MIB

MEN IN BLACK™
THE ROLEPLAYING GAME

THE DIRECTOR'S GUIDE

Die Code References

Description	Die Code
Below human average for an attribute.	1D
Untrained human average for an attribute and many skills.	2D
Average level of training for a human.	3D
Professional level of training for a human.	4D
Above average expertise.	5D
Considered about the best in a city or geographic area. About 1 in 100,000 people will have training to this skill level.	6D
Among the best on a continent. About 1 in 10,000,000 people will have training to this skill level.	7D
Among the best on a world. About 1 in 100,000,000 people will have training to this skill level.	8D
One of the best in several systems. About 1 in a billion people have a skill at this level.	9D
One of the best in a sector.	10D
One of the best in a region.	11D
Among the best in a galaxy.	12D

Difficulty Number Chart

Qualifier	Value
Very Easy	1–5
Easy	6–10
Moderate	11–15
Difficult	16–20
Very Difficult	21–25
Heroic	26–30
Heroic+	31+

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Firearm	Damage	Range (factor)
Acme Dest. Watch	1D+2	+2/0/–1D/–
Blaster Pistol	3D+1	+2/0/–2D/–
Blaster Rifle	4D+2	+1/0/–1D/–3D
Dagger/Knife	STR+1D	+1/–1D/–3D/–
Electrostatic De–oxygenator	1 per rnd. breathed; at 1/2 body make a Dif. *Endurance* or faint for 1D min.	30 ft.
Korlian XT–17	7D	–2D/0/–1/–1D
Laser Pistol	4D	+1D/0/–2D/–
Laser Rifle	5D+2	+2/0/–1/–1D
Laser Streamer	5D	+2D/+1D/–1D/–
Malfuncionator	Destroys anything with electrical current; 8D to living beings	+1D/0/–1D/–3D
Medusa's Touch	3D per rnd.	Touch
Megasonic Dest. Ray	5D	+2/0/–2/–2D
MiB Special Issue		
Level 1	4D+1	+1/0/–2/–2D
Level 2	3D+1	+1/0/–2/–2D
Paralyzation	Target Immobile	+1D/+2/0/–
Noisy Cricket	5D+1	+1D/0/–2/–1D
Pistol	3D	+2/0/–2D/–
Plasma Rifle	6D+2	–1D/–2/0/–1
Pocket Laser	2D+1	+1D/0/–/–
Prot–cyclotron Blaster	5D	0/0/–1/–1D
Reverberating Carbonizer	6D	+1/0/–1/–2D
Rifle	4D	0/0/–1D/–3D
Series–4 De–atomizer	7D; inanimate objects disappear	+1/0/0/–1D
Shotgun	5D+1	+2/0/+1D/0/–

Special Abilities

Ability	Starting Skill Dice Modifier
Atmospheric Tolerance	−1D
Attribute Increase	−2D
Blur	−1D
Darkness	−2D
Desolidification	−3D
Elasticity	−1D
Elemental Control	−3D
Energy Control	−3D
Enhanced Senses	−1D
Environmental Tolerance	−1D
Fast Reactions	−1D
Fear	−2D
Glider Wings	−2D
Hypnotism	−2D
Immortality	−3D
Infravision/Ultravision	−3D
Invisibility	−3D
Limited Regeneration	−3D
Long Life Span	−2D
Multiple Abilities	−2D
Natural Armor	−1D
Natural Weaponry	−2D
Omnivorousness	−1D
Resist Energy Attack	−2D
Resist Heat/Cold Attack	−2D
Resist Interaction Attack	−2D
Resist Physical Attack	−2D
Shapeshifting	−3D
Silence	−1D
Sixth Sense	−1D
Speed	−1D
Telekinesis	−2D
Telepathy/Empathy	−2D
Teleportation	−3D
Transmutation	−3D

Classification Adjectives

abdominous	hypsicephalic
achromic	kyphotic
aliferous	lepidote
amphibious	marsupial
augmented	mesomorphic
bipedal	metameric
cervicorn	metamorphic
dichoptic	multiped
dischromatopic	myopic
dolichocephalic	neurasthenic
ectomorphic	nyctolopic
ectoparasitic	orthocephalic
elongated	peritrichous
endomorphic	polydactylous
eutherian	polymorphic
exomorphic	rigid
hirsute	sternutative
hyperopic	totipalmate

Classification Nouns

ameboid	felinoid
android	humanoid
anthropoid	ichthyoid
arachnid	lacertilian
arthropod	leporid
bovine	lupinoid
caprid	mollusk
cephalopod	myriopod
cervid	ophidian
cetacean	ornithoid
crustacean	reptilian
equine	ursid

Range Chart

Point-Blank
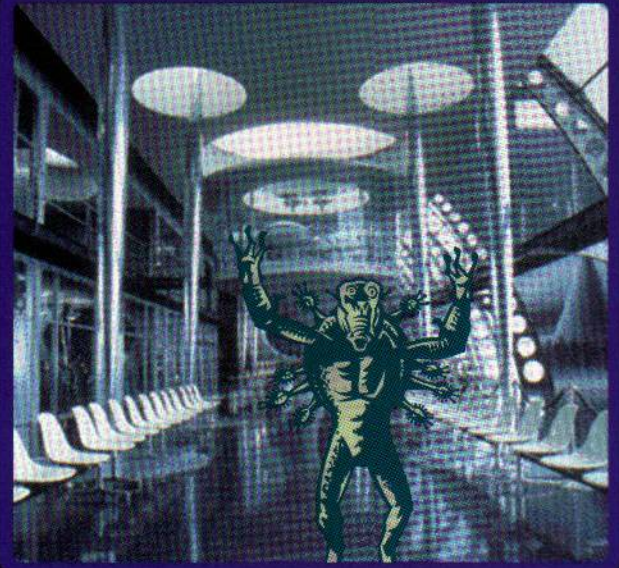
Short
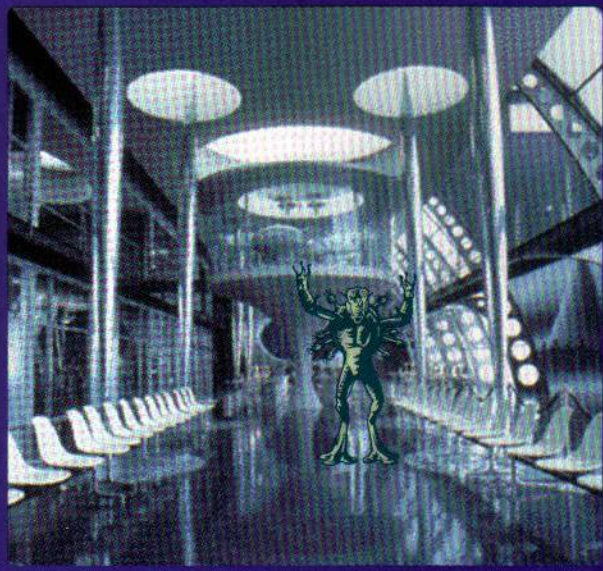
Medium
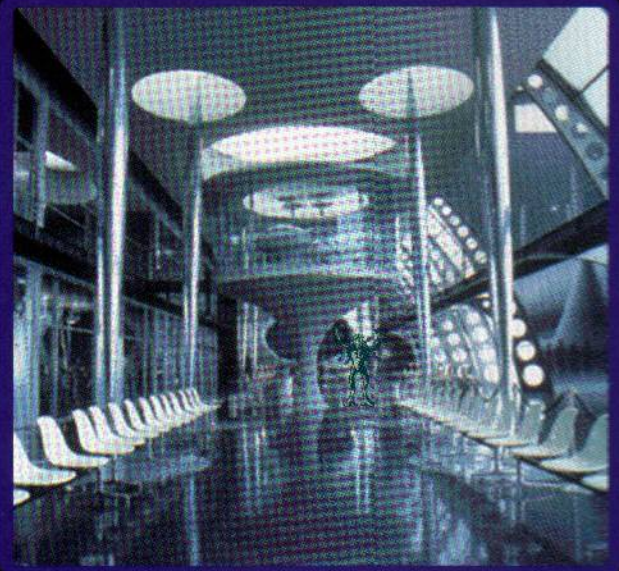
Long

Enhancement Modifier Example: Armor

Armor	Bonus
Padded leather	+1D
Bulletproof vest	+2D
Light Kevlar	+2D+1
Flak jacket	+2D+2
Standard Kevlar	+3D
Kevlar ceramic	+3D+1

First Aid

First Aid Total	Body Points Healed
0	0
1–5	2
6–10	1D
11–15	2D
16–20	3D
21–25	4D
26–30	5D
30+	6D

Range Chart

Point-Blank

Short

Medium

Long

osive	Damage	Range	Blast Radius
ll	3D/2D each rnd.	+1/0/−2D/−3D	5/10/15
entation Grenade	6D	+1D/+1/0/−2D	3/8/16
ay	2D+2	36 ft.	3/6/9
ght Assassin	5D	0	3/6/11
gen Fountain	Depends on Pathogen	0	5/10/—
Phrend	4D(to victim)	0	6/12/18 in.
Explosive	3D	0	1

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THE DIRECTOR'S GUIDE

CONTENTS

MEN IN BLACK™

You know there's more to life than what's on the surface. Events occurring around you seem a little too coincidental. You think there's a conspiracy. You do a little poking around and find how right everyone is…and how wrong.

You've seen the power of others: their ability to convince people of one version of truth or another. You want to be part of creating the conspiracy—you've had enough of the pawn's life. You've decided to rise out of the rank and file and try for a position of power—of the reality-making kind.

Welcome to the *Director's Guide,* an ultrasecret training manual that can get you started in this exciting vocation. The *Official Top-Secret Eyes-Only Guide to Selecting and Training Men in Black Recruits through (Mostly Fictitious) Simulated Missions Involving Situations Typically Encountered by Men in Black Personnel* (the *Men in Black Roleplaying Game* for short) lends itself particularly well to redefining (shall we say "redirecting"?) the reality in which we live. Now all those things you once only thought were true (such as your fifth-grade math teacher being from Mars) become the base for *your* version of reality. You finally have the opportunity to tell it like it really is.

This guide contains the basics needed to be a Director of a the *Men in Black Roleplaying* adventure. Usually we prefer to train Directors in a hit-or-miss fashion, throwing them into dangerous situations and seeing if the wolves, er, players tear them apart. However, we know we won't be around forever; we wouldn't want our vast and superior wisdom and experience to disappear. Consider this our "if we should die" opus. Use this guide only as a last resort. The hit-or-miss approach is much more exciting.

This is an independent-study course. The only time limit you have is the one you create for yourself (which could be influenced by how soon your players want to start a scenario).

The only test will be before a group of your peers, and they will have only one question: Do you have the skills to present a challenging, engaging, and fun scenario? Don't worry, though: players are usually forgiving, and you can retake the test as often as you'd like.

Although this guide is geared toward the novice Director, veterans will undoubtedly find various sections useful. Experienced Directors should think of the section on Director tips ("Lesson 1: Basics of Directing") as a refresher course. As well, players who haven't already considered backgrounds for their characters may find "Lesson 2: People" to be particularly informative.

This guide is based primarily on the *Men in Black* film, which differs in many ways from the comic book series by Valiant. If you preferred the comic books or have a particular alien or gadget you'd like to include, please make the necessary adjustments to what is presented here and in related books.

You will need the *Men in Black Roleplaying Game* in order to get the most out of this manual. You may also find it helpful to have a pencil, eraser, and notebook handy (or skip all those and go straight to the computer), so you can take notes as ideas come to you. (A pencil is recommended over a pen, even the erasable kind, so that you may more easily and less messily make corrections to templates and scenario ideas.)

Course Syllabus

This book is divided into four lessons:

Basics of Directing (Folder 1)

The most important piece of information to learn from this lesson is to have fun. This tenet of Directing implies one of the more important guidelines of running a *MiB* adventure: if a rule gets in the way, ignore it. All the material in the rulebook and its supplements should be considered a guide. They are meant to assist you—not dictate to you—as you create fascinating and entertaining adventures. However, these guidelines have been carefully crafted to promote overall consistency and stability in the world in which the assignments occur. This is not to say that the premises of all your adventures should include consistency or stability. Rather, the rules provide you and your players with a foundation on which to build exciting stories.

The basic concept of an adventure is the same as a story. Both contain exposition, progressively more difficult obstacles, a climax, and a resolution. Each of these pieces occurs within its own scene, which can focus on setup, puzzle, roleplaying, information gathering, thrill, chase, or combat.

In coming up with descriptions of these scenes, keep in mind the old rule of "show, don't tell." Try to use as many of your player characters' senses as workable, as well as being specific in your details. Do whatever it takes to involve your players in their characters (though disallow any kind of abusive behavior…if you couldn't figure that out on your own, you moron—jeez, sometimes you are so stupid!).

This lesson, furthermore, provides suggestions for hooks, obstacles, and scene descriptions. It includes an expanded table of reward points.

People (Folder 2)

If you need some ideas for adding depth to your characters, this is the place to start. There are sections on extraterrestrial aliens, motivations, and a wide range of particulars to include in character descriptions. Five new Special Abilities and four new Flaws are detailed here.

Furthermore, this lesson offers one method of creating new alien species. A table of alien titles, a die code comparison chart, and templates are included to help you in your endeavors.

In this section you'll also find a table of suggested "prices of services" for players who want to know how much they make.

Tech (Folder 3)

Have an idea for an awesome new weapon or gadget but don't know what to put in the description? This lesson suggests aspects to consider as you create new weapons and gadgets. Templates are provided to give you a place to note your ideas. Additionally, there are seven new weapons and seven new gadgets that you can use straight out of the book or adjust to suit your adventures.

