book. It talked about Justice and just actions, evil men and just men, and the “ability to perceive Justice.” And at the end, it talked about vigilantism. Manowitz figured the author must be one of the city’s vigilantes, and now he was sure. One of them — the Harbinger, DarkAngel, Renegade, one of the minor ones — had written this book to explain and justify his actions. And now it seemed they wanted him to become a vigilante, too.

Manowitz didn’t care much for the idea at first, and he found some of the book’s reasoning — that some people have a more correct perception of Justice than others, and therefore have a duty to preserve and uphold Justice — simpleminded. He’d always taken pride in working *within* the law, as a cop, to “uphold Justice.” That was the right way to do things. But he couldn’t be a cop anymore.

And why not? Because society had reached the point where the “rights” of criminals outweighed the rights of innocent citizens and those who had sworn to protect them. Where thugs and killers went in and out of prison like birds because society lacked the will to build enough prisons to keep them all locked up and punished. Where the most obvious ways of dealing with these problems were constantly criticized by well-meaning idiots who’d come to have greater sway over society than straightforward common sense.

The more he thought about the book, the more what it said made sense to him. If he couldn’t be a cop anymore, there were other ways “to serve and protect.”

He went back to Jersey Jake’s when the week was up. Jesse was sitting in a booth near the back. She didn’t say anything as he sat down.

“What’d you think?” she finally asked after he’d ordered a drink.

“Interesting stuff. Made sense, if I understood it.”

“What didn’t you understand?”

“I think I understood everything, but if you follow what the book says, if I’m not a “just man,” I

might not be perceiving things correctly, so maybe I’d misunderstand.”

“Do you think you’re a just man?”

Manowitz thought for a second. “Yeah. Yeah, I do.”

“Why?”

“That was what was getting me in trouble on the force all the time — what got me fired. I get so sick of seeing the way society handles crime these days. I think most of the answers are pretty obvious, but no one’s got the guts to do what needs doing. I have the guts, but all they got me in the end was fired.”

She didn’t say anything, as if she was hoping to shake his conviction by not agreeing with him.

“You work for the people who wrote this?” he asked.

She nodded.

“What do you do?”

“That’s not really the important question,” she said, leaning in closely so she could lower her voice. “The question is, what would *you* do for them?”

“What do you mean?”

“I mean this. You’re obviously interested in them, or you wouldn’t be here. You know what’s involved. Would you risk your life to accomplish the sort of objectives they have?”

“I did it every day for ten years. Got the scars to prove it.”

“Would you kill for them?”

“I’ve shot criminals before. Three times. Killed two of them.”

“That was in a gunfight. Lots of people could do that. I mean, if you had to, could you deliberately stalk another person, an evil man, and then kill him in cold blood when the opportunity presented itself?”

He thought for a while. “Yes,” he said at last, “I could do that. But only if I were convinced he deserved it.” But even as he said it, he thought to himself, *Could I?*

She smiled. The smile changed her whole face; it made her beautiful. For a second she looked familiar, as if he’d seen her somewhere, but then she stopped smiling and the spark of recognition faded away without catching flame. “Good. Are you interested in coming to work for them, then?”

“Maybe. I don’t mind working for a cause, but I’ve got to eat, too. What’s in it for me?”

“Beginning salary of \$90,000 a year, deposited without taxes into an offshore account in your name; company apartment; company car; expense account. Sound good?”

“Vacations?”

“None. You’re on duty 24-7, 365 days a year. But a little time off can be arranged sometimes.”

He considered the offer for a while. It would be great to get back into “law enforcement,” one way or the other. He finally said yes, knowing he’d already said it when he showed up at Jake’s.

“Excellent.”

“What happens now?”

“Now you go away for a while so you can learn a few things. You’ll be gone about six months, give or take. I’ll give you a week to get your affairs

in order and say your goodbyes. Meet me at the QuickCorner at the Duvall exit onto Holden Avenue one week from tomorrow at 7:00 a.m. Take the bus or the subway, not a cab.”

“What should I bring?”

“A few changes of clothes, any weapons you’re comfortable with, anything else you might like to have while you’re away.”

“Anything else I should know?”

“For now, that’s it. See you a week from tomorrow.” She slid out of the booth and walked away from him.

Eight days later he was in the QuickCorner parking lot. Parked over by one side of the building was a bread delivery truck. The driver was standing outside the cab drinking a cup of coffee. Then Jesse walked around from the back of the van and waved at him. He went over to her.

“Hi,” he said.

“Hi. Any trouble getting here? Notice anything odd?”

“No — should I have?”

“Not if everyone’s done his job,” she said with a smile. Again her features jumped out at him for a minute, as if he’d seen her somewhere before, but he couldn’t place it. “C’mon and get in the back of the van, it’s time to get going.”

The back doors of the van had no windows. When she opened them, he could see why — there were no bread racks, so if anyone saw inside it would blow the cover. Instead there were two rows of seats and some racks of gear — medical equipment, mostly, but also some weapons, submachine guns and pistols. A metal wall with a door in it separated the driver’s compartment from the back. He climbed in; she followed and shut the doors.

“Have a seat,” Jesse said. “Anywhere you like; you’re the only passenger today.”

“Do you usually have a full load?”

“Almost never.”

He took a seat and fastened his seatbelt while she looked around the equipment racks. Finally she pulled out a hood. “I’ve got to blindfold you and insert some earplugs,” she said.

“Why? It’s not like I can see out the window or anything.”

“Sorry, procedure,” she said. He didn’t like it, but figured it couldn’t hurt. He couldn’t see a thing inside the hood, or hear the sound of the engine starting, but he felt the van begin to move. The hood smelled funny, like perfume. He had only the briefest of realizations that he was being drugged as he drifted off to sleep.

When he woke up, he wasn’t in Hudson City anymore — he was at what he soon learned was the LIBRA training camp. He spent the next several months there with his teammates as they honed their existing skills and developed ones they’d never had before. He concentrated on infiltration, becoming a top-notch B&E man. Now he’s a linchpin of the LIBRA team — the man who’s got more street experience than any of them.

Personality/Motivation: Shadow has become as thoroughly dedicated to the vigilante lifestyle and mentality as the Harbinger could hope for. The only thing that’s really holding him back is his temper. He’s got a tendency to fly off the handle, particularly when he’s frustrated or annoyed — and he has a *really* low tolerance for frustration. More than once he’s shot people the team wanted to take prisoner because he lost his temper, or launched an op too soon because he couldn’t stand by and watch anymore. If that flaw can ever be hammered out of him, he’ll be a well-tempered sword.

Quote: “Not so big and powerful now, are you, punk? Lie there and bleed while I take care of your little friends.”

Powers/Tactics: Although he earned his reputation on the force (such as it is) by beating a perpetrator, Shadow prefers to avoid HTH Combat if he can. He’s better with his guns. He favors pistols, usually carrying at least three semi-automatics and one revolver (each loaded with different ammunition). He thinks the best defense is a good offense, so he’s usually in the thick of the fight, blazing away with a gun in each hand.

Out of combat, Shadow is the team’s surveillance expert, skilled at breaking, entering, bugging, and tailing. He spends a lot of time on stakeouts or planning his infiltration missions — Sarge insists, as always, on precise preparation.

Campaign Use: Shadow is a good choice as a pre-generated PC for a player who doesn’t want to create a character for the game — he’s got a good set of highly-playable skills, and plenty of firepower.

If you need to make Shadow more powerful, give him some HTH Combat abilities (such as Commando Training defined as “Police Combat Training”), up his DEX a little, and/or give him more Combat Skill Levels. To weaken him, reduce his DEX and other Primary Characteristics a little, and cut his CSLs in half.

Shadow won’t Hunt specific criminals or other characters unless ordered to do so.

Shadow has no criminal record, though his fingerprints are on file with the HCPD.

Appearance: Shadow wears the LIBRA grey uniform and dark grey body armor; he conceals his face with a hockey mask-like face plate with red lenses that minimize glare. He carries multiple pistols in shoulder and hip holsters, usually with plenty of extra clips.

VILLAINS



ABADDON PLOT SEEDS

A series of seemingly unrelated victims have been found knifed to death throughout the city. What's the connection between them, and is Abaddon the one to blame for their deaths? If so, who hired him?

The PLRL secretly contacts the PCs with an offer: it will provide them information about Abaddon's whereabouts, provided they turn the assassin over to its agents when they capture him. Will the heroes make a deal with one devil to catch another?

During an unrelated mission, the PCs stumble upon some information that indicates Abaddon was trained by the *Mossad*, not any Palestinian terrorist group. Is it true — and if so, what's the Mossad up to?

ABADDON				
Val	Char	Cost	Roll	Notes
20	STR	10	13-	Lift 400 kg; 4d6 [4]
19	DEX	27	13-	OCV: 6/DCV: 6
20	CON	20	13-	
15	BODY	10	12-	
15	INT	5	12-	PER Roll 12-
12	EGO	4	11-	ECV: 4
15	PRE	5	12-	PRE Attack: 3d6
10	COM	0	11-	
8	PD	4		Total: 13 PD (5 rPD)
6	ED	2		Total: 11 ED (5 rED)
4	SPD	11		Phases: 3, 6, 9, 12
10	REC	4		
40	END	0		
35	STUN	0		Total Characteristics Cost: 102

Movement: Running: 7"/14"

Cost Powers **END**

<i>Martial Arts: Knifefighting</i>				
Maneuver	OCV	DCV	Damage/Effect	
4 Block	+2	+2	Block, Abort	
4 Dodge	—	+5	Dodge, Affects All Attacks, Abort	
4 Foist	+2	+0	Weapon +4 DC Strike	
4 Slashes	+0	+2	Weapon +4 DC Strike	
5 Stabs	-2	+1	Weapon +6 DC Strike	
5 Thrusts	+1	+3	Weapon +2 DC Strike	
8	+2 Extra DCs (already added in)			
2	<i>Swift Runner:</i> Running +1" (7" total) 1			

Perks

20 Contacts: 20 points' worth, among Middle Eastern terrorists

Talents

4 *Blademaster:* HKA +1d6 with Short Blades (HTH)
6 Combat Luck (3 PD/3 ED)
15 Combat Sense 12-

Skills

25 +5 with Short Blades (HTH and Ranged)

3 Acrobatics 13-
3 Breakfall 13-
3 Climbing 13-
1 Demolitions 8-
3 Interrogation 12-

2 AK: Afghanistan 11-
2 AK: The Middle East 11-
2 AK: Palestine 11-
1 CK: Jerusalem 8-
1 KS: The Espionage World 8-
3 KS: The Military/Mercenary/Terrorist World 12-
1 Language: English (basic conversation; Arabic is Native)
2 Language: Hebrew (fluent conversation)
2 Language: Persian (fluent conversation)
1 SS: Pharmacology/Toxicology 8-
3 Paramedics 12-
5 Rapid Attack (HTH)
3 Shadowing 12-
1 Sleight Of Hand 8-
3 Stealth 13-
3 Streetwise 12-
2 Survival (Desert) 12-
3 TF: Common Motorized Ground Vehicles, Two-Wheeled Motorized Ground Vehicles
10 Two-Weapon Fighting (HTH)
3 WF: Small Arms, Knives

Resource Points

28 Equipment Points: 200
0 Vehicle/Base Points: 10
0 Follower/Contact Points: 5
0 Miscellaneous Points: 0

Total Powers & Skills Cost: 200

Total Cost: 302

100+ Disadvantages

10 Distinctive Features: Style (Not Concealable, Noticed And Recognizable, Detectable By Large Group)
20 Hunted: Mossad 8- (Mo Pow, NCI, Kill)
15 Hunted: PLRL 8- (Mo Pow, Kill)
20 Psychological Limitation: Casual Killer (Very Common, Strong)
20 Psychological Limitation: Pathological Hatred Of Israel, America, And Their Citizens (Common, Total)
10 Reputation: sadistic Muslim assassin, 11- (Extreme; Limited Group [Espionage and Military/Mercenary/Terrorist Worlds])
10 Social Limitation: Criminal Record (Occasionally, Major)
97 Experience Points

Total Disadvantage Points: 302

SUGGESTED EQUIPMENT

Weapon	OCV	RMod	Dam	STUN	Shots	STR Min	Notes
Combat knife#	0	—	1d6	0	—	7	Can Be Thrown
Throwing knives	0	0	1d6-1	0	6	RBS	AF3

Armor: Armored Clothing (DEF 2, Activation Roll 14-)

Gear: As appropriate for his current mission

Clothing: When on a mission, his Armored Clothing; at other times, as appropriate for the circumstances

Background/History: Yusef al-Behraz is the son of a member of the Palestinian League for Retribution and Liberation (PLRL), a terrorist group whose stated purpose is the destruction of the state of Israel and the establishment of a Palestinian state in its place. His parents raised Yusef to violently hate both Israel and its ally, the United States. As soon as he was old enough, his father trained him in the arts of combat and destruction. However, Yusef's talents lay in a slightly different area. One day, as his father watched, Yusef casually tossed three daggers into the bullseye of a wooden target, one after the other. Then he watched him do it again while throwing all three daggers at once. The PLRL soon took Yusef away for training as an assassin.

Gradually, Yusef's training made him forget about home, and replaced any gentle thoughts he had with the cold desire to kill. As soon as he was ready, the PLRL sent him into the field to kill key Israeli personnel. Yusef worked for the PLRL for nearly ten years. He was so feared that the Israelis gave him the name *Abaddon*, after the devil of evil war.

In time another emotion came to equal Abaddon's hatred of the Israelis: selfishness. He decided he was wasting his talents in the desert when governments and private individuals would pay top dollar for his services. He arranged to have the PLRL send him on a mission to Europe, then defected and went to work as a freelance assassin. Since then he's worked for employers on three continents, continually proving that he deserves his *nom de guerre*.

Personality/Motivation: Although he was a good-natured child, any kindly emotions Yusef al-Behraz might once have felt have been totally replaced by the cold, cruel killing machine that is Abaddon. Whoever hires him hires the best sort of assassin — one with absolutely no feelings of remorse or sympathy. Abaddon's one fault as an assassin (as some would see it) is his strong sense of self-preservation. He runs at the first sign of trouble rather than trying to complete the mission, and if captured talks freely to avoid torture. He insists upon high fees, and woe unto any employer who fails to pay him his full fee when specified. But despite his lack of "assassin's honor," Abaddon still gets hired for high fees because he rarely fails.



Quote: "Do not try to run, it is pointless. I am here, and so you are doomed to die."

Powers/Tactics: Abaddon's weapons of choice are knives and daggers. He typically carries four combat daggers and a dozen throwing knives. In most cases he fights with one dagger in each hand, and can throw one of them if necessary (this might qualify for a Surprise Move bonus the first time he tries it against a character). One of his favorite tricks is to throw a knife at a foe so the knife's hilt hits a wall in back of the target, causing the knife to bounce back and strike the target from behind. His *Blademaster* Talent, Martial Maneuvers, Combat Skill Levels, and the like allow him to do as much as HKA 4d6 with a knife.