There are also numerous helpful tables in this lesson, including an expanded weapon and gadget generator table, comparison charts (which contain such statistics as damage and range), rate of fire chart, armor chart, and examples of scale codes and body strength. The charts and examples given here combined with the equipment chapter of the rulebook will allow you to design numerous fantastic yet plausible (within the game world) weapons and gadgets.

Places (Folder 4)

The last lesson in this training manual helps you in establishing locations for your player characters to visit. There are sections on selecting the right place, designing its specifics, and naming it. Descriptions of several common buildings are also provided, complete with sample layouts, suggested Director characters, and a stock encounter.

Warning

We're watching you—we're always watching you—so don't screw this up. You represent the Men in Black agency and all of its employees, sponsors, subsidiary companies, bizarre aliens with nasty little teeth that…

Sorry. Anyway…always remember that you can do this. You wouldn't be a member of the agency if you didn't have what it takes. So read on, create challenging assignments for your players, and above all, have fun!
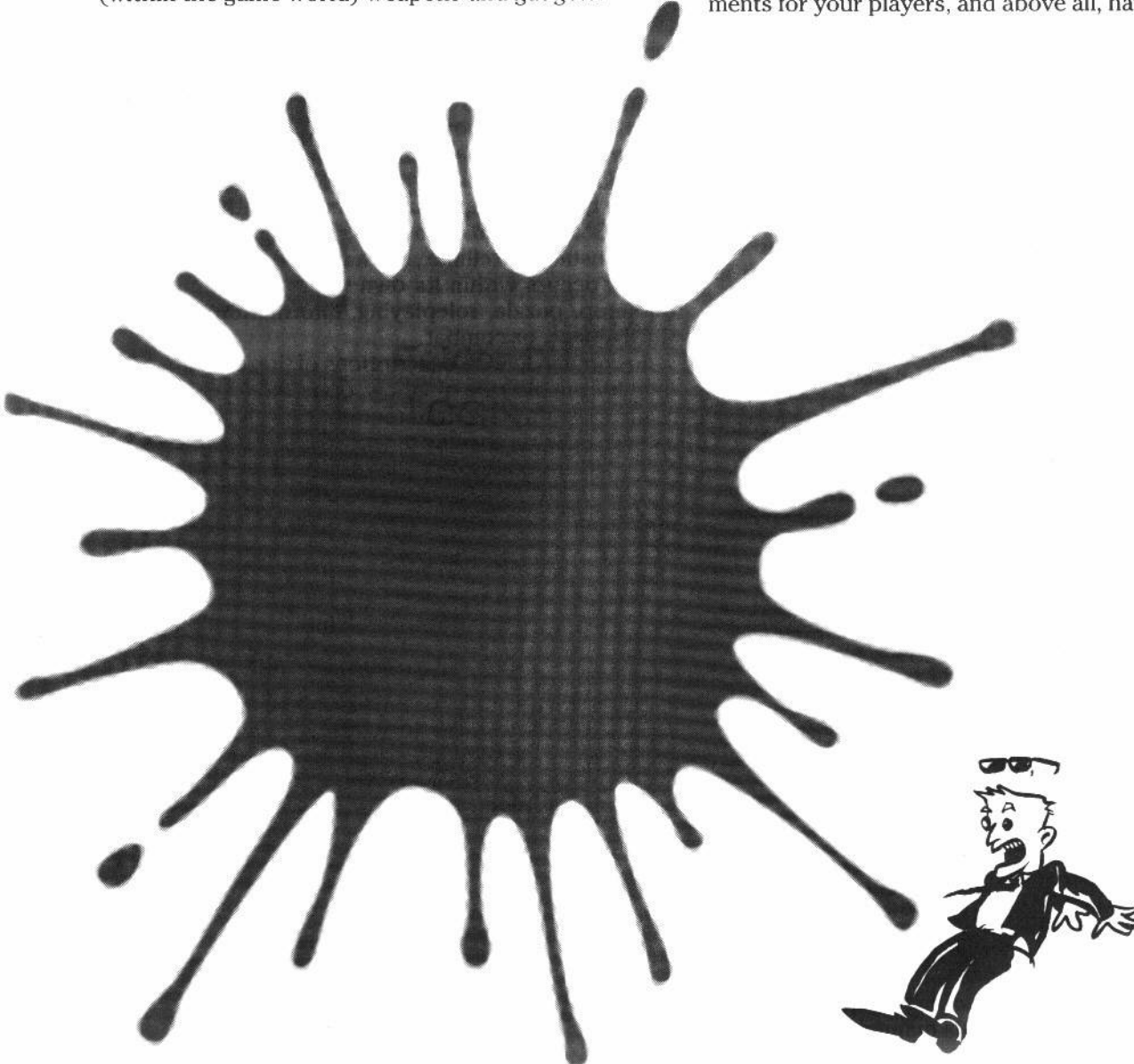
FOLDER 1

BASICS OF DIRECTING

In this lesson, you will learn some of the more popular methods used in finer Directing everywhere. This lesson compliments and expands on material presented in the introductory lesson in Folder 7 of the Men in Black Roleplaying Game. *As always, only use what works for you in accomplishing the ultimate goal of having fun.*

The Genre of *Men in Black*

Science fiction discusses the influences of science, technology, and societal trends on human lives. It attempts to predict future societies on Earth and explores possible forms of extraterrestrial life and its societies. It delves into the questions all humans have about themselves—as individuals and as a society. So right up front we're into some serious business here. Don't go trying to have fun with this, or worse, create a night of excitement for you and your friends. That would be considered blasphemy and outright rude to the scientific community. (Did you get the code? We're telling to *not* do exactly what we *want* you to do. Cool, huh? This covert stuff is great. Non-MiB personnel should ignore all the text within these parentheses.)

Publicly, the "men in black" are considered to be part of a conspiracy. They are said to be gaunt men wearing black suits. They appear singly or in groups, harassing people who claim to have had alien encounters. At least, that's all people remember.

Those who have proposed the conspiracy suggest that the government wants to prevent people from learning more about extraterrestrials. Some conspiracy theorists believe that the government, with the help of the aliens, is hiding information that could benefit the human species, such as better technology or an improved way of thinking. But the training film offers the true reason for the conspiracy. Although the government (or, rather, the ex-government agency) and the aliens are working together, it's not to keep beneficial knowledge from humans. It's to protect the aliens who seek refuge on Earth from the mass hysteria that would certainly ensue following such a revelation.

Another aspect worth noting in the training film is its superscience. Superscience is more than technology taken to the next logical step. It's technology taken a few steps too many. It's a great distance from what has been and could be accomplished at this time. This includes interstellar starships, universal language translators, neuralyzers, and Noisy Crickets.

One other item to note about *Men in Black:* It's a spoof of all that stuff. It has outrageous weapons, fantastic gadgets, and convenient cover-ups. Agents appear in a short time out of nowhere. Keep this in mind as you create and run adventures. Make weapons, gadgets, and aliens just a little weirder, a little more outrageous than normal. Fill your descriptions of

tense scenes with comedy relief. If your players don't laugh at least once during the adventure, you're taking this way too seriously.

Although…

What if conspiracy theories are real? If you believe them, then I have a device I'd like you to take a look at.

The Men in Black Agency: A Brief Review

The main headquarters of the Men in Black is located in New York City in a nondescript building at 504 Battery Drive. It is staffed by human and alien agents, supervisors, and support personnel. Within the building, the staff operates on a thirty-seven-hour day. Outside the building, agents stay on call all the time.

Although the agency has gained much from the aliens who have requested permission to land, development continues on technology to improve HQ's ability to monitor all extraterrestrial visits, especially planetfalls. For the time being, agents must rely on information from the Landed Alien Display, field reports, tabloids, rumors, and informants (aliens and humans alike). Field agents have plenty to do keeping registered aliens safe and unregistered aliens with malicious intent off Earth—all while making sure that as few humans as possible know what's really going on.

Creating Scenarios

Plotting

Your primary duty as Director is to create a series of opportunities for your players to use and develop their characters. Among the many potential names for that series of opportunities, we will use "scenario" here. Scenarios are usually designed for MiB agents, but you can always generate one for non-MiB personnel. (In the former case, scenarios are often more specifically referred to as "assignments.") The suggestions we outline in this guide work well for both instances.

A scenario can also be thought of as a story that your players create with you through their characters. As with any story, an adventure begins with a setup scene. Here the hook is introduced, which draws the characters into the plot. As they progress, they find themselves in dramatic situations, or scenes, where they are involved in various sorts of conflicts. (You'll learn more about scenes later in this lesson.) These conflicts could be against themselves, cast members, society, or natural forces. Conflicts often take the form of obstacles, the most basic type being lack of information: the characters go on adventures to gain knowledge so they can accomplish their ultimate goal. (Other, more specific obstacles are described later in
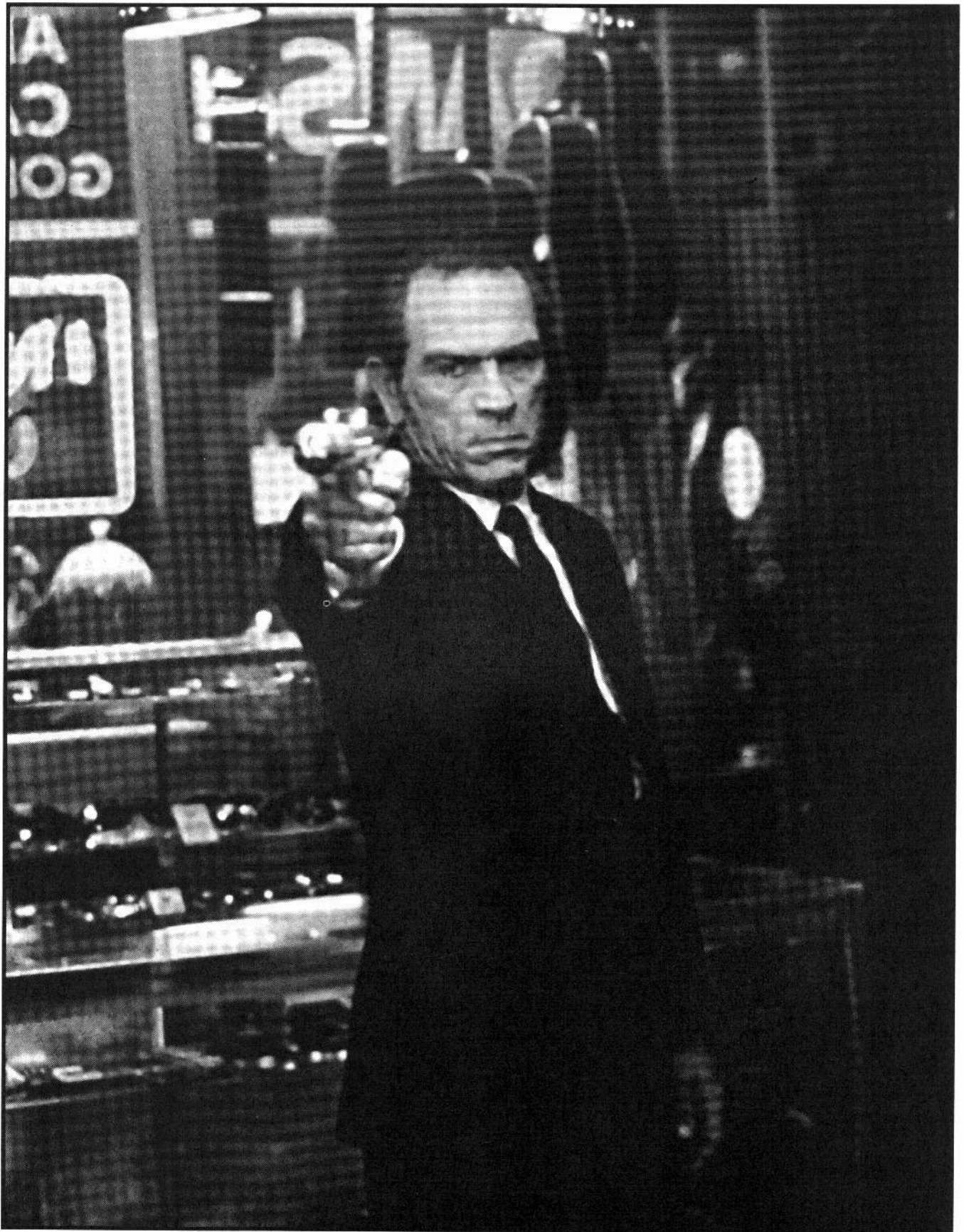
The majority of a scenario's scenes should lead to the climax, the final scene the characters must get through in order to complete their goal. The climax scene involves conflict like any other scene but on a more intense level. The various aspects of the scenario—conflicts, foreshadowing, obstacles, mood, and so on—should have prepared your players for the climax.

In a typical roleplaying scenario, the climax may not come for several sessions. Furthermore, if you've decided to create scenarios within the framework of an overarching story line, each scenario will have its own climax, plus the overall story line will have an even more dramatic one of its own.

Although in stories there may be a specific period of falling action after the climax, it is usually best (for the players) and easiest (for you) to go straight to the resolution, in the form of the debriefing scene (discussed later under "Scene Types"). Award some Character and Fate Points and allow the players to relax, discuss the scenario, and determine in what ways their characters have changed.

Arranging the scenes is called plotting. You have two basic options for plotting a scenario (other methods are some combination of these):

Sequential scenarios are the simplest type. The players begin at Start 1 and move through a series of events to Resolution 1. The events can be ordered either by time or by location. Although simplicity is the major advantage, it's also the major disadvantage. If you are too inflexible with the sequence or don't make it reasonable, your players can feel trapped and robbed of free will, a dismal situation at best.

In nonsequential scenarios, each event offers multiple choices for the players, some of which link to one another. The multiplicity of options makes these types of adventures more exciting for the players. However, they are also more difficult to create since you must generate more scenes than your players will probably play, and you need several possible conclusions.

Triggered scenarios can resemble either nonsequential or sequential scenarios, or a little of both. Events in these types of scenarios are linked to where or when the players are. Nothing significant happens in the scenario until the characters trigger a scene by entering a certain time or place. For example, a scenario of this type may begin with several choices, but each choice leads to a sequential scenario. Alternatively, the scenario may begin with one choice, but depending on subsequent decisions and the times or locations at which the players make those decisions, multiple options open up.

Goals

One of the best ways to start creating adventures is by deciding on a goal. Keep in mind that what you give the characters as their starting goal does not have to be the final goal of the adventure. For example, in the training film, K and J at first believed their goal was only to capture the Bug. As the film progresses, the goals of finding a lost object (the galaxy) and foiling a plan (preventing war and destruction of the Earth) develop.

Although scenarios with multiple goals are more interesting and exciting, they take longer to play out. Thus, if you only want the scenario to last one session, keep to a single goal and a few obstacles. Trying to cram multiple goals into one session leads to frustration on both your part and your players', unless you plan on making the attainment of those goals extremely easy.

Additionally, keep your players' characters in mind when choosing goals. If they come up with an idea for a scenario, seriously consider it. Perhaps you can't incorporate the whole suggestion all at once. Instead, introduce the basic concept in the next scenario and develop it from there. Even if your players don't give direct suggestions, you can still keep in mind their characters' motivations and goals as you plan scenarios. The players will have a lot more fun if you choose something they want to do, and you'll have an easier time getting them there.

Typically the goal is communicated to the player characters up front, such as in a meeting, and becomes part of the hook. Other times, you may wish to start the scenario as an ordinary day or in the midst of action and have the player characters stumble across the goal.

Hooks

Hooks give the players reasons why their characters should be where you want them to be. We include here some generic possibilities, which should be tailored to the scenario's goal, setting, and your particular group.

• The organization the player characters are involved in calls a meeting. This is a classic adventure start, familiar to most players—which can therefore be used to lull them into complacency. After starting a few scenarios that way, spring another hook on them. Now what are they going to do without a briefing?

Goal Suggestions

• Foil a plan.
• Rescue, guard, or capture a cast member (who could be an alien, an ordinary human who knows too much or is important to the Men in Black, or a renegade Men in Black agent).
• Retrieve a stolen or lost item.
• Welcome an alien.
• Use a topic found in a sensational tabloid (leaf through a few, pick some stories, and devise scenarios based on what "really" happened).

• Someone seeks out the characters to give them information. Unfortunately, at the meeting time, something goes amiss. The characters may find the informant dead or dying. His last words (which could be spoken—if the cast member is still barely alive—or written) point the characters toward the start of the scenario.

• The characters find or receive information in the form of a letter, newspaper article or ad, phone call, e-mail, videotape, or audio tape. The tip may come from either an anonymous or known source. For example, Men in Black agents may hear on the radio about bizarre cult activities. Similarly, an old friend could seek the aid of the non-MiB characters in investigating some strange phenomena.

• One of the characters offends someone. Perhaps a character purposely insulted a cast member in the last scenario; in the present one, the characters find out how powerful that person really is. If the characters are agents sent out on a "meet and greet," the offense could happen accidentally due to incomplete information about the alien's culture. The alien may take a hostage, declare war, or withdraw an offer of aid. In either case, the characters must spend the rest of the scenario righting the wrong.

• You could also turn the offense around, having one of the leading cast members (or a representative) offend one or more of the characters. It could be part of the cast member's master plan to antagonize the characters into following a certain course of action.

• A new aspect to the character's long-term goal is revealed. Because long-term goals can provide a framework within which you create scenarios, this is an excellent method to get the characters from one scenario to the next. For Men in Black groups, this will generally be the prevention of humanity from realizing the truth about aliens. For other groups, it could be finding a long-lost relative or discovering the details of a UFO sighting. Every scenario in some way will be related to this goal and will usually start with the characters encountering new information regarding that goal.

One hook you should use only with extreme caution is the trick. Players hate to be tricked into going on adventures. It takes away the free will they believe they're supposed to have. If you do decide to use the trick, be sure that it's a typical action for your leading antagonist to use. That is, make sure the trick is reasonable within the terms of the scenario.

Defining the Scenes

Scenes involve some sort of action on the part of the players. This could be a fight, a conversation, or some event that requires the players to decide what their characters are doing. When the players have completed the action, the scene ends and a new one begins. The new scene could be one of substance or could serve as a bridge to one in which the characters can act.

Every scenario has two general types of scenes: standard and dramatic. Standard scenes are slower, focusing more on developing the adventure. Foes and puzzles, while challenging, serve more to provide details about the larger picture; they are rarely fatal situations. They give the players a chance to establish their characters through interactions among themselves and with cast members. Dramatic scenes, then, are those fatal situations. Not defeating a foe or solving a puzzle will have ugly consequences. Time becomes something you, as the Director, must keep track of. Scenarios typically consist of more standard scenes than dramatic ones.

Balance a few key dramatic scenes with several standard scenes. The dramatic scenes keep the blood pumping, while the standard scenes give a chance for the mind to work. Standard scenes also give the players opportunities to develop their characters. Likewise, including various types of dramatic and standard scenes keeps the players awake and aware, and makes the session memorable.

When creating scenarios, remember to also mix the intensity of the scenes. Use more intense scenes to keep your players interested, but alternate them with lighter scenes to give them a chance to rest and gather their thoughts.

The length of each scene depends on the nature of the scenario. Less intense scenes are longest in scenarios that focus on the discovery of clues needed to solve mysteries. More intense scenes are longest in scenarios that emphasize action.

Describing Scenes

Clear description is the most important aspect of roleplaying games. Here the Director creates the mood and atmosphere of the location in particular and the scenario in general. A restaurant in a less-scrupulous part of town certainly looks different than a similar establishment on the ritzy side. Likewise, players will react differently in each locale—but only if you've adequately portrayed the interior, furniture, people, sights, sounds, and smells.

When providing descriptions of scenes, try to start with the background environment—the buildings, the street, the weather—before delving into the part the players need to deal with. This usually means that explanations of people in the area go last in your recitation. This order is recommended for two reasons: First, the players will have a better idea of the environment in which they are working (and of what they can work with). Second, the players will want to act as soon as they hear something to react to, so get the big details out of the way before the players interrupt your spiel.

In coming up with descriptions, keep in mind the old rule of "show, don't tell." Remember that your players (and, generally, their characters) have five senses. Try to use them all, though not necessarily at once.

For example:

Director: As you enter the local greasy spoon, you notice that it's too warm in here. You can feel a sheen of sweat form on your face. The air smells cloyingly of oil. You see your contact sitting alone at a table with a large basket of fries in front of him. You hear a door, of the free-swinging variety, drop shut farther back in the restaurant.

Player: My character walks over to our contact, grabs a fry, and says, "Do you mind?" as he takes a bite.

Director: You find it very salty. Too salty.

Usually, in addition to sight, involving one or two other senses helps your players become more engrossed in the scenes. Likewise, if you can dig up a picture or a map of the location you are describing, pass it out to the players. Not only does it give them something tangible, it also provides them with a clearer idea of what you're attempting to convey.

The players are counting on you to be their senses. Your descriptions offer them clues to completing the scenario (mixed in with distracting elements to provide some challenge). In other words, the players only know what you tell them. This is an awesome responsibility, one that should not be abused, particularly with new players. (Presumably, more experienced players will be aware of the right questions to ask—though this is not always the case.)

Continuing this line of reasoning, do not let a scene hinge on a piece of information that the players would normally have access to and then fail to describe that element. For example: Motorcycles don't normally sneak up on people. The characters will hear the motor a couple of minutes before it's on top of them. If the scene depends on the characters not noticing a motorcycle coming up behind them, tell the players of the intense racket of car horns, sledge hammers, and elevated trains. It will make more sense, then, when characters are surprised by the attack of the vehicle.

Furthermore, be specific about what is happening *to* the characters (in addition to what is happening around them). You don't have to get gruesome about the details, but certainly let the players know when an action will adversely affect their characters in upcoming rounds. Describe specifically the limits on future actions by the characters—and make certain the players have heard you. In the midst of combat, the players are attempting to decide quickly what their characters will do next. They just might be distracted enough not to hear you tell one of them that the alien stinger that caused 8 points of damage also released a toxin into the character's system that will cause him to loose additional points in future rounds until he's dead or the wound is taken care of. Realizing his character is poisoned may cause the player to choose different actions. Additionally, as each round starts and you remind the player to take body points off, add details about the toxin's effects on the character.

Example: *George's character, S, is trying to take in a young Bug who has no intention of going back quietly. To underscore this point, the alien lashes at S with her stinger. A lucky hit on S's leg causes 8 points of damage and injects venom into S. On the next round, you tell George to subtract another 6 body points (from the venom). To further emphasize this, make sure you have George's attention, and then tell him that S suffers excruciating pain when he leans on his stung leg, as if he can feel every cell. Inform S that he's not sure how much more he can take. (Though, if S started with 35 body points, at that rate he'd be gone in another five turns—but you don't have to describe it to the players in technical terms, unless they prefer to play that way.) The next round, you tell him that the pain has moved up his leg, while his leg has turned numb. S won't be able to move without falling over. And oh, by the way, take another 6 points off. You continue in that fashion until S faints from the pain (he was a man devoted to his cause).*

However, don't draw conclusions for your players. Give them the scene description up to the point where they need to make a decision and let them take it from there. If getting to another scene relies on the players choosing a certain course of action, instead of handing it to them, allow them other options that can lead to the same conclusion, perhaps with a few more steps. Sometimes this causes a scene to go a little longer than you had anticipated, but if the players are having fun, they'll never realize the difference.

Most scene descriptions are more than merely discussions about the surroundings. You must also consider the types of cast members you need to both help and prevent the players from accomplishing their goals. (See Lesson 2, "People," for more information). Describing the cast members who appear in the scenes is just as important as describing the location itself.

Give names to people the characters encounter. This adds additional depth, believability, and helps players remember details more easily. At the same time, by naming a person, you attach a certain significance to him or her (or it), regardless of the importance of that person. (This tip works well with places, too.)

If you've decided that a cast member has a peculiar mannerism, act it out. If possible and appropriate, use props to enhance the visualization. A store clerk might chew on the end of his pen while he's thinking. A bartender may continue to fix drinks even as she responds to the characters' queries.

When the characters question a cast member, have the person engage in small talk, adding bits of irrelevant (to the scenario) information. This enriches the game world because it shows the players that there is as much going on beyond their characters' goals as there is in the real world. As well, it provides you with opportunities to throw in some foreshadowing and distractions. Furthermore, the cast members may reappear in another adventure. The players may seek him out because of something he mentioned during the small talk.

Emphasizing Uncertainty

Uncertainty runs rampant in the world of the Men in Black. Things are never what they seem. The jewelry store owner, for all you know, could be an alien prince in disguise.

Those players who choose to have characters poking into the Men in Black conspiracy must deal with uncertainty during every scenario. Yet even though the Men in Black have an extensive database, not every aspect of every species' behavior has been documented (that hasn't even been done for all the varieties of humans). Men in Black agents must always remember that the meeting with that new alien ambassador may contain a few surprises.

Use uncertainty to keep tension high, thereby maintaining the players' interest. Because someone looks human does not mean she will act that way. Likewise, two members of the same species may have entirely different motives. The manual may not hold the answers to everything. The characters may need to dig a little deeper to find out what's really going on.

Foreshadowing

Foreshadowing is one way to offer clues. But these kinds of clues encompass information needed to solve puzzles as well as hints of events to come. They also make the outcome more believable, because they give the players reasons to expect the events you've planned.

You should make sure that everything in your resolution has at some point been foreshadowed. On the other hand, don't go overboard. Along with telling scenes, be sure to include ordinary situations that serve no purpose other than to add depth to the world in which the characters live.

Foreshadowing can be added in a variety of ways. It can be presented as an event, as part of a description, or as a prop. For example, in the training film, the Baltian prince in his human disguise rounds a corner with his cat under one arm and a box under the other while whistling "I've Got the Whole World in My Hands." The foreshadowing here is the whistling in conjunction with holding the cat. As it turns out, it is the cat that plays a significant role later in the film. (The box was thrown in for distraction.)