Abaddon performs his missions like a hunter: he sits and waits in his victim's path and then leaps to the attack when the victim arrives. He has to get fairly close to his victim before he attacks; if he can't do this, he leaves and tries another time. Everyone lets down his guard sooner or later.

Campaign Use: Abaddon is an assassin with a twist. When they think "assassin," many PCs think "sniper" or "poisoner." Abaddon's skill with such an "old-fashioned" weapon may surprise them, giving him the crucial Phase he needs to complete his mission.

As a Hunter, Abaddon is patient and persistent. He won't take foolish chances or let his passions overrule his common sense — he knows that waiting for just the right moment to strike only makes his victory all the sweeter.

If you want to make Abaddon tougher, increase his defenses. He favors light defenses so he doesn't encumber himself and can move swiftly, but if he's facing two or more PCs at once he could benefit from some extra PD. To weaken him, get rid of his *Blademaster* Talent and reduce his Characteristics slightly.

Abaddon is wanted on three continents for eight murders.

Appearance: Abaddon is a man of Middle Eastern descent; he's got a muscular build and stands about six feet tall. His hair is black and cut very short in military style; he's got a thick, black moustache but no beard. He has no set uniform or costume, instead wearing any one of several different field uniforms. As an expert knife-fighter, he carries many different knives and throwing knives, and has other throwing blades concealed on his person.

CALIBER				
Val	Char	Cost	Roll	Notes
15	STR	5	12-	Lift 200 kg; 3d6 [3]
21	DEX	36	13-	OCV: 7/DCV: 7
18	CON	16	13-	
14	BODY	8	12-	
13	INT	3	12-	PER Roll 12-
12	EGO	4	11-	ECV: 4
20	PRE	10	13-	PRE Attack: 4d6
10	COM	0	11-	
10	PD	9		Total: 17 PD (7 rPD)
6	ED	2		Total: 13 ED (7 rED)
4	SPD	9		Phases: 3, 6, 9, 12
7	REC	0		
36	END	0		
40	STUN	9		Total Characteristics Cost: 111
Movement: Running: 6"/12"				
Cost Powers END				
49	<i>Guns, Guns, Guns!</i> : Multipower, 99-point reserve; OIF (multiple OAFs; -½), all Beam (-¼), Real Weapon (-¼)			
3u	1) <i>Assassination/Sniper Pistol (ASP)</i> : RKA 2d6, +1 STUN Multiplier (+¼); OAF (-1), Beam (-¼), Real Weapon (-¼), STR Minimum (12; STR Minimum Cannot Add/Subtract Damage; -1), 2 clips of 4 Charges each (-¾) plus collimating sight (+2 OCV, +10 versus Range Modifier, +2 PER versus darkness modifiers; Limited Range [125"], Only When Shooter Braces And/Or Sets (-1) plus Change Environment1" radius, -3 to Hearing Group PER Rolls, Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½); OAF (-1), No Range (-½), Real Weapon (-¼), Self Only (-½)			
2u	2) <i>Modular Firearm</i> : RKA 1d6+1, Variable Advantage (+1 Advantages; +2), Variable Special Effects (anything that can be represented with gun parts or ammunition and which doesn't contradict the Limitations; +¼); OAF (-1), Beam (-¼), Real Weapon (-¼), STR Minimum (13; STR Minimum Cannot Add/Subtract Damage; -1)			
<i>Martial Arts: Commando Training</i>				
	Maneuver	OCV	DCV	Notes
3	Aikido Throw	+0	+1	3d6 + v/5, Target Falls
4	Boxing Cross	+0	+2	5d6
4	Choke	-2	+0	Grab One Limb, 2d6 NND (2)
4	Escape	+0	+0	30 STR vs. Grabs
4	Hold	-1	-1	Grab Three Limbs, 25 STR
4	Judo Disarm	-1	+1	Disarm, 25 STR
4	Karate "Chop"	-2	+0	HKA ½d6 (1d6+1 with STR)
4	Kung Fu Block	+2	+2	Block, Abort

Perks

10 Contacts: 10 points' worth, throughout the underworld

5 Improved Equipment Availability: Military equipment

Talents

6 Combat Luck (3 PD/3 ED)

Skills

16 +2 with All Combat

6 +2 with Firearms

4 +2 OCV with ASP

3 Climbing 13-

3 Combat Driving 13-

3 Demolitions 12-

1 AK: Central America 8-

1 AK: The Middle East 8-

1 AK: Southeast Asia 8-

1 CK: Beirut 8-

2 KS: The Espionage World 11-

2 KS: The Hudson City Underworld 11-

2 KS: The Military/Mercenary/Terrorist World 11-

3 Shadowing 12-

3 Stealth 13-

5 Streetwise 13-

3 Tactics 12-

4 TF: Common Motorized Ground Vehicles, Helicopters, Two-Wheeled Motorized Ground Vehicles

6 WF: Small Arms, Knives, Grenade Launchers, General Purpose/Heavy Machine Guns, Shoulder-Fired Weapons

2 Weaponsmith (Firearms) 12-

Resource Points

15 Equipment Points: 135

10 Vehicle/Base Points: 30

5 Follower/Contact Points: 15

0 Miscellaneous Points: 0

Total Powers & Skills Cost: 207

Total Cost: 318

100+ Disadvantages

20 Hunted: HCPD 8- (Mo Pow, NCI, Imprison)

20 Hunted: FBI 8- (Mo Pow, NCI, Imprison)

15 Psychological Limitation: Greedy (Common, Strong)

15 Psychological Limitation: Brutal And Sadistic; Loves To Toy With His Victims (Common, Strong)

10 Reputation: brutal killer/robber, 11- (Extreme; Limited Group [Espionage and Military/Mercenary/Terrorist Worlds])

5 Rivalry: Professional (with Triggerhappy)

15 Social Limitation: Secret Identity (Allen Striker) (Frequently, Major)

10 Social Limitation: Criminal Record (Occasionally, Major)

108 Experience Points

Total Disadvantage Points: 318

SUGGESTED EQUIPMENT

Weapon		OCV	RMod	Dam	STUN	Shots	STR Min	Notes
AMT Automag IV	+0	+1	2d6	1d6	7	10		Has two of these
Walther PPK	+1	-1	1d6	1d6-1	7	6		
Flare Grenade	+0	+0	Flash 4d6	—	2	RBS		
Combat knife#	0	—	1d6-1	0	—	6		Can Be Thrown

Body Armor: Armored Clothing (DEF 2, Activation Roll 14-), Armored Jacket (DEF +2, covers Hit Locations 7-13, Sunglasses (Sight Group Flash Defense [5 points])

Gear: Radio headset, climbing gear (+2 to Climbing rolls)

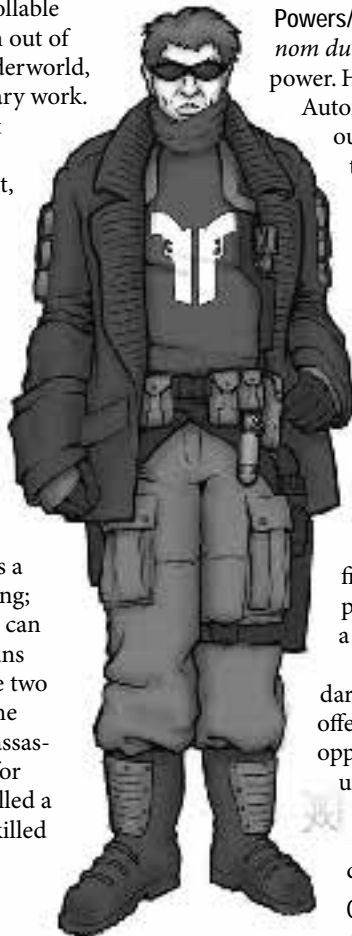
Clothing: In combat, his Armored Clothing (see *Appearance*); out of combat, as appropriate for the situation

Background/History: Allen, Daniel, and Richard Striker are triplets. They nearly killed their mother during childbirth, and they didn't make things any easier on their parents after that. By the time they were 16, they were so uncontrollable and brutal their parent kicked them out of the house. They drifted into the underworld, where they got involved in mercenary work. Soon, they were split up for the first time, as their various assignments took them all over the world to fight, murder, and pillage. To this day, they do their best to remain in contact, but the circumstances of their lives often makes this difficult.