Foreshadowing is also good for maintaining tension by offering the characters a taste of things to come. If they discover that a combat encounter with only one of the adversary's henchmen was tough, they'll worry even more about the final confrontation with the big guy.
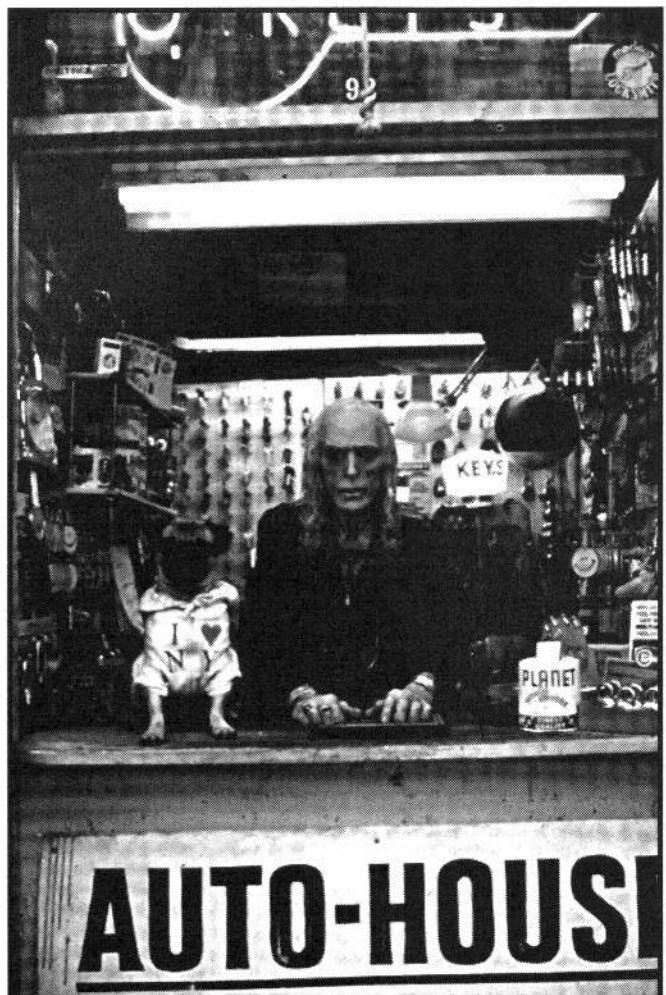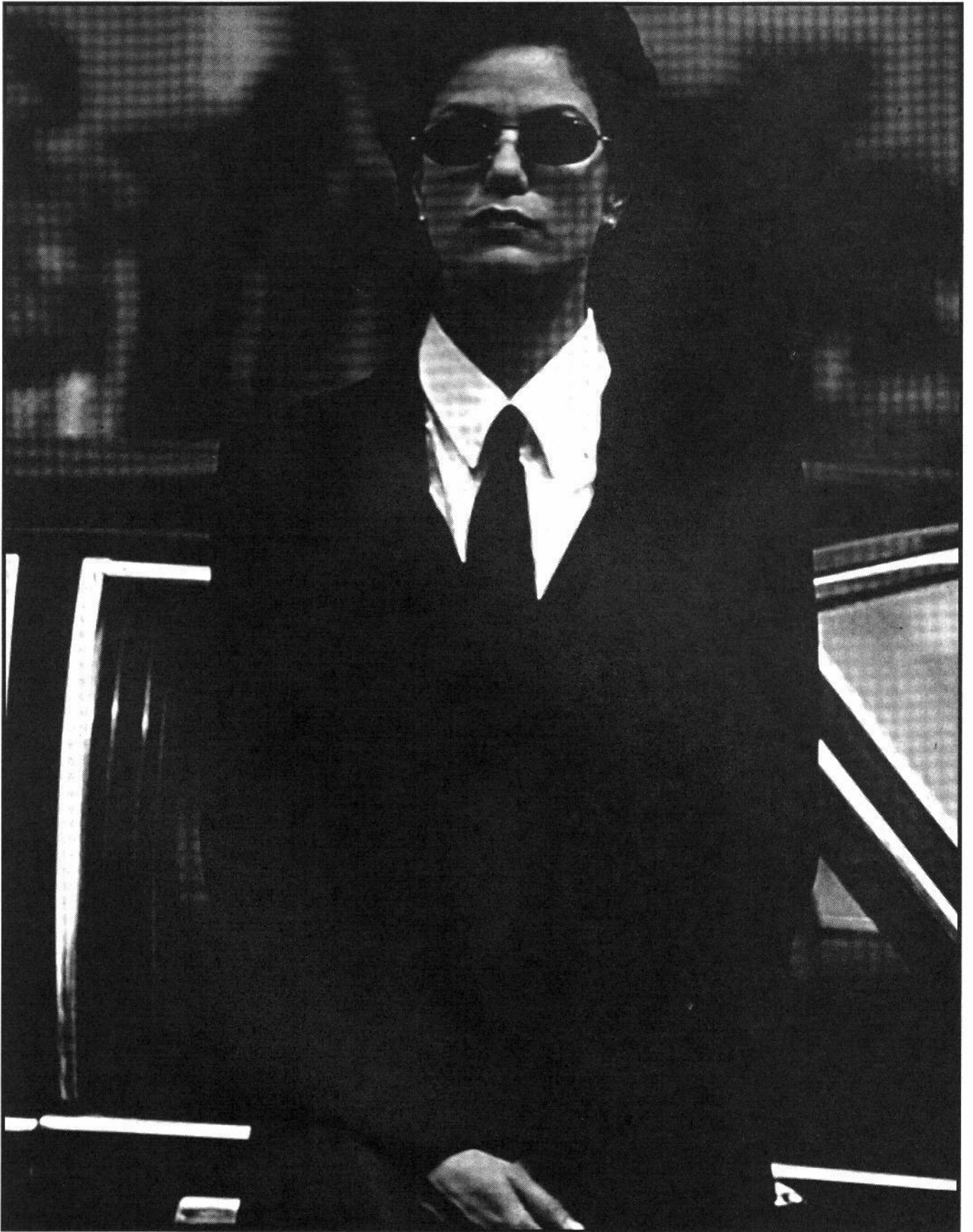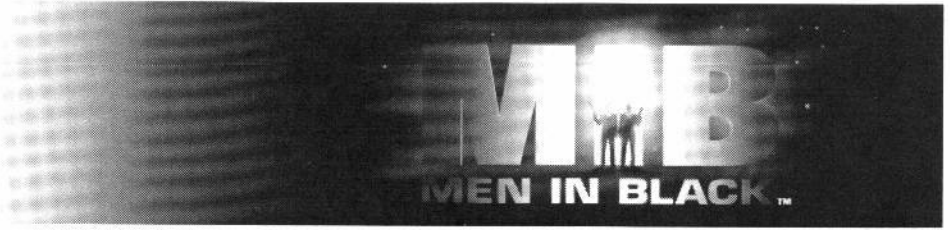
Obstacles

Not everything in life helps people attain their goals. Likewise, not everything in a scenario should aid the players. Obstacles provide challenges, keeping the session interesting. Yet, unless you vary the obstacles you include in your scenarios, your sessions will become predictable, and boredom will set in for you and your players.

In addition to major obstacles in an adventure, it's a good idea to have a few optional clogs (often referred to as stock encounters) to throw into the works, just in case the planned obstacles prove too easy for the players. On the other hand, you may have to tone down your chosen obstacles. You don't want to spoil all the fun—only add to the challenge. Too much failure is disheartening.

Is there a way to determine whether the obstacle you've devised is fair and yet challenging to your particular group? Well…not really. As suggested in Folder 7 of the *Men in Black Roleplaying Game,* you could compare attribute totals and body point totals. If the numbers are about equal, the obstacle will be challenging, but not overly so. If the numbers favor one side or the other too much, you will need to make sure you give the weaker side some advantage—cast member assistance, better equipment, and so on. For cast members, you also have the option of changing their stats.

When designing information-gathering, puzzle, and roleplaying scenes, keep in mind the dice the characters have in *Knowledge, Perception,* and related skills, in addition to the experience of your players. Higher *Knowledge* and *Perception* totals, as well as more player experience, means that your noncombat situations will need to be tougher. Accomplish this by increasing difficulty numbers or spreading out the clues, forcing the characters to search in more places to get what they need.

Obstacles can also be added on the spur of the moment, making tasks even more challenging for the cast members as well as characters. They can be used as excuses to increase the difficulty of rolls—before or after a roll has been made. Just make certain these impromptu obstacles are appropriate for the scene.

When working with obstacles, secrecy is of two-fold importance: by not informing the players of the exact difficulty level, it won't be so obvious to the players if you decide to adjust it in accord with your desired outcome. Likewise, if you make a roll that would have disastrous game effects, the players can't see it if the dice are behind the screen. A note of warning: don't abuse this privilege. It takes away the free will of your players. Adjust the rolls and difficulty levels to keep the scenario challenging yet fun.

Possible obstacles include:

Adverse conditions. This includes weather, terrain, and hostile or uncooperative cast members. Make certain, however, that the conditions you choose are appropri-

ate for the scene or that you have a believable explanation for them. A snowstorm in Georgia in July is highly unlikely—unless an alien is illegally using a device to alter the local weather.

Diversions. Diversions look good, but they lead the characters astray. They often come in the form of extra cast members or pieces of information that are more for show than integral parts of the adventure. Diversions can be added to a scene by including extra details in your description of the surroundings or in information provided by cast members. For example, if the characters get in a subway car, don't only talk about the person they are seeking. Throw in some details about the other passengers in the car. Have a particular person (not the one they're after) move to a new car. Mention that another passenger looks up from her magazine and quickly looks back. If the characters are not exactly sure who they are looking for, this technique will slow them down. It likewise offers opportunities for some interesting roleplaying.

Information, missing or misleading. When giving characters information, you have many options beyond making it difficult to obtain. Various aspects of the information can be adjusted: The characters get the information—but not all of it; crucial portions are missing. Or, it's the wrong kind. Or, it's the right kind but there's a few extra details. Or, it's the right kind but it's in the form of a puzzle. It turns out that the person providing the information is crazy or has lied about certain, significant details, putting everything that person says into question. Whatever the case, make the delivery of the information convincing. Unless it's appropriate for the cast member to place more emphasis on one or another part of the information, don't do it.

Be sure when using this obstacle that you build into your scenario ways of getting the correct information. These ways should be neither too obscure nor too obvious.

Multiple goals. When your scenario contains multiple leading cast members, each will have his or her own goals—and these goals may be at odds with one another. As your characters proceed through the scenario, they will come across hints of each of these goals. Mixing up the clues will challenge the players by giving them two or more threads to sort out.

Time limits. This is an obstacle that either characters know about before entering the scene, or you spring on them to make the scene more difficult. Time limits also can come in the form of limited supplies. The characters need to get the job done before their food runs out. Or, the character with the gun has one shot left.

Twists of fate. The "bait and switch" is one of the more common examples of a twist of fate. You start the characters in one direction. Then, in a later scene, you provide them with new, contradictory, and seemingly more accurate information. Through judicious use of subtle

foreshadowing, your players won't feel tricked when they figure out what happened.

Twists of fate can also be thrown in if the players get lazy or need some extra challenge. For example, finding an important piece of equipment proved too easy. The characters then discover that the item doesn't work. Or, if you caught yourself before handing over the item, have the characters learn that it's not where they first thought it would be. Then either hide it in the same location (so that they must search a little harder) or put it somewhere else entirely. If you choose to put it in another location, decide whether the characters read the map wrong or they didn't have all the information. In either case, you'll have to come up with some clues to get the characters to the new place.

As delightful twists of fate are, don't throw them in merely to antagonize the characters (and thereby, the players). Whether you use this obstacle as part of your overall plan or you toss it in for a bit of excitement, the twist of fate should be plausible in light of the rest of your scenario. Good roleplaying and clear thinking should be rewarded, not stomped on.

Weapon restrictions. Sure, J could use the Noisy Cricket to stop the Bug, but how was he going to explain that away? Be sure to let the players know of any usage restrictions when they are issued their weapons.

When Obstacles Prove Too Much

What happens if something doesn't go quite right for you or your characters? If you have been rolling your dice in secret (behind your hand or a screen), then it's easy to alter the results (because the players won't know the difference). If you haven't been, then you need to come up with a plausible excuse as to why the results are different than "by the book."

If the scenario seems to be moving too fast—the players are overcoming the obstacles more quickly than you expected—then throw a few more problems at them.

Player mistakes that don't lead to death can serve a number of functions in the scenario. They may be just the hook needed for the next session. If the mistake occurred early on, consider it as a new obstacle of the players' creation (instead of yours). It's not something for which you may have planned, but it's something that could be worked in. "Players' obstacles" can range from a setback that causes the scenario to last longer to a complete side adventure (for example, the players must retrieve stolen equipment or information).

What happens if it gets more serious than that? Say your leading cast member is about to be captured, or worse, killed. If the second-in-command is nonexistent (or you're not ready for him or her to take command), you may need to fudge the dice roll, spend a Fate Point to help the character escape, or (if you can devise a plausible excuse) increase the difficulty number of the action. Be sure not to rely on fudging rolls or difficulty levels too often, thus frustrating the players unnecessarily. Instead, try to plan ahead with a backup scenario.

What if it's a player's character who's about to die? If the player roleplayed well but the dice indicate a bad situation, fudge the roll or increase the difficulty level for your cast member. Then explain it away in terms of the scene. This usually applies to combat. For example, you've rolled for the adversary and find that he has scored a hit on the player's character. When you generate damage, you note that it's the maximum that can be rolled. The player rolls the minimum *Endurance* to resist. You decide (to yourself) that it's not in anyone's best interest to have the player die at this time. Instead, you inform the player that she's been knocked out. Her adversary gloats over her, "If I see you again, you won't be so lucky," and dashes off before anyone can strike again.