Several years ago, Allen got tired of the typical mercenary lifestyle and decided to break into the high-powered, high-profit world of costumed crime. To give himself an edge, he designed two unique weapons: his ASP, a pistol that's almost as good as a sniper rifle for long-distance shooting; and his Modular Firearm, which he can reconfigure into various types of guns to suit his current needs. With these two powerful weapons, he established the identity of Caliber and became an assassin and enforcer. He works mostly for organized crime groups, but has pulled a few robberies on his own or with skilled crews (one of these involved Triggerhappy, who botched the job and has since become a serious rival of Caliber's). Things are going so well for him he wonders if maybe he shouldn't get his brothers to join him.

Personality/Motivation: Caliber is a powerful man with sadistic tendencies. He comes across as a bully who can, and will, back up his threats — and who'll use lethal force if he feels like it. He likes nothing better than to toy with his victims, making them suffer for a little while before killing them... though this sometimes gives them the chance to get away from him.

Quote: “This little piggy gets broken <CRACK>. This little piggy is also gonna get broken unless you tell me where I can find Dominic Marcelli, you little !\$#@%!!*...”



Powers/Tactics: Befitting a man with his *nom du crime*, Caliber carries a lot of firepower. His mundane guns include two AMT Automags and a Walther PPK as a “hold-out” piece. But his best guns are the two special ones he designed, the ASP and Modular Firearm. The ASP, which uses .45 WinMag ammunition so its rounds are interchangeable with the Automags, is a long-barrelled pistol with integral aiming accessories to make distance shots feasible. The Modular Firearm is essentially a set of custom-made gun components and clips of different ammunition that he can fit together in different combination to create just the right gun for the job at hand. It could be an assault rifle firing incendiary bullets one Phase, a powerful pistol loaded with AP ammo a few seconds later, and so forth.

In combat, Caliber is bold and daring, usually preferring to take the offensive. He moves around a lot so his opponents can't draw a bead on him. He usually relies on his Modular Firearm and Automags, reserving his ASP for the long-distance shooting it's designed for.

Campaign Use: Caliber makes an excellent all-around gunfighting adversary for *Dark Champions* PCs in many sub-genres, but his background gives him some depth you can exploit. He could recruit his brothers to join him (as the costumed criminals Salvo and Fusillade), or you could hold them in reserve to take his place after the PCs kill him. Since the heroes don't know he's a triplet, they'll be surprised when he “comes back from the dead”!

Caliber's conduct as a Hunter is the opposite of his combat style. He's calm and cool, favoring long-range shots with his ASP. He'll wait for hours,

CALIBER PLOT SEEDS

Caliber brings his brothers to Hudson City and they team up to commit a series of daring, high-tech robberies — and they don't hesitate to kill anyone who gets in their way. The PCs have to find them and stop them before they try to take down any more scores.

After the PCs capture some criminals, one of them claims to have information on Caliber — but he'll only talk if the PCs agree to let him come along on the attack, since he wants revenge on the assassin (who left him to take the fall for a job a couple years ago). Will the heroes go for it? Is this a legitimate offer, or is the stool pigeon working for someone?

The PCs find Caliber in an alley. He doesn't have any of his weapons, his clothes are torn, he's deathly pale, and he's curled up in a fetal position muttering unintelligibly to himself. What's going on?

if necessary, to get just the right shot. He tries to have at least two escape routes planned; he has no intention of going to prison just to satisfy his employers.

To make Caliber tougher, give him more body armor and beef up his Skill list a bit. To weaken him, get rid of his Modular Firearm, remove some Martial Maneuvers, and/or reduce his Characteristics a little.

Allen Striker has a lengthy juvenile record of offenses both petty and serious, and a much shorter adult record for burglary and assault. As Caliber, Striker's wanted for numerous murders and robberies in multiple jurisdictions, though he has so far evaded capture.

Appearance: Caliber is a broad-shouldered white male, muscular but not too muscular, standing 6'2" tall. He wears a black leather combat jacket, black combat boots, black gloves, and dark grey pants and shirt, with a two-gun emblem in white on the shirt. His belt has numerous pouches for his gun parts and ammo clips, as well as holsters for his ASP and Modular Gun; there are also pockets along the thighs of his pants and the upper arms of his jacket to hold ammo clips. He carries his two AMT Automags in shoulder holsters underneath his jacket, and has a knife sheathed in one of his boots. He doesn't wear a mask, preferring to "conceal" his face with expensive sunglasses.

Caliber's ASP is a custom-designed semi-automatic pistol with an unusually long barrel and a high-tech integral sight.

CROSSBOW

Val	Char	Cost	Roll	Notes
20	STR	10	13-	Lift 400 kg; 4d6 [4]
20	DEX	30	13-	OCV: 7/DCV: 7
20	CON	20	13-	
15	BODY	10	12-	
15	INT	5	12-	PER Roll 12-
10	EGO	0	11-	ECV: 3
20	PRE	10	13-	PRE Attack: 4d6
12	COM	1	11-	
8	PD	4		Total: 11 PD (3 rPD)
8	ED	4		Total: 11 ED (3 rED)
4	SPD	10		Phases: 3, 6, 9, 12
8	REC	0		
40	END	0		
40	STUN	5		Total Characteristics Cost: 109
Movement:		Running:	9"/18"	
		Swimming:	4"/8"	
		Leaping:	6"/12"	
Cost Powers				END
13	<i>Custom Crossbow:</i> Multipower, 30-point reserve; all OAF (-1), Real Weapon (-¼)			
1u	1) <i>Bladed Bolts:</i> RKA 2d6; OAF (-1), Extra Time (Full Phase to load and fire weapon; -½), Real Weapon (-¼), STR Minimum (14; STR Minimum Cannot Add/Subtract Damage; -1), Two-Handed (-½), 16 Charges (-0)			[16]
1u	2) <i>Grapnel-Bolt:</i> Swinging 15"; OAF (-1), Extra Time (Full Phase to load, fire, and Swing, regardless of distance Swung; -½), Real Weapon (-¼), 1 Recoverable Charge (-1¼)			[1rc]
15	<i>Shrug It Off:</i> Physical Damage Reduction, Resistant, 50%; Requires A CON Roll (-¾), Character Must Be Aware Of Attack (-¼)			0
6	<i>Animal Swifttness:</i> Running +3" (9" total)			1
2	<i>Animal Swifttness:</i> Swimming +2" (4" total)			1
2	<i>Animal Agility:</i> Leaping +2" (6" forward, 3" upward)			1
6	<i>Hunter's Senses:</i> +2 PER with all Sense Groups			0
15	<i>Hunter's Luck:</i> Luck 3d6			0
Perks				
55	<i>Animal Companions:</i> 8 Followers built on up to 200 base points each			
Talents				
3	Bump of Direction			
6	Combat Luck (3 PD/3 ED)			
3	Lightsleep			
3	Resistance (3 points)			

Skills

- 8 +4 OCV with Crossbow RKA
- 24 Range Skill Levels: +8 versus Range Modifier for All Attacks
- 3 Acrobatics 13-
- 9 Animal Handler (Canines, Equines, Felines, Raptors, Reptiles & Amphibians, Ursines) 14-
- 3 Breakfall 13-
- 3 Climbing 13-
- 7 AK: Africa 16-
- 3 AK: Amazon Rainforest 12-
- 3 AK: Louisiana Swamps 12-
- 3 AK: Rocky Mountains 12-
- 3 Fast Draw (Crossbows) 13-
- 5 KS: Hunting 14-
- 3 Paramedics 12-
- 5 PS: Hunter 14-
- 3 Riding 13-
- 7 Shadowing 14-
- 3 Stealth 13-
- 12 Survival (Desert, Mountains, Temperate/Subtropical, Tropical) 14-
- 7 Tracking 14-
- 4 TF: Common Motorized Ground Vehicles, Helicopters, Two-Wheeled Motorized Ground Vehicles
- 6 WF: Common Melee Weapons, Common Missile Weapons, Small Arms
- 3 Weaponsmith (Muscle-Powered HTH and Ranged) 12-

Resource Points

- 0 Equipment Points: 60
- 0 Vehicle/Base Points: 10
- 0 Follower/Contact Points: 5
- 0 Miscellaneous Points: 0

Total Powers & Skills Cost: 258

Total Cost: 367

100+ Disadvantages

- 20 Hunted: FBI 8- (Mo Pow, NCI, Imprison)
- 20 Psychological Limitation: Hunter's Mentality, Lives For The Thrill Of The Hunt (Common, Total)
- 15 Psychological Limitation: Code of Honor: Everyone Deserves A "Fair" Chance To Win (Common, Strong)
- 10 Psychological Limitation: Protective Of The Environment (Common, Moderate)
- 15 Social Limitation: Secret Identity (William Nairata) (Frequently, Major)
- 187 Experience Points

Total Disadvantage Points: 367

Background/History: William Nairata (born William Walters) grew up in Louisiana, where he learned to hunt and fish. Hunting became his favorite pastime — in fact, his sole preoccupation. When hunting with a rifle became too easy, he switched to bowhunting, which he felt was more of a challenge and a true display of his skill. When he was 17, he decided he'd experienced enough of Louisiana and went to Africa to hunt big game. There he befriended many tribesmen and learned their hunting secrets. On occasion, he traveled to other parts of the world to hunt and study hunting techniques.

After twelve years, he became bored again, because normal hunting didn't challenge him anymore; he could outwit the fiercest, most cunning animals on the planet. He realized the only real challenge left was to hunt *people*. Ordinary people wouldn't do, of course — he'd have to hunt cops, soldiers, vigilantes, anyone who'd have a chance against him. He faked his death in Africa and emerged two years later in the United States as Crossbow, hunter of men. Sometimes he works as an assassin, bounty hunter, or even vigilante... but just as often he picks a good target, hero or criminal, sends him a warning note, and begins the chase.

Personality/Motivation: Crossbow has a hunter's mentality. He only enjoys himself when he's stalking and killing his quarry — and it has to be a quarry worthy of his attention. His desire to experience the thrill of the hunt has completely overridden his moral sense; he sees people as game, not as fellow human beings. If someone could find a better way to challenge him, he'd take it.

To make the hunt as thrilling as possible, Crossbow always makes sure his opponents have a "fair chance" to beat him... but his definition of "fair" is a little shaky. Usually "fair" mean nothing more than sending his target a warning note — if he can't look out for himself, that's his problem. Similarly, an ambush is fair, provided Crossbow leaves his victim some tiny sign that would allow him to avoid the trap if the victim has enough skill to notice the clue. If Crossbow gets involved in open combat (which he tries to avoid), his sense of "fairness" means he won't shoot anyone from surprise.

Crossbow is justifiably proud of the skills he's worked so long to hone; to show them off, he sometimes pulls flashy robberies for hire or performs assassinations that meet his criteria for "a good hunt." However, his hunter's caution and patience temper his self-confidence, and that combination makes him a deadly opponent.

While he's no environmentalist — he'd happily hunt an endangered species if he thinks it presents enough of a challenge — Crossbow generally wants to preserve wilderness areas and game stocks so hunting remains a popular and enjoyable pastime. He feels nothing but loathing for poachers, industries that exploit the environment, and similar people, and won't hesitate to turn his skills against them.

CROSSBOW PLOT SEEDS

Crossbow uses the profits from several jobs to buy his own private tropical island, then kidnaps the PCs so he can recreate "The Most Dangerous Game" (all except the ending, of course!), with the PCs in the role of Rainsford.

Crossbow stumbles across a poaching ring too big and tough for him to handle. Will the PCs believe him when he offers a truce and asks for their help to stop the poachers?

Crossbow offers to team up with the PCs to hunt down Triggerhappy. Is he on the up-and-up, or is he subtly giving the PCs "fair warning" that they're his real targets? If he's genuinely after Triggerhappy, did someone hire him to go after the indiscriminate mercenary?

SUGGESTED EQUIPMENT

Weapon	OCV	RMod	Dam	STUN	Shots	STR Min	Notes
Combat knife#	0	—	1d6-1	0	—	6	Can Be Thrown

Armor: None

Gear: Hunting and outdoor survival gear

Clothing: When on a mission, as described under *Appearance*; at other times, as appropriate for the situation (he favors camouflage clothing when hunting game, for example)

Quote: “I wonder what the prey feels like when it realizes it’s being stalked?”

Powers/Tactics: While Crossbow could use his powers to become a skilled assassin/sniper, his hunter’s mentality drives him to the stalk and chase. If a hunt goes poorly, he may fire “warning shots” to liven up the prey, but in general he acts like a hunter would. If forced into an open combat he feels he can’t handle, he flees.

Crossbow’s favored weapon is a custom-designed crossbow made of modern high-tech materials so it’s lightweight, yet fires bolts with incredible power. In addition to his regular hunting bolts, he’s designed a grapnel-bolt he can use to launch a swingline. He can use other weapons if he has to, though. Additionally, he’s a skilled animal handler and often uses trained animals (typically large carnivores, such as bears and hunting cats) to harry his target. He considers these beasts his “pets” and companions, and will take gruesome revenge on anyone who hurts them.

Campaign Use: Crossbow presents an interesting change of pace from the usual assassin. He’s not in it for the money, but for the challenge — and that means he’ll only confront the PCs in certain ways. In some circumstances, he might even become their ally; criminals make as good prey as heroes, after all.

Crossbow is an ideal Hunter. He stalks and kills his “prey” in classic fashion, not worrying about secondary assaults (such as hurting DNPCs or ruining a character’s credit rating). Since he gives his quarry a “fair chance” to beat him, the pursuit can make for a fascinating back-and-forth between him and the PC (particularly in a solo game).

To make Crossbow a tougher opponent, you should adapt him so he’s a better open combatant — remove the Extra Time from his crossbow, increase his defenses, maybe give him +1 SPD or some Martial Arts. To weaken him, remove some of his Skills (or decrease their rolls), and reduce his main Primary Characteristics from 20s to 15-18s.

The authorities have never captured Crossbow, so he has no record. He’s a suspect in thirteen murders.

Appearance: Crossbow is a white man of average height. He wears a tunic and pants of dark green, with a black vest, boots, belt, and gloves. He wears no mask, but often paints his face to camouflage it. He ties his dark brown hair back in a ponytail.