If the player caused the unfortunate occurrence in the first place, you must consider other factors. With a participant new to roleplaying, you may choose to remind him before allowing the action to be played that
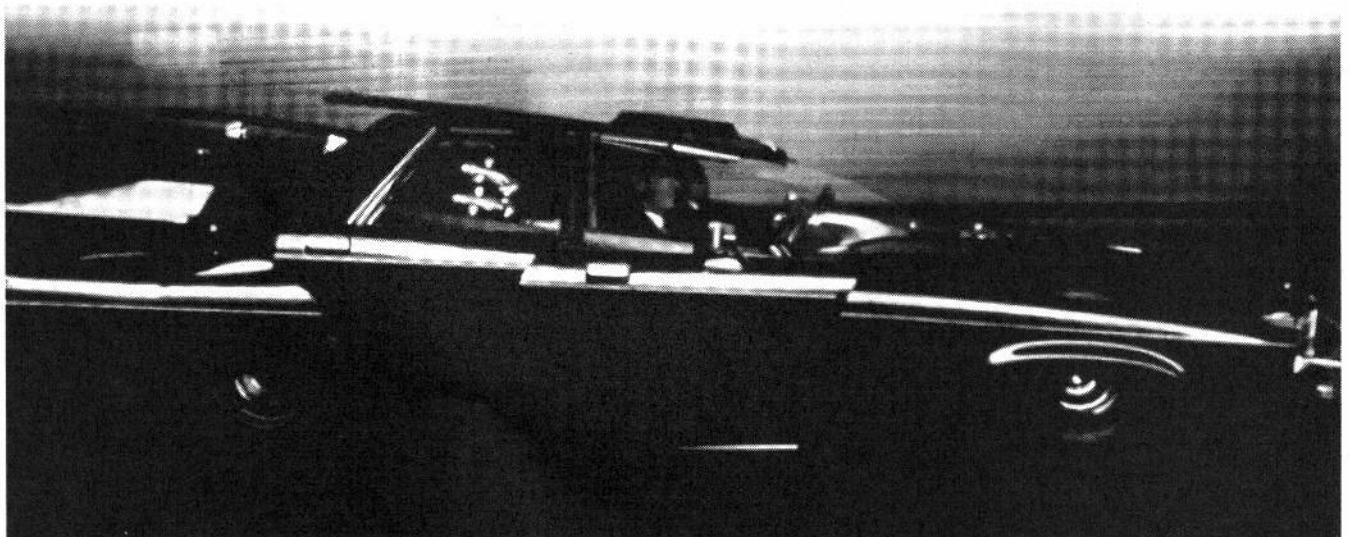
Study Tips

Keep in mind the types of players and characters in your group. Tailor your scenarios to the players' interests and abilities and to their characters' attributes and skills. Give them opportunities to use all their skills (though not necessarily all in one scenario), even the obscure ones. Face it, players want to show off. Don't force them to constantly seek out the help of various cast members by throwing unsuitable obstacles at them. Give all the players a chance to shine in the sessions.

If you choose to have special abilities and flaws in your scenarios, be certain to allow plenty of occasions for those aspects to be roleplayed. This is especially important to remember with flaws, because players tend to conveniently forget about those. For example, if you allow a player to have the flaw *allergy*, with the allergy being to Twinkies (because of their high preservative content), then be certain to include events where that flaw becomes a factor. Don't, though, stick to flaw manifestations in either crucial *or* noncrucial times. Mix it up so that the player won't know when the allergy might affect performance.

Another way to make scenarios more interesting is to determine the characters' goals and dreams. Provide chances for the players to develop and fulfill them. For some players, coming up with goals will be easy. For others, it may take a few sessions. Much as you may want to personalize a scenario, don't force the players to make quick decisions regarding the past and future of their characters' lives. After all, you've had many years to form your personality; it isn't reasonable to expect that anyone could create a multidimensional personality in a few hours or less. You may need several short scenarios that emphasize roleplaying in order to allow the players an opportunity to establish their character identities. As both you and your players learn more about their characters, you can incorporate those findings into your scenarios.

You might also encourage your players to write suggestions of scenes they'd like to see in scenarios. These suggestions not only include goals for entire adventures. They could also be encounters, events, cast members, rewards, jokes, and the like. Examining other scenarios to see how they are set up can also provide you with important pointers.

Keep scenarios simple for less experienced players. Veteran roleplayers can handle (and even enjoy) having a number of challenges spring up all at once. Remember to give the players an adequate amount of time and opportunity to solve the problems on their own, though this period will vary depending on the players' experience level.

Most of all, watch your players for signs of mutiny and listen to their suggestions for improving the scenario. It should be fun for everyone.

the choice may not be a wise one. If he is insistent, let him do as he wishes, but don't make the situation any easier (or harder) than originally planned.

Likewise, you could build reminders against thoughtlessness right into the scene. Allow the characters to get out of it—but just barely. This may be enough to make them understand the value of thinking before acting. If you feel the players need help learning this lesson, insert a cast member who finds out about the fiasco and reprimands the characters for acting as they did.

Climax and Resolution

The climax is the last step the characters take to reach their goal. This scene usually involves some final attempt to thwart the characters, either by the leading cast member or by some unsuspecting (though hardly innocent) bystander who doesn't want to give up whatever the characters are after. However, the climax might instead occur whenever the characters put all the clues together to come up with the answer that solves the scenario.

Make sure your climax is enjoyable or, at the very least, believable. No matter what the outcome is, if the players got there under their own power, they'll have the most fun. This means that you neither put too many obstacles in their way, nor offer them too much aid.

As mentioned in the scene types, your scenario will typically contain some sort of debriefing session. If you made notes about the scenario, in addition to information on the scene, you should put down what sort of reward the characters will receive. The reward, in game terms, could be in the form of a contact, a commendation, or being allowed to keep new equipment they've found. It might be some information that will help the players attain a long-term goal. Or a grateful alien cast member gives the players a gift, such as a new weapon or piece of equipment.

And don't forget about those Character Points and Fate Points!

Running Adventures

After you've spent days huddled in the corner of your bedroom or basement devising your latest fast-paced, action-packed, conspiracy-ridden, awesome scenario,

you have to run it for your group. The following tips and techniques should help you entertain your players and allow the game to run smoothly.

Before and During the Session

The best way to insure that your scenarios run well is to be prepared. You won't be able to anticipate every move of your players. However, hunting for a scrap of paper for a note or a pen to write it with can detract from the excitement of the session. Even worse, those surprises from your players—such as when they don't follow the scenario as written—will be that much more difficult to handle. So let's consider some activities that can make your life as a Director easier.

Read the whole adventure at least once. This gives you a chance to make adjustments to it, to improve it, and to make it more consistent with what the characters have already done. It also gives you a chance to determine if you need any special props, lighting, sound effects, or other materials.

If cast members occur throughout the adventure, it's helpful to write them on cards or paper so you don't have to hunt for their stats when you need them. This also goes for random cast members and encounters. (It's useful to keep a stack handy to liven things up when

necessary. If you need some ideas, see Lesson 4, "Places.")

You should also read the rules at least once, preferably learning the basic ones (movement, resolving combat, using skills, generating difficulty levels). You won't need to memorize everything: the most commonly used tables and information have been included on the Director's screen in this guide. You might also find it helpful to tab the *Men in Black Roleplaying Game* book with index cards or paper clips so you know immediately where to find tables and skill descriptions. Thus, you don't have to memorize all the rules, but you also don't have to waste time hunting for specific information.

The Director's screen also helps add mystery to the situation. It prevents players from learning of events and cast members too early, as well as hiding certain rolls, such as ability attempts for cast members and rolls for outcomes that may have significant ramifications for later parts of the scenario.

If you are running a campaign (a series of link scenarios), you may also want a notebook on hand. By having one close by, you will have a convenient place to put details about your decisions when you make something up on the spot. This will aid you in maintaining consistency (as well as saving you from having to make it up again) when similar questions surface at other times in the campaign. (Campaigns are discussed in more detail in Folder 7 of the *Men in Black Roleplaying Game*.)

Additional tools you might consider having at hand include an almanac, an atlas, maps, tour books, brochures, or a condensed encyclopedia. Refer to them as you create scenarios to maintain consistency among static aspects of the world, as well as sources of ideas. More importantly, they can be used during the scenario. Maps and pictures can help the players better visualize their characters' environment. You might also use the materials as props—to find clues, the characters must search through one or more items.

Other props can also engage the players and cause them to get more into their characters. For example, if the scenario calls for a letter, either attempt to make a reasonable facsimile or have blank sheets of paper handy to pass out at the appropriate moment. If at another point you know that the characters have the option to rewire a control panel, you can make the event more interesting by giving the players a "control panel" to work on. You can make one by sticking different colored wires into a (thoroughly washed) foam meat tray. This gives the players something to work with—aside from your verbal description.

Props for cast members likewise add a sense of realism to the scenario. If you know that one of the cast members the players will meet has a habit of wringing a handkerchief when he talks, have a cloth or tissue ready for that person's scenes.
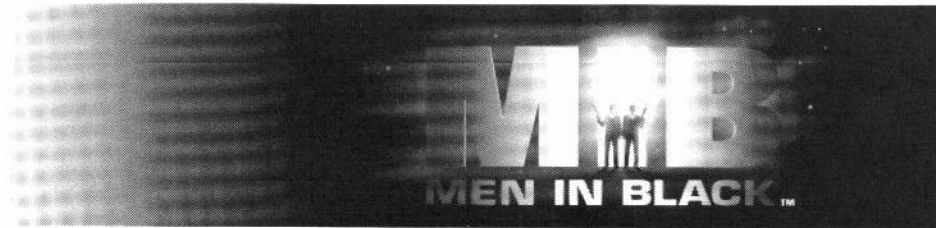
While you're thinking about props, also consider lighting. Turn down the lights if it's night or the characters wander into a dark place. Get a blue-colored light bulb to represent a dimly light restaurant.

So far we've covered ways to engage your players' sense of touch and sight. How about grabbing their attention through their hearing? Try using sound to enhance your descriptions. Sound effects include animal noises, alien languages, weapon fire, explosions, background music, and so on. If you have a portable CD or tape player, you can use selections from collections to provide you with a wider range of noises.

Note that the key to using props, lighting, and sound effects is to prepare what you'll need ahead of time. This way you can seamlessly insert them into your scenario. Remember that special effects are meant to enhance the experience, not distract from it.

On the day of the session, make sure that you have all the necessary dice, paper, sharpened pencils, extras, equipment, notes, snacks, and, of course, the scenario before the session actually begins.

Pacing the Scenario

The *Men in Black* training film follows a day in the life of an agent and a new recruit. It offers a perfect example of the kind of action an agent would normally see. Even the slower scenes don't detract from the overall mood. As you create and run your scenarios, you should strive to have them reflect the excitement that permeates the film. Luckily, there are number of ways to do this.

Foremost, be prepared ahead of time. You can't anticipate everything, but what you do anticipate can only help you keep up the pace. The previous section recommends a few activities for you to consider including in your preparation.

Second, don't get caught up in the rules. Consider them merely guidelines. If the action is moving briskly and you suddenly forget the difficulty numbers for climbing a slick surface at less than a forty-five degree angle, make it up. Any controversial rule interpretations should be written down and discussed *after* the session, unless the outcome of the adventure relies on that decision. Then it might be a good time for a break.

Furthermore, in science fiction stories, people don't generally stop to discuss the technical possibility of assumptions that have been established from the start of the story. If you are fair and consistent with your players, they won't have much to grumble about—they won't mind you fudging rules because they know you're doing it in the name of fun.

In a similar vein, reward player ingenuity by bending the rules or your master plan to accommodate the effect they'd like to see. When the players believe their characters are actually able to affect the story (even as you control the environment), everyone enjoys the scenario more.

Another way to keep up the pace—and which might not be so obvious—is to encourage teamwork. Nothing gets done in anarchy, and it strains the fun. Likewise, discourage inexperienced players from wandering off on their own. It slows the pace of the scenario for those who didn't stray from the adventure because you must divide your attention between two different groups.

Details are great for adding realism, promoting roleplaying, and keeping interest. But too many details can slow down the scenario, causing players to lose interest. Keep descriptions brief yet expressive and relevant. A few extraneous details are great for keeping characters aware of their surroundings and preventing them from reading too much into the points you choose to mention. Nevertheless, it's rarely necessary to intricately describe the entire flight from New York to Anchorage. Once the players grasp the essence of the description, use a scene shift to jump to the next relevant scene description.

Example: *"You have no problems with check-in. There are plenty of empty seats, not unusual for a flight at this hour in the middle of the week. The take-off is smooth. Several hours later, you arrive safely in Anchorage. The terminal here, however, is not so uneventful...."*

In dramatic scenes, keep the descriptions short but vivid. To build suspense during standard scenes, describe the scene in more detail.

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When the scene calls for the pace to quicken, but the players are being poky, force them to act by thrusting them into a situation in which they must do something immediately or suffer "dire" consequences. Examples of such situations include a fight, an explosion, a beeping pager, a ringing phone, and so on.

If your players get stuck and it doesn't look like they will be able to get started again on their own, feel free to help them out a little—but keep in character yourself. Offer aid in the form of an anonymous tip or a message from headquarters. Or have a character with the appropriate ability, skill, or attribute roll against that characteristic. If the result is successful, have the character realize, remember, or notice additional information. But use these devices sparingly—only when the characters need a tiny shove. No one likes to have their lives run for them.

Encouraging Roleplaying

Props, lighting, and sound effects can aid your players in roleplaying by providing them with a believable setting for their characters. You can encourage roleplaying in other ways, of course. First and foremost, you must roleplay all the cast members to the best of your ability. Use different mannerisms, gestures, and ways of speaking for each character. The players will most likely follow your lead as to the amount of roleplaying to do. It may take some people more time to warm up to this than others, but most people will get into their characters eventually.

Another way to encourage roleplaying is to ask the players lots of questions, especially by referring to players by their characters' names during the adventure (leave calling the players by their real names for "out of character" times). This reminds the players that they are supposed to be determining what their *characters* would do in the situation (which, depending on what sort of psychological profile they have created for their characters, may not be what the players would do if they were in that situation).

Also, although it's obvious in noncombat situations, you can inject roleplaying into combat scenes, too. Before the players make any rolls, have them elaborate, in as much detail as they would like, on what they are doing and what they would like to accomplish. For exceptional descriptions (which indicates forethought, planning, and a desire to participate in the scenario), lower the difficulty number a notch or two, as a mini-reward for roleplaying. But be sure not to mention this adjustment to the players; this way they don't come to expect that treatment all the time. Likewise, when you roll dice, don't merely roll to determine effects. After deciding what happens in terms of the dice rolls, add details to enliven the scene.

For example:

Bland: The alien rolls to hit you and gets an 18. You take damage.

Better: The alien slashes viciously at you. Ooh. She gets an 18. Her claws rake across your arm. That's gotta sting.

If you feel comfortable with it, take the roleplaying one step further: get up and move around. Act as you think the cast members would act. Similarly, ask the players to stand up and move around as their characters would. This can help the players better visualize the scene (as well as get their attention). For example, if the location of everyone in a room is important, have your players stand in the positions their characters would occupy. The idea is to get the players to feel a part of the action in as many dimensions as possible.

A cautionary note on this: Don't do anything that could harm the players physically or mentally. Physical harm is rather easy to identify, but mental harm is trickier. If you notice your players becoming uncomfortable with something you are doing or saying (and not just from the novelty of roleplaying), you should seriously consider stopping that action. The point of roleplaying games is to have fun. Whatever you do should enhance the session, not drive the players away. For the same reason, disallow abusive behavior by players toward other players and yourself.

Cue Cards

For some instant humor in your scenario, nothing beats a well-played Cue Card. Since we discussed this concept in greater detail in the *Men in Black Roleplaying Game*, Folder 7, we'll merely remind you of some of the more attractive points of employing Cue Cards.

One of the most useful features of Cue Cards is their ability to subtly help you get the players through the scenario. Although, when creating your own Cue Cards, you should add a few that have no purpose beyond humor or distraction, the cards can serve as an additional opportunity to divulge information to the characters without the need for creating new scenes. Remember, each card contains a sentence or so relating some dialogue or describing an action, as well as a reward (which can be used by the player whenever she wishes).

Using the *MasterDeck*

If you have purchased other boxed roleplaying products produced by West End Games, you undoubtedly own the *MasterDeck*. With a few usage modifications, this set of 108 cards will work equally well for influencing play in the *Men in Black Roleplaying Game*, either with the Cue Cards or instead of them. The modifications are intended to simplify card use.

First, players receive two to five cards per character, depending on the number of characters and whether you are using Cue Cards. The more characters, the fewer cards, unless you want a lot of card playing. Additionally, use fewer *MasterDeck* cards with the Cue Cards than without. Depending on the number of
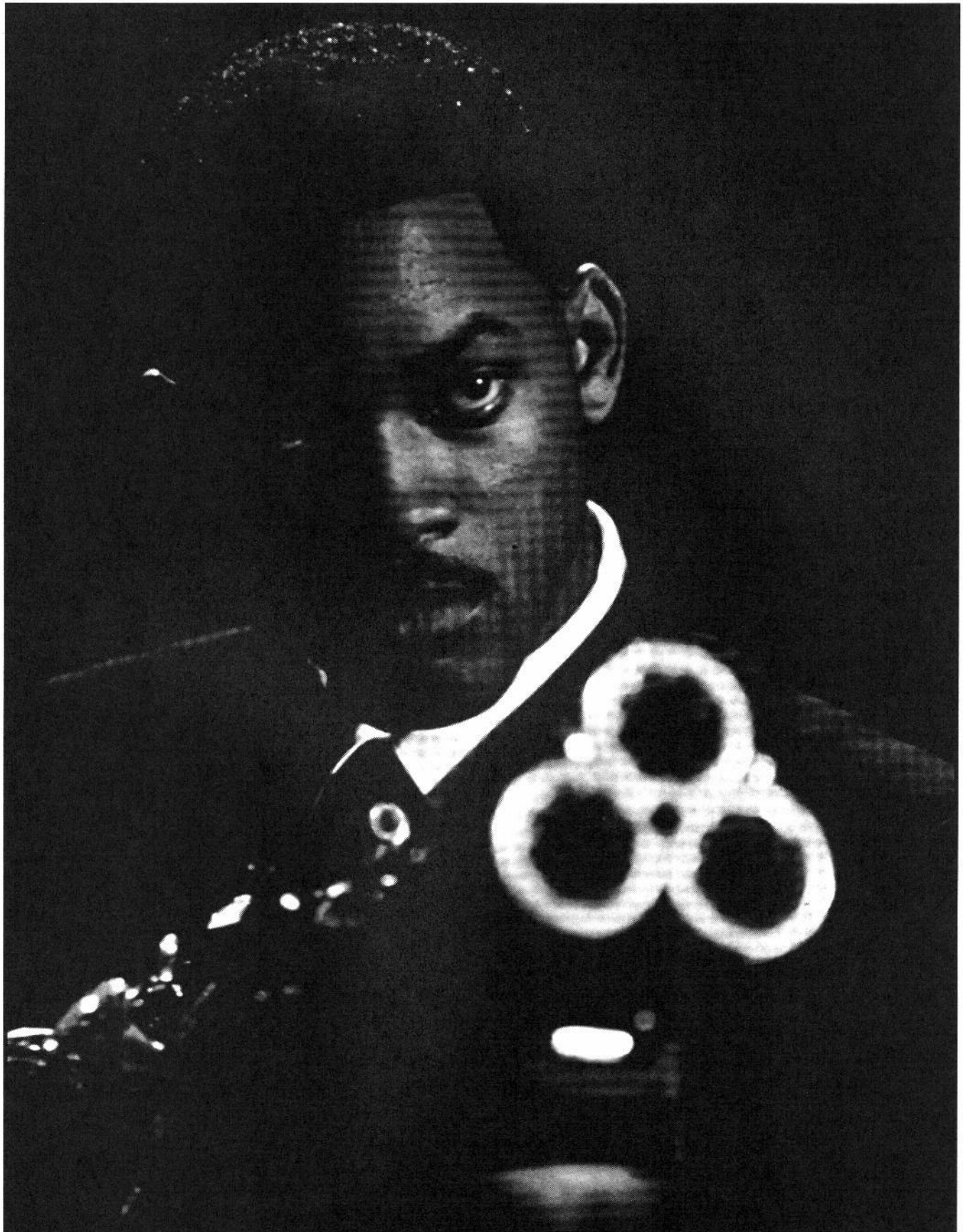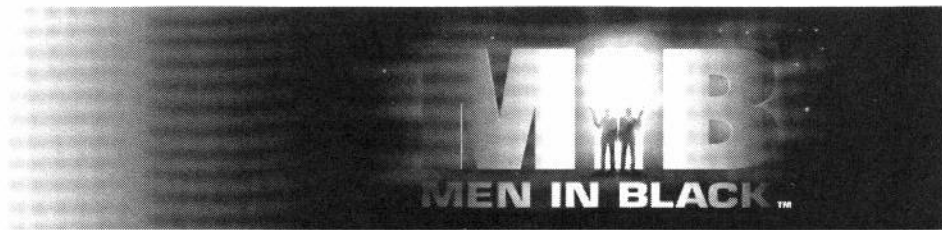
Cue Cards you have, you may wish to give two *MasterDeck* cards to one Cue Card. Players would, in this situation, have a minimum total of three cards, with a maximum total of six.

Deal yourself twice as many *MasterDeck* cards as you do the other players (because you have more characters to run), but do not deal yourself any Cue Cards. Leave the remaining cards in two separate decks on the table within easy reach of everyone. Leave enough room beside each deck for a discard pile. At the end of the scenario, shuffle back into each deck any cards remaining in the players' or your hands. Start each scenario with a fresh hand of cards.

Cards are played only from the hand; there are no pools. Players may trade cards (on a one-to-one basis) at any time, as long as it doesn't distract from the scenario. Cards may be replenished at the end of each scene, up to the number the player started with in each type of card. Players may not use *MasterDeck* cards to pick up Cue Cards.

Enhancement, subplot, and picture cards all count toward the number of cards in a player's hand. Either type of card may be played at any time, though only one per turn or round. (This adjustment will allow you to ignore whether you are "in" or "out" of rounds.) Furthermore, you, as the Director, get absolute veto power on subplot cards. If you do not allow a subplot card to be played, the player must discard that card and take another card. Players may put into effect any amount of subplot cards. If you think a subplot card was roleplayed exceptionally well, give the character one Character Point per card, for a total of two for the entire scenario.

Enhancement cards are used generally as described, with these adjustments: The modifier for the action card is +1D.

The modifier for the *adrenaline, presence, supporter,* and *willpower* cards is +1D; the cards are otherwise used without change.

The modifier for the *breakthrough* card is also +1D and, unless you have decided that certain skills cannot be used if the character has no skill dice in them, ignore the rest of the text for this card.

For the *claim* card, the player may exchange that card for the one on the top of the discard pile.

The modifier for the *double cross* card is +2D.

The *drama* card may be spent as a Fate Point or turned in for three Character Points.

The modifier for the *effect* card is +6.

The *hero* card may be spent as a Fate Point.

A player may use the *leadership* card to play cards into other player's hands; the rest of the text is the same.

With the *rally* card, new cards are placed into each players' hand.

Unless you are using the *MasterDeck* to determine initiative, the *seize initiative* card allows the user to take the first action in a combat round (or at any time initiative is rolled).

Haste, idea, opponent fails, and *second chance* cards require no modification. Be sure to discard the card after it has been used.

Subplot and picture cards need fewer changes. They can be used, for the most part, as described. If you are using the *MasterBook* rules for the *MasterDeck*, then you may have noted that, for playing certain cards, characters may receive extra Life Points, which in the *Men in Black Roleplaying Game* are known as Fate Points. Use your discretion in handing out these bonus Fate Points.

Lastly, ignore the bottom half of all the cards. If you want to continuing using the bottom halves, follow them as outlined in *MasterBook* with these modifications:

The "P" refers to the characters. The "G" refers to cast members.

To initiative line effects:

Fatigued means that those effected by the condition take a –1D to any rolls made during the round.

Inspiration now only affects characters, who may receive an extra card at the beginning of the round.

When *stymied,* characters or cast members may not roll again if a 6 comes up on the Wild Die, nor may they spend Fate Points or Character Points to affect the die roll.

In an *up* condition, the Wild Die may automatically be rolled again, even if a 6 did not appear; additionally, characters or cast members may use Fate Points, Characters Points, *hero,* or *drama* cards for additional rerolls.

In the *skills* effect, *intimidate* is the only relevant skill.

Breaks, flurry, and *confused* conditions are played as described.

In the *approved action line,* ignore those skills not listed in the *Men in Black Roleplaying Game* .

There are no modifications to the *critical skill resolution* rules.

FOLDER 2
PEOPLE

In this lesson, you will learn about ways of adding depth to cast members (tips that are equally helpful to players). The more you know about your cast members—and your players know about their characters—the better you and your players will be able to roleplay them. You will also be introduced to a detailed method of creating alien species.

Although this lesson is written for Directors, players may find the sections on extraterrestrial aliens and cast members informative and helpful in rounding out their own characters.

Characters

Encourage your players to create descriptions for their characters. Having characters with depth helps game participants roleplay. Additionally, the backgrounds let you know what in their past might come back to haunt them, as well as some of their goals. These aspects can be incorporated into campaigns and used to personalize pregenerated adventures. Allow those players who need help getting started to read "Adding Depth to Your Descriptions" later in this lesson.

You may also wish to reward your players for coming up with detailed backgrounds. Give them positive modifiers in situations in which something about their background gives them advantages. You could do the same for disadvantages that the players create for their characters. If they do include disadvantages in their backgrounds, you may also wish to reward the characters in some other way. This might be extra Character Points (the amount depending on how significant the disadvantage is) or as compensation for some equally significant advantage. Refer to the Modifiers table for some suggestions.

> **Example:** *The player of the Men in Black agent H decides that his father was a dock worker—a supervisor, in fact—who worked his way into that position. Because his mother worked days also, H spent the summers of his childhood playing on the New York docks. Considering the docks haven't changed all that much in the intervening years, when, during the scenario, H winds up stalking an alien fugitive among them, the Director decides to give him a +4 to his tracking rolls as he tries to find the fugitive.*

Modifier Table

Significance of Situation	Modifier to Roll or Difficulty Number
Slight	+/– 1D
Significant	+/– 2D
Decisive	+/– 3D
Overpowering	+/– 4D

The Money Question

Somewhere along the line, your players will undoubtedly ask you, "How much money do we get to spend?" Figure that Men in Black agents may purchase just about anything they want, but they must get approval for any purchases over $100. If the players seem to be going nuts with this, you may want to restrict them to $100 in cash or a debit card with a $100-per-day spending limit (noncumulative).

For players with characters in other occupations, use the "Price of Services" table (located later in this lesson) to help you in deciding how much these characters should get. For landed aliens, the situation depends on their circumstances. Aliens who are just visiting for a few days will have enough money to last those days. The amount will depend on special background circumstances, their position in their governments, and any other factors you would like to take into account.

Those on Earth for longer durations will need to find jobs. Aliens working for the Men in Black should get the same pay as human agents. Others who decide to try society outside of the agency will receive some sort of compensation for whatever jobs they've been able to acquire. In all cases, players need to make arrangements for supporting themselves with you, the Director.

As for the cost of goods, remember that *Men in Black* is set in the late twentieth century. If you want to be accurate about prices of items, save department store and mail-order catalogs, restaurant menus, and other price lists for reference.