As his *nom du crime* suggests, his primary weapon is a traditional crossbow (albeit one made with modern materials and technology). He carries it in his hand, with a quiver of bolts hung on his right hip. He’s often accompanied by one of his trained animals, be it a falcon, tiger, or something even more exotic.



FENRIS				
Val	Char	Cost	Roll	Notes
20	STR	10	13-	Lift 400 kg; 4d6 [4]
18	DEX	24	13-	OCV: 6/DCV: 6
20	CON	20	13-	
18	BODY	16	13-	
20	INT	10	13-	PER Roll 13-
12	EGO	4	11-	ECV: 4
20	PRE	10	13-	PRE Attack: 4d6
10	COM	0	11-	
8	PD	4		Total: 8 PD (0 rPD)
6	ED	2		Total: 6 ED (0 rED)
4	SPD	12		Phases: 3, 6, 9, 12
10	REC	4		
40	END	0		
38	STUN	0		Total Characteristics Cost: 116

Movement: Running: 6"/12"

Cost Powers **END**

Martial Arts: Karate

Maneuver	OCV	DCV	Notes
4 <i>Atemi</i> Strike	-1	+1	3d6 NND(1)
4 Block	+2	+2	Block, Abort
4 Disarm	-1	+1	Disarm, 40 STR
4 Dodge	+0	+5	Dodge all attacks, Abort
3 Legsweep	+2	-1	7d6; Target Falls
4 Knifehand Strike-2		+0	HKA 1d6 (2d6 with STR)
4 Punch/Snap Kick	+0	+2	8d6 Strike
5 Side/Spin Kick	-2	+1	10d6 Strike
8 +2 DCs (already added in)			
3 Use Art with Blades, Clubs, and Staffs			

Perks

- 30 Contacts: 30 points' worth among the Military/Mercenary/Terrorist World, South American governments, and FARC
- 3 Criminal Rank: leader of medium-sized drug cartel
- 10 Money: Wealthy
- 5 Improved Equipment Availability: Military equipment

Talents

- 3 Resistance (3 points)

Skills

- 16 +2 with All Combat
- 3 Bribery 13-
- 3 Bureaucratics 13-
- 3 Combat Driving 13-
- 3 Combat Pilot 13-
- 3 KS: The Espionage World 13-
- 3 KS: The Military/Mercenary/Terrorist World 13-
- 1 Language: Spanish (basic conversation; English is Native)
- 2 PS: Drug Lord 11-
- 2 PS: Mercenary 11-
- 3 Stealth 13-

- 4 Survival (Temperate/Subtropical, Tropical) 13-
- 3 Tactics 13-
- 3 Tracking 13-
- 4 TF: Common Motorized Ground Vehicles, Helicopters, Small Planes
- 7 WF: Common Melee Weapons, Small Arms, Grenade Launchers, Shoulder-Fired Weapons, Staffs
- 3 Traveler
- 1 1) AK: Afghanistan 11-
- 1 2) AK: Africa 11-
- 2 3) AK: Central America 13-
- 1 4) AK: Europe 11-
- 1 5) AK: The Middle East 11-
- 3 6) AK: South America 14-

Resource Points

- 12 Equipment Points: 120
- 20 Vehicle/Base Points: 50
- 45 Follower/Contact Points: 95
- 0 Miscellaneous Points: 0

Total Powers & Skills Cost: 246

Total Cost: 362

100+ Disadvantages

- 10 DNPC: Amada (fiancee) 8- (Normal)
- 25 Hunted: DEA 11- (Mo Pow, NCI, Capture)
- 15 Hunted: a rival drug lord 8- (As Pow, NCI, Kill)
- 5 Hunted: former mercenary comrades 8- (Less Pow, Kill)
- 15 Psychological Limitation: Overconfidence (Very Common, Moderate)
- 15 Social Limitation: Public Identity (Franklin Lynaugh) (Frequently, Major)
- 10 Social Limitation: Criminal Record (Occasionally, Major)
- 167 Experience Points

Total Disadvantage Points: 362

Background/History: Franklin Lynaugh used to be a mercenary, and a good one, with the professional name Fenris. He was part of a crack team that hired out for jobs all over the world and never failed to complete a contract. He wanted to lead the team, but the other mercs preferred the leader they already had. As time went by, he quarrelled more and more with the others, and the arguments often ended in bloody fistfights. Finally, matters came to a head and Fenris got into a gunfight with his erstwhile comrades in downtown Madrid. Only luck, skill, and the timely passing-by of a tractor-trailer truck allowed him to escape with his life.

Fenris kicked around the world for a few months, working as a mercenary and guard. Then he contracted with the DEA to infiltrate and destroy the headquarters of the Carillo-Mendoza drug cartel. But when he got to Colombia, Fenris decided to take over the cartel instead of destroying it. He changed careers and went from mercenary to druglord. He's spent the past few years leading the cartel, making money and confounding his many enemies.

FENRIS PLOT SEEDS

What if Amada isn't the innocent young woman she appears to be? She could be an agent for the DEA, a European police agency, or the like — or maybe a spy for FARC or one of Fenris's rivals. If so, when will she spring her trap on him, and how will he react?

Fenris's former mercenary comrades contact the PCs and offer to help them take him down permanently. Is this a serious offer, or are the mercenaries playing some sort of angle and planning to use the heroes?

A new gang of drug dealers — ones supplied by Fenris — has become active in the city and is moving in on the turf of established groups, leading to bloodshed in the streets and the deaths of innocents caught in the crossfire. The PCs have to solve the problem by cutting off the source of supply.



Personality/Motivation: Fenris has adapted well to his role as leader of the Carillo-Mendoza cartel. His attitudes are much like those of his competitors — greed, ambition, and hunger for power rule his thoughts. However, Fenris's success as a drug dealer has led him to become somewhat overconfident and complacent, which may one day allow his enemies to get close enough to hurt him.

Fenris retains a bitter hatred of the mercenaries he used to work with. He's spent millions of dollars trying to kill them, with no success so far. The only emotion he feels more strongly is love for his fiancée, Amada. His advisors have warned him against such an "entanglement," but he refuses to

listen. If anyone harms or threatens her, he'll stop at nothing to kill that person.

Quote: "You may try to interfere with me if you wish. I will be sure to send flowers to your widow."

Powers/Tactics: Fenris doesn't get into many gunfights anymore, so he's usually not heavily armed. Most of the time he carries only an H&K P7M13 handgun and a poisoned knife. If he expects trouble he'll get an H&K MP5 submachine gun and put on some body armor.

Fenris's natural self-confidence tends to make him bold and daring, willing to take great risks to accomplish his objectives. This daring, when combined with his skill at warfare, makes him a foe to be wary of. But years of hunting and being hunted by his enemies has made Fenris cautious as well. He carefully considers each move before he makes it, never sticks his neck out without good reason (except to protect Amada), and always has an escape route available.

Campaign Use: Fenris is a useful combination of combat skills and crimelord resources — he can stand up to the PCs if he has to, but can rely on his underlings to do his dirty work if he prefers. Since he doesn't come to America much anymore, he also represents a chance for the PCs to travel a little.

As a Hunter, Fenris is tenacious, but he chooses his moments with care. He'll use his money and resources to hire the best assassins and mercenaries available and send them after the PCs whenever they have other things to deal with; he won't attack them himself (though he might hire mercs to bring the PCs to them so he can have the pleasure of putting a bullet in their brains).

To make Fenris tougher, give him a few "super-skills" or increase his SPD to 5. To weaken him, reduce his Characteristics a little and get rid of several Martial Maneuvers.

Fenris is wanted for drug trafficking, assault, kidnapping, and murder in America, Europe, and parts of Africa. However, his political influence in Colombia prevents the government from trying to extradite him, so for now he's unconcerned about the warrants outstanding against him.

Appearance: Fenris is a tall, broad-shouldered white man with a rawboned, wind-burned face and a strong, square jaw. When in the field, going to a fight, or helping his men out on a drug run, he wears camouflage clothing and carries an assault rifle — usually a Steyr AUG. The rest of the time he favors light-colored, expensive, hand-tailored men's suits and sunglasses, and goes lightly armed.

SUGGESTED EQUIPMENT

Weapon	OCV	RMod	Dam	STUN	Shots	STR Min	Notes
H&K P7M13	+1	+0	1d6+2	1d6-1	13	9	PR
H&K MP5	+1	+0	1d6+1	1d6-1	30	12	AF5
Combat knife#	0	—	1d6-1	0	—	6	Can Be Thrown, is poisoned

Armor: None normally, though he may put on Armored Clothing or standard body armor if the situation warrants it

Gear: Whatever he needs, within reason

Clothing: Finely-tailored men's suits, or clothing of equal quality appropriate to the situation

TRIGGERHAPPY				
Val	Char	Cost	Roll	Notes
25	STR	20	14-	Lift 800 kg; 5d6 [5]
18	DEX	24	13-	OCV: 6/DCV: 6
22	CON	28	13-	
18	BODY	16	13-	
13	INT	3	12-	PER Roll 12-
10	EGO	0	11-	ECV: 3
15	PRE	5	12-	PRE Attack: 3d6
10	COM	0	11-	
10	PD	7		Total: 15 PD (5 rPD)
7	ED	3		Total: 12 ED (5 rED)
4	SPD	12		Phases: 3, 6, 9, 12
10	REC	2		
44	END	0		
42	STUN	0		Total Characteristics Cost: 120

Movement: Running: 6"/12"

Cost Powers **END**

<i>Martial Arts: Commando Training</i>				
Cost	Maneuver	OCV	DCV	Notes
3	Aikido Throw	+0	+1	5d6 + v/5, Target Falls
4	Boxing Cross	+0	+2	7d6
4	Choke	-2	+0	Grab One Limb, 2d6 NND (2)
4	Escape	+0	+0	40 STR vs. Grabs
4	Hold	-1	-1	Grab Three Limbs, 35 STR
4	Judo Disarm	-1	+1	Disarm, 35 STR
4	Karate "Chop"	-2	+0	HKA ½d6 (1d6+1 with STR)
4	Kung Fu Block	+2	+2	Block, Abort
15	<i>Tough Guy:</i> Physical Damage Reduction, Resistant, 50%; Requires A CON Roll (-¾), Character Must Be Aware Of Attack (-¼) 0			
3	<i>Advanced Helmet (Protection):</i> Armor (+3 PD/+3 ED); OIF (-½), Activation Roll 8- (only protects Hit Locations 3-5; -2) 0			
6	<i>Advanced Helmet (Communications Suite):</i> HRRP (Radio Group); OIF (-½), Affected As Sight And Hearing Group As Well As Radio Group (-½) 0			
3	<i>Advanced Helmet (Nightsight):</i> +4 to Sight Group PER Rolls (4 Active Points); OAF (-1), Only To Counteract Darkness Penalties (-½), Requires Ambient Light (it won't work in total darkness; -¼), Side Effect (character suffers a 2 x Effect Vulnerability to Sight Group Flashes based on bright light while looking through the scope, and may experience a minor Sight Group Flash from looking at a bright light, always occurs; -½), 1 Continuing Fuel Charge (battery, Easy to obtain; 3 Hours; -0) plus Detect Infrared Light (Sight Group) (3 Active Points); OAF (-1), Linked (-½), 1 Continuing			

Fuel Charge (battery, Easy to obtain; 3 Hours; -0) [1cc]
 10 *Lucky Bastard:* Luck 2d6 0

Perks
 5 Money: Well Off
 10 Improved Equipment Availability: Advanced Military equipment

Talents
 6 Combat Luck (3 PD/3 ED)
 3 Lightsleep

Skills
 10 +5 OCV with M60
 16 +2 with All Combat

3 Climbing 13-
 7 Combat Piloting 15-
 1 Computer Programming 8-
 3 Demolitions 12-
 2 Gambling (Card Games) 12-
 3 Interrogation 12-
 1 KS: The Espionage World 8-
 2 KS: The Military/Mercenary/Terrorist World 11-
 3 Mechanics 12-
 2 Navigation (Air) 12-
 1 Paramedics 8-
 3 Stealth 13-
 2 Survival (Temperate/Subtropical) 12-
 4 TF: Common Motorized Ground Vehicles, Helicopters, Two-Wheeled Common Motorized Ground Vehicles
 6 WF: Small Arms, Blades, General Purpose/ Heavy Machine Guns, Grenade Launchers, Shoulder-Fired Weapons, Vehicle-Mounted Weapons for his helicopter

Resource Points
 16 Equipment Points: 140
 70 Vehicle/Base Points: 150
 5 Follower/Contact Points: 15
 0 Miscellaneous Points: 0

Total Powers & Skills Cost: 252
Total Cost: 372

100+ Disadvantages
 20 Hunted: FBI 8- (Mo Pow, NCI, Imprison)
 20 Hunted: GIGN 8- (Mo Pow, NCI, Imprison)
 20 Psychological Limitation: Casual Killer (Very Common, Strong)
 15 Psychological Limitation: Misogynist (Common, Strong)
 15 Psychological Limitation: Code Of The Mercenary (Common, Strong)
 10 Reputation: ruthless killer and terrorist, 8- (Extreme)
 5 Rivalry: Professional (with Caliber)
 15 Social Limitation: Secret Identity (Jack Bustamonte) (Frequently, Major)
 10 Social Limitation: Criminal Record (Occasionally, Major)
 142 Experience Points

Total Disadvantage Points: 372

TRIGGERHAPPY PLOT SEEDS

In an effort to disrupt the Hudson City economy and kill dozens of infidels, the PLRL hires Triggerhappy to blow up one of the bridges over the Stewart River at rush hour. Can the PCs discover the plot and track Triggerhappy down in time to defuse the bombs?

In an effort to get the French off his back, Triggerhappy plants information with a snitch that a GIGN team in town to track him down is really a robbery crew. Unless the PCs discover the truth in time (and team up with the French to take Triggerhappy out), they're likely to end up in a gunfight with the good guys.

A series of explosions rocks the city — and it looks like Triggerhappy's handiwork. When the PCs catch up to him, he professes his innocence. Is he telling the truth... and if so, who framed him?

SUGGESTED EQUIPMENT							
Weapon	OCV	RMod	Dam	STUN	Shots	STR Min	Notes
M60E3	+1	+2	2d6+1	1d6	250	16	AF10, Bulky, FS
Desert Eagle	+1	+0	2d6+1	1d6	9	13	
Combat knife#	0	—	1d6-1	0	—	6	Can Be Thrown

Armor: Armored Clothing (DEF 2, Activation Roll 14-), Heavier body armor if necessary

Gear: Just about anything he needs for a mission, within reason

Clothing: Military-style outfits made of armored cloth

Background/History: The mercenary and killer known as Triggerhappy is actually the second man to go by that name. The first was a homicidal maniac who died in a shootout with the HCPD. A few weeks after that, Jack Bustamonte, a mercenary and terrorist-for-hire, came to Hudson City with the GIGN (the French anti-terrorist agency) on his tail because of his participation in the bombing of a French airplane. To cover his tracks, Jack adopted the Triggerhappy identity — after all, the first Triggerhappy's weapon of choice, the M60 machine gun, was his as well. Soon, a “new” enforcer and mercenary was available for work. Since then, he's worked mainly for terrorist organizations, robbery crews, and a few organized crime groups (one of these missions involved Caliber, who botched the job and has since become a serious rival of Triggerhappy's).