Cast Members

But enough about players' characters. Let's get to what you really came for: designing cast members. First of all, you should consider what role they will play. This determines how much work you'll need to put into them. Cast members come in three varieties: extra, support, and lead.

Extras

Extras are the unnamed people in the background, used to give a place depth. These cast members include pedestrians, restaurant patrons, and other people the characters probably won't converse with and will interact with only in an extremely limited way. (How much attention do you really pay to the other customers who are in the store with you?) MiB agents may deal casually at headquarters with secretaries, mechanics, security guards, and backup support.

For these characters, you will need to know their attributes (which will normally be 2D each), a few significant skills, and the number appearing in particular events and encounters. Often, you will use the same set of stats for most of the people. You may wish to note a few significant but general features of their ap-

speaking style, and notable mannerisms and personality features), as well as his or her major motivation. Reoccurring leading cast members or ones who appear in many scenes of the scenario should have additional information in order to give them depth and help you roleplay them better.

For supporting and leading cast members, you may wish to use separate sheets of loose-leaf paper and then store the pages in a binder. Having supporting and leading cast members on their own pages will give you room to add information about them as you use them in adventures.

As you come up with new aspects for each cast member, be sure to record them in the appropriate log. These may be events that occur to the cast member independent of the characters' lives, as well as new mannerisms or habits that the character has picked up or developed. (Perhaps a new phobia or an acquired passion for chocolate?) Likewise, whenever you include a reoccurring supporting or leading cast member in a scenario, be sure to note briefly how the cast member was involved and what happened in the scenario concerning that person.

All this note-taking provides depth to your cast members as well as to your world. It can help you to include details in your adventures that remind your players that they are part of a reality bigger than themselves and their insignificant little activities.

Name

When choosing a name, consider what it means to you. What sort of images come to mind when you say the name aloud? Do you want those images associated with your cast member? Names should reflect the personality and the motivations of the cast members. Tough people need tough names, unless you plan on doing more describing than the character may warrant. Naming a major antagonist Bambi may throw the players off as they attempt to find a delicate creature only to discover the true source of their grief is someone into collecting sawed-off shotguns. But once your players get wise to this tactic, you'll need to change strategies.

Names with hard consonants such as 't,' 'p,' 'b,' 'd,' 'c,' 'k,' and the like are more difficult to slur together, making for a tougher sounding name than those containing lots of soft consonants (such as 's,' 'th,' 'sh,' 'w,' 'm,' 'n,' 'f,' and 'r') and vowels. MiB agents will only have initials.

Names should also sound unique. Unless it furthers the plot, try not to use similar sounding names for different cast members, no matter what their roles. Play-

ers will probably have difficulty keeping the clerk Henry straight from the bartender Harry, particularly if they only meet the cast members once.

When creating unusual names for alien cast members, try to make them pronounceable. This helps you and your players remember them more easily. If you choose to have the written version of the name look different than it sounds or be composed of letter combinations not easily pronounceable in a major Earth language, be certain to write the correct pronunciation in parentheses after its spelling. This will help you to say the name the same way throughout the scenario.

You may also wish to consider a nickname or two for your cast member (though this may be a task to do after you've defined other aspects of the cast member). Nicknames are always given for a reason, such as shortening the formal name, a mispronunciation that stuck, or for some distinguishing characteristic or hobby. Deciding on the reason for choosing a nickname can provide further insight into your cast member.

Motivation

Motivation answers the big "Why?" of a person's existence. Why does she get out of bed? Why did he select these particular goals? Answers to these questions reveal how the cast member will react to future events.

Behind door number one is the cast member's profession. Consider how and why he got into that line of work, as well as how strongly he relates to it. For example, Men in Black agents will have a variety of reasons for joining the agency. It could be chance (as in K's case in the training film) or choice (like J and L). Some may have joined to meet new and strange people. A few might have wanted to help the Earth and the aliens who visit it. Some may have needed a change or an escape from the past. Likewise, the circumstances of their recruitment may have a profound effect on how they deal with the agency, not to mention other humans and aliens.

Then there are goals. What does the cast member want to accomplish in her lifetime? Determine the amount of energy the cast member puts into pursuing those goals. Someone who is interested in world domination as a casual hobby won't spend as much time in devious planning as someone more dedicated to that sort of activity.

You must then consider the methods a cast member might employ to attain these aims. What will the cast member do in order to accomplish his goals? What won't he do? Does he like attention? Perhaps with every activity the character performs, he must always make sure someone notices him. Or is the cast member more covert? She might plan carefully to insure that her activities are hidden.
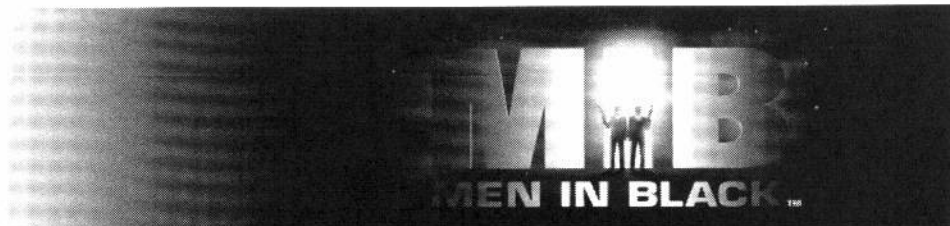
(This doesn't mean that no one can discover what she's doing, but it makes it more difficult.)

The cast member's value system offers other clues to motivation. What are some behaviors that the character prizes, some that appall him, and some that he's neutral about? What would the character do if he witnessed someone behaving in what he would view as distasteful?

Alien cast members have their special considerations. For starters, you should think about why they came to Earth. Are they running away from something or someone? Are they on a quest? Are they just visiting? If the official answer is different from the true answer, decide why.

Furthermore, the evolutionary background and physical characteristics affect an alien's motivation. Considering a few of the ideas presented in "Study Tips: Extraterrestrial Aliens" later in this lesson; they can provide you with believable reasons for the way in which an alien cast member acts. For instance, aliens from hive communities think little of the concept of personal property. This may lead them to take from others if they forget that Earth has different customs.

Everyone has reasons for acting the way they do. Choose motivations that suit the way you would like the cast member to act. Alternately, select a major motivation and build a cast member around it.

Personality

The personality description provides a base from which to extrapolate a cast member's reactions to various events around him, whether under pressure or in normal circumstances. Is there anything to which the character reacts unusually? Maybe a certain conversation topic causes a calm person to lash out in anger. Or a normally violent person might have a soft spot for kittens.

Determine the cast member's strongest and weakest personality traits. Consider such elements as introversion or extroversion, pessimism or optimism, liberalism or conservativeness, humility or haughtiness, patience or impatience, to name but a few. Knowing the degree to which various personality traits affect the cast member will also help you judge how that cast member will react in various situations.

You could also decide if this cast member has a sense of humor. If she isn't completely logical, what makes her laugh? Is she into practical jokes, but only if they aren't played on her? Can she take some personal jabs (and give them just as well) but thinks that a pie in the face is infantile?

You can delve even deeper into this character by determining how he sees himself. He may, for example, believe himself to be quite knowledgeable on subjects that many people would like to hear about. Then decide how this differs from the way others see him. For instance, a person who thinks he's helping by freely giving advice may be seen by some people as pushy.

Title

If your cast member is (or thinks she is) a person of great importance, you may wish to include a title in her log. If the cast member is a contact in or from a foreign country, then be sure to select something appropriate for that country. If the cast member is an alien and you would like some suggestions for nifty titles, check out the Alien Titles table later in this lesson.

Species

This is actually a significant aspect to determine. If you want your cast member to be something other than human or one of the species listed in the *Men in Black Roleplaying Game* (Folder 8), and you need help inventing your own name, we offer some tips in "Naming," under "Creating Alien Dossiers" in this lesson.

Gender

Decide if your cast member is male, female, or something else entirely. The gender of the cast member often affects how others perceive that person, as well as the cast member's self-perception.

Physical Appearance

List age, height, weight, and build here. You should also include the color of the character's eyes, skin, and hair, as well as style of clothing. Does she have any favorite outfits or accessories, or does she more typically wear a uniform (such as a lab coat)? How does he style his hair (or his species' equivalent)? Does she have any distinguishing features, perhaps a scar, sculpted fingernails, or large pendant she wears around her neck?

Is this appearance real or a disguise? If it's a disguise, what is the cast member's true appearance? (For some questions to spark ideas on this, see "Creating an Alien Dossier" in this lesson.)

Resources

Resources are determined by the cast member's occupation (which might be simply "inheritor") and pastimes. A school teacher may work as a museum guide or a consultant during the summer. A computer engineer may write articles on the weekend.

Resources may also include contacts. A professor with a railroading hobby may know people in that industry. Depending on his relationship with these people, he may be able to obtain needed information sooner than a person without those contacts.

Other contacts include wealthy relatives, mentors, business owners, security guards, bartenders, and so on. Anyone who could lend money or provide services or information is a potential resource.

An additional detail to consider, especially for leading cast members whom you plan to incorporate into several scenarios, is the ease and speed with which she can obtain or contact any of her resources. Is the money in an account with check-cashing privileges? Or would she have to sell stocks? How easy is it for her to get a loan? How long would it take for her to get infor-

The Price of Services

Average Monthly Income	Examples
$600	Part-time, minimum wage employment
$1,400	Restaurant or hotel staff
$1,800	Factory or office worker
$2,500	Professor; scientist/engineer; supervisor
$3,800	Consultant; computer animator
$5,600	Upper management; doctor
$9,500	President of a medium-sized company

Note: These are average, before-tax ranges for the mid-1990s. (For more current data, consult an almanac.) Individuals may earn more or less depending on skill level, location, and employer. Higher levels may be determined by the Director as necessary. Use your discretion when deciding how much cast members and players' characters actually make. Players who want to have incomes of $3,800 and higher must also have an equally significant disadvantage.

mation from her network of informants? Knowing some of these answers could also provide you with weaknesses for your leading cast member. Perhaps you give the characters the opportunity to learn that they have a few days before their adversary can get in touch with an important contact. If they can stop either the adversary or capture the contact, they will have a better chance of succeeding.

Background

The background description deals with aspects of the cast member's past and present life situation. Under this description's umbrella come the cast member's current occupation and social standing. What does the character do and how does she live? How is she involved in her community? Does she have any strong political or religious affiliations? For example, a gang leader may deal drugs but use much of that money to support the church in which she sings on Sundays. Establishing a character's background may also help you discover some weaknesses, as well as strengths.

Background information also includes events that might have caused the character to have the value system or goals she does today. Determine what his parents were like and develop a few memorable childhood incidents. Describe when and where the cast member was born. List some of the places he has visited. Establish how she acquired her skills—through schooling, on-the-job training, or independent study.

You may wish to further develop the cast member by determining some of his preferences: color, music, the arts, television programs, reading material, and so on. This may also give you insight into ways to make the cast member more believable. For instance, you've decided that you want an alien who's planning to take over the world by releasing poisonous plant spores into the atmosphere. Instead of making all of that obvious, you could create an alien with a passion for plants who has a greenhouse. He sells many terrestrial plants and has become an admired horticulturist, but his greenhouse and business are disguises for his work with extraterrestrial plants. The only thing visitors to his greenhouse describe as odd is the music he claims helps his plants grow. This music could be favorite folk tunes from his home planet.

Describe the cast member's best friends. How much can she really rely on those people? As well, decide if the cast member has a pet. How well does he treat the animal (or animals)? Remember in the training film that the Baltian cherished his cat so much, he put a prized possession (a galaxy) on the cat's collar.

Also consider people in the cast member's life (past or present) who may be associated with the players' characters. These mutual acquaintances could be friends, relatives, fellow employees, or contacts. The cast member herself might even be a relative of one of the player characters. The cast member and the player's character likewise may or may not know they have a mutual acquaintance. If the cast member and a player's character should know each other, be certain to pass a note to the player informing him of the reason his character would recognize him or her. If you think the player's character should know but might not recognize the person, have the player make an Easy to Moderate *Perception* roll. Adjust the difficulty number depending on the circumstances under which the character is attempting to remember the person. For example, a character in the midst of a fire fight might be distracted by what's going on.

Notable Characteristics

Notable characteristics are what really help make the cast member more believable to the players, as well as more memorable. Of course, after you've decided on a few characteristics, don't forget to use them in the game.

Among other aspects, notable characteristics include speaking style, mannerisms, and habits. Does she have a favorite phrase? Must he be constantly touching a lucky charm? Does she always go to a certain park bench at a set time? Does the cast member have any
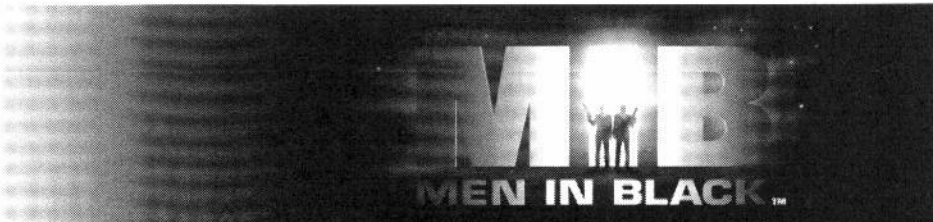
physical, mental, or emotional limitations? For example, the cast member could need a special car because of poorly developed leg muscles. Other possibilities including having dyslexia or a phobia.

Often, a quote from the character can hold a great deal of information about him. This is a brief statement by the cast member that sums up his or her attitude, life philosophy, or motivation. It can also serve as a record of the cast member's way of speaking.