Personality/Motivation: Personality-wise, the two Triggerhappys couldn't be further apart. The first was a homicidal maniac, virtually uncontrollable, whose lack of caution brought about his death. Jack Bustamonte, on the other hand, is a ruthless killer who's very careful to look after himself. As an experienced merc and terrorist-for-hire, he knows how to deal with dangerous situations.

To ensure he receives the respect — and pay! — he considers his due, Triggerhappy lives by the so-called “code of the mercenary,” which mandates utter loyalty to one's employer and a willingness

to use any means to complete the job. Triggerhappy is perfectly willing to, for example, blow up an entire planeload of people just to kill one person.

For reasons unknown to police psychologists, Triggerhappy seems to dislike women intensely. He always chooses women as his hostages and/or victims if he can, and will go out of his way to humiliate and embarrass any female PCs.

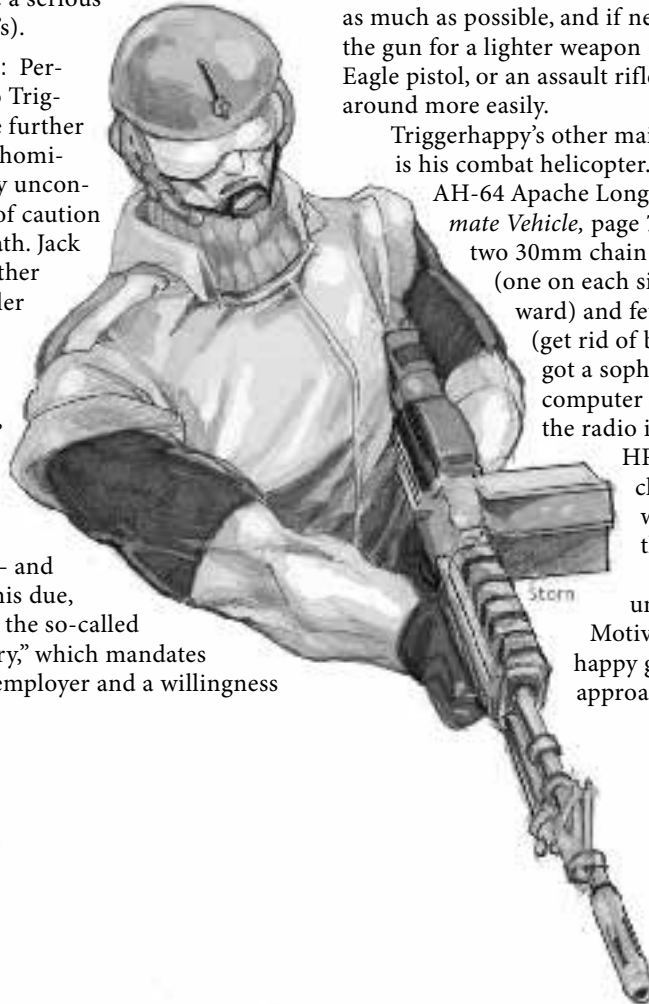
Quote: “An ounce of overkill is always worth it.”

Powers/Tactics: Triggerhappy is as big, strong, and tough as they come — enough to carry around an M60 as his personal weapon. Admittedly, it's a modified M60, slightly cut down in size and using plastics where possible to reduce the weight, but it's still an M60. Since it's a Bulky Focus (and thus halves his DCV), he uses cover as much as possible, and if necessary abandons the gun for a lighter weapon (such as his Desert Eagle pistol, or an assault rifle) so he can move around more easily.

Triggerhappy's other main combat resource is his combat helicopter. It's similar to an AH-64 Apache Longbow (see *The Ultimate Vehicle*, page 79), but has only two 30mm chain guns for weapons (one on each side, pointed forward) and fewer electronics (get rid of both jammers). It's got a sophisticated autopilot computer he can link to using the radio in his helmet (his

HRRP). He'll outfit the chopper with more weapons if the gets the chance.

As described under Personality/Motivation, Triggerhappy goes for the overkill approach. He'll keep pour-



ing on the firepower until he knows his target is dead or he brings an entire building down the poor guy, whichever comes first. If he gets the chance, he'll trick out the battlefield in advance with mines and other booby traps he can trigger with his radio — nothing like a few explosions to liven things up!

Triggerhappy has no desire to go to prison — he'll do anything he must to get away if the situation turns sour. This includes taking hostages, wounding innocent bystanders, and more.

Campaign Use: Triggerhappy is just the sort of merc characters love to hate — amoral, destructive, ruthless. He's a great addition to a team of adversaries that needs a little extra firepower.

Triggerhappy doesn't need to be much tougher, but you could up his defenses if necessary by giving him better body armor. To weaken him, reduce his Characteristics (particularly STR and CON).

Triggerhappy doesn't have the subtlety to make a good Hunter. He simply swoops in with his helicopter and starts blasting away. To him,

a “low-key” approach involves planting a large bomb in the target's car.

Triggerhappy has a long record of murder, assault, arson, and bombings; he's committed crimes in Hudson City, other American cities, in Europe, and in Asia. Numerous police and anti-terrorism agencies, including the FBI and GIGN, would like to get their hands on him.

Appearance: Triggerhappy is a white male of average looks; he seems to have a perpetual five o'clock shadow. He's extremely muscular and toned, as befits a man who uses a customized M60 machine gun as his primary personal weapon (he has a Desert Eagle handgun in a holster on his belt, along with clips of ammo and such). He has no set uniform, preferring a variety of military-style outfits made of armored cloth. When on a mission, he always wears a helmet with advanced communications equipment and nightsight capabilities.

Here's a guide to the reference sources used in writing this book, as well as inspirational source material.

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COMIC BOOKS

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Captain America (Marvel Comics)

Daredevil (Marvel Comics)

Deathstroke the Terminator (DC Comics)

Green Arrow (DC Comics)

Moon Knight (Marvel Comics)

The Punisher (Marvel Comics)

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The Scourge of the Underworld (Marvel Comics)

Vigilante (DC Comics)

Comics Series

100 Bullets (DC Comics)

Sin City (Dark Horse Comics)

The Watchmen (DC Comics)

MOVIES

8MM

Air Force One

Assassins

Bad Lieutenant

Batman

Blackhawk Down

The Bourne Identity

Commando

Con Air

Crimson Tide

Death Wish I, II, III, and IV

Desperado

Die Hard I, II, and III

The “Dirty Harry” movies

Drop Zone

Equilibrium

Eraser

Executive Decision

An Eye For An Eye

Face/Off

The Fugitive

Get Shorty

The Godfather I, II, and III

Goodfellas

Grosse Pointe Blank

La Femme Nikita

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Heartbreak Ridge

Heat

The Hidden

The Hunt For Red October

The Italian Job

The Jackal

Jackie Brown

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New Jack City

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Predator I and II

The Professional

Pulp Fiction

Red Dragon

Reservoir Dogs

Rising Sun

Robocop

The Rock

Ronin

Seven

The Silence Of The Lambs

Sneakers

Sniper

Spartan

Speed

Spy Game

The Star Chamber

The Substitute

SWAT

Swordfish

Tango And Cash

Terminator I and II

The Transporter

True Lies

Unbreakable

Under Siege

The Usual Suspects

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