Movies and television shows can serve as sources of inspiration. Listen to how the actors sound, and watch their actions. Mimic those aspects you like, using what you think would be particularly appropriate for the cast member. You don't have to base a cast member entirely on one person; feel free to mix and match, making your cast member unique. For aliens, you might include samples of speech in your notes if they have difficulty with Earth languages and prefer to use their own. An alien might have trouble ordering or pronouncing words correctly, have a distinctive accent, or not be able to use Earth languages at all.

Roleplay notable characteristics sparingly. Try not to have too many per cast member. Although you want to make the cast members believable, you don't want to overwhelm your players with too many extraneous details. They look to you, as the Director, for all their information. If you use an excessive amount of notable characteristics, your players may start interpreting everything you do as somehow important to the adventure.

Statistics

After you've determined as much of the preceding information as you would like, begin to put it into game terms. Unlike beginning characters, cast members are not bound to spend a certain number of points on their stats. Instead, you can make them as weak or as strong as you deem necessary. Leading cast members will generally have more points than extras or players' characters. The assumption is that they've had more opportunities and time to become better skilled.

Cast member allies who appear in a significant portion of the scenario, however, should not be more powerful than the characters. Having allies that are too powerful takes away the players' feelings of importance. Reserve superiority complexes for adversaries. Allies should be presented to the characters as people who can supplement their skills rather than replace them. The players need a way to participate in the scenario, too!

Players' characters will, of course, need more skilled cast members as teachers, mentors, and supervisors. But these types of cast members should only be used if sought out by the characters or needed to start a new adventure. (Zed hands out assignments—he doesn't go on them. He has way more important work to do.)

For help in deciding what numbers to put where, consider these guidelines. These values are for humans;

alien attributes and skills should be adjusted in either direction depending on how you perceive them in comparison to similar human traits.

Description	Die Code
Below average	1D
Novice	2D
Average	3D
Skilled	4D
Master	5D
City-wide renown	6D
Nation-wide renown	7D
World-wide renown	8D
Renowned in several solar systems	9D
Sector-wide renown	10D
Region-wide renown	11D
Galaxy-wide renown	12D

For the final touches, generate body points and give the cast members some Character and Fate Points. Extras will have none, while leading cast members and major supporting cast members may have several, depending on how important they are to the scenario. These points will come in handy if, say, a leading adversary gets in a tight situation and you need to extract her from it.

Reoccurring Cast Members

As the name implies, reoccurring cast members appear in more than one adventure. They can be adversaries, allies, or something in between. They may be either supporting or leading cast members, depending on the part they play in the scenario. (Reoccurring cast members involve too much detail to be extras. However, there's no reason you can't reuse the stats. A generic pedestrian varies little in terms of numbers from a generic restaurant patron.)

The adversary who got away in the last scenario may show up in a future scenario. When characters gain contacts, they do so assuming they will be able to get in touch with those contacts at another time. For non-MiB groups who operate out of a particular town, the characters may get to know various people around the area. The characters may not be able to rely on those people as they would on regular contacts, but they may be able to get an occasional bit of information from them. Likewise, if an antagonist was searching for the group, he may question those people who regularly see the characters, which would not be such a good thing.

A cast member who does a favor for the characters in one scenario may look for a favor in return at some later point. This can be an excellent way to get the characters into a new scenario.

A leading cast member in one scenario may appear as a supporting cast member in the next. This happens when the previous leading cast member only makes a guest appearance. Perhaps as the characters go

Cast Member Log

Name: _____

Title: _____

Species: _____

Gender: _____

REFLEXES
Acrobatics _____
Climbing _____
Dodge _____
Jumping _____
Hand-to-Hand Combat _____
Piloting: _____
Riding: _____

COORDINATION
Lockpicking _____
Marksmanship _____
Missile Weapons _____
Sleight of Hand _____
Thrown Weapons _____

STRENGTH
Lifting _____

ENDURANCE
Ignore Pain _____
Resist Poison _____
Running _____
Swimming _____

KNOWLEDGE
Alien Technology _____
Computer Ops _____
Demolitions _____
First Aid _____
Forgery _____
Linguistics _____
Medicine _____
Navigation _____
Scholar: _____

PERCEPTION
Artist: _____
Business _____

Conceal _____
Hide _____
Language: _____
Security _____
Shadowing _____
Surveillance _____
Tracking _____

CONFIDENCE
Con _____
Interrogation _____
Intimidation _____
Streetwise _____
Survival: _____
Willpower _____

CHARISMA
Charm _____
Disguise _____
Persuasion _____

Body Points: _____

Character Points: _____

Fate Points: _____

Special Abilities: _____

Flaws: _____

Motivation: _____

Personality: _____

Physical appearance: _____

Resources: _____

Background: _____

Notable characteristics: _____

MEN IN BLACK

through the current scenario, they come across signs left by the alien that got away in the last scenario. If they decide to pursue that trail, they lose valuable time for the true plot line. (If you do decide to use this tactic, be ready with either a brief yet unsuccessful encounter with the alien or reasonably clear indications that the new route is a dead end. In either case, be sure to have a way for the characters to get back to the true scenario.)
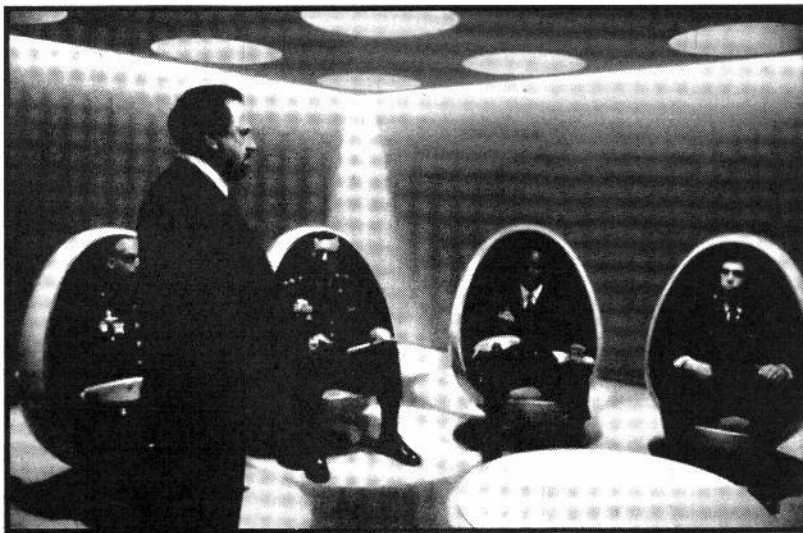
Reoccurring cast members need not show up in every scenario. The cast member could be in hiding, either on the run from the player or waiting for a chance to ambush them. Similarly, the characters might not have the opportunity in the current scenario to visit certain contacts. A store clerk in their home town may be on vacation or at a MiniMart convention.

A reoccurring cast member may be an adversary who has had a change of heart. Perhaps the antagonist's underling in an earlier scenario realizes what an evil person he was working for. When he comes across the characters again, this time he offers them aid. The challenge for the characters is to determine whether he's lying. As another example, the characters—intentionally or unintentionally—do something to one of their contacts that causes her to turn against them: her brother was caught in the cross-fire, and now she blames them for the accident.

Reoccurring adversaries can come in two varieties: annoying and antagonistic. Annoying cast members are those who occasionally appear as leading cast members in scenarios, but, more than likely, they are only supporting characters looking for ways to cause trouble for the players. (That is, as long as it doesn't require too much effort.) For example, the annoying cast member may not like the looks of the characters. Therefore, any time the characters come in contact with him, he makes things more difficult. He could be a resistant sheriff's deputy or an alien living just on the edge of the law.

An antagonistic cast member—always a leading cast member—tries hard to be malevolent. She may appear in every other scenario, but it may not be obvious to the characters that she's the same person. An alien interested in world domination will be involved in a number of related activities. If the alien is as smart as she thinks she is, she'll try to keep people from realizing that those activities are connected—until it's too late.

Particularly with reoccurring cast members, keep track of their development. Just as the players' characters receive Character and Fate Points in scenarios, give some to the cast members you plan on keeping around. Reoccurring cast members are no more static than players' characters. As the characters improve, so should reoccurring cast members. Growth should

happen in ways appropriate for the cast members, of course. Minor reoccurring cast members develop more slowly than major ones. However, just because a major reoccurring cast member doesn't show up in a few scenarios, it doesn't mean that he's been idle. He may have been honing a weak area in order to be able to defeat the characters more easily. Remember that you can account for such possibilities by noting in the cast member's log what that person has been doing.

And don't forget about recycling cast members. It may seem obvious to reuse stats for extras, but you should also consider reusing previously created supporting and leading cast members. After all, you've done the work already. By changing the name, adjusting one or more aspects (such as personality, major motivation, appearance, or skills), and revising the notable characteristics, you have a new cast member without having to go through every step again.

In creating the description of your alien cast member, consider diet, clothing, and breathing restrictions and requirements. How would a methane-breather explain away his respiratory apparatus? Where would he find replacement tanks? Also decide if the alien's species has any social customs or taboos that may seem

Study Tip: Extraterrestrial Aliens

Remember that extraterrestrial aliens are just that: not from Earth (as opposed to those aliens born and raised on our blessed planet—you know, Elvis, Warhol, Morrison, and the list goes on and on). They have their own customs, philosophies, and traditions. What humans may take for granted, an alien might find odd or even offensive. Likewise, something humans consider important may be of little consequence to an alien.

like bizarre behavior to humans (such as always washing her hands after touching someone else).

Consider whether your alien cast member is an outcast or an accepted member of her society. People often infer on the basis of one encounter the typical characteristics of a whole species. Some interesting conflicts for the characters could arise if you introduced another member of the same species, one who behaved remarkably differently and had divergent motivations. Now who should the characters believe?

Customs, philosophies, traditions, language, and other aspects of culture depend on many variables, including physical characteristics, evolutionary background, and planetary system. The color of the sun and sky, the terrain of the planet, the number of moons, and other such aspects influence thinking processes, perceptions, and assumptions. Although you don't have to consider all the minutiae, one or two items may help bring sounder reasoning to an alien's major motivations.

Do you really need to take into account all these ideas in order to make an alien? Of course not, especially not in *Men in Black*. But questions serve to get you started when creating new species or alien characters.

You might also want to give alien cast members titles beyond "refugee" or "visitor." Although not all aliens on Earth are of noble lineage or on government business, a significant number are. Providing your alien cast members with a distinguished-sounding title will lend them an importance they didn't have before. The title can also help define their motivations and goals.

This table represents a mere sampling of the many titles in existence. It (and its suggested use) are meant as a starting point. Feel free to adjust the table or your results to suit your purposes.

Suggested use of the Alien Titles table: Select one word each from columns 1 and 3, from columns 2 and 3, or from all three columns. If there is a choice between two similar forms of a word (such as "Sur-" and "Sub-" or "King" and "Queen"), choose only one of those. Then tack on "of" followed by the alien's home planet or system to finish off the effect. For example, I could select "messenger of" from column 1, "Sublime" from column 2, and "Tyrant" from column 3. If my alien is from Tau Ceti, she would be the "messenger of the Sublime Tyrant of Tau Ceti."

Creating Alien Templates

Although the *Men in Black Roleplaying Game* provides a detailed explanation of creating individual aliens, this section delves into the process of creating more generic alien templates.

Alien templates can be used by the Director for cast members or by the players for characters. If you choose to allow players to create characters using the templates, the more detail you include with the dossier, the easier it will be for you to control the generalities of the alien created.

Alien Titles

Column 1	Column 2	Column 3
agent of	Acclaimed	Admiral
ambassador of	Decorated	Ambassador
clerk of	Elevated	Chancellor
consul of	Eminent	Commander
delegate of	Esteemed	Consulate
deposed	Exalted	Dictator
dethroned	First	Diplomat
emissary of	Glorified	Emperor or Empress
envoy of	High	General
functionary of	Honorable	Governor
legate of	Lauded	King or Queen
messenger of	Lofty	Magistrate
minister of	Low	Minister
ousted	Meritorious	Prefect
plenipotentiary of	Prime	Premier
representative of	Revered	President
retired	Sublime	Prince or Princess
secretary to	Sur- or Sub-	Regent
servant of	Venerable	Senator
steward to	Vice	Tyrant

A blank Alien Dossier has been included at the end of this section to help you record your decisions.

Statistics

Designate specific attribute ranges for the alien species. You might decide to have no limits on statistics for an individual member of this species, or you might assign a minimum in any attribute of 1D and a maximum of 5D. Or perhaps you have in mind a species that is extremely strong but not very intelligent. You would then set the minimum and maximum ranges for *Strength* and *Endurance* at 3D and none, respectively, but restrict the *Knowledge* and *Perception* ranges to 1D–3D.

Then pick a special ability or two. Obviously, the tougher you want the alien species to be, the more abilities they should have. The Special Ability chart here lists the ones in the *Men in Black Roleplaying Game*, plus a few new entries. (See Folder 8 in the *Men in Black Roleplaying Game* for descriptions of the special abilities.)

Next pick a flaw, or two, preferably ones that offset the special abilities. Even tough alien species have flaws, although they tend to compensate or hide them better than weaker species. The Flaw chart here lists all the ones in the *Men in Black Roleplaying Game*, plus a few new entries. (See Folder 8 in the *Men in Black Roleplaying Game* for descriptions of the flaws.)

Special Abilities

Ability	Starting Skill Dice Modifier
Atmospheric Tolerance	–1D
Attribute Increase	–2D
Blur	–1D
Darkness	–2D
Desolidification	–3D
Elasticity	–1D
Elemental Control*	–3D
Energy Control*	–3D
Enhanced Senses	–1D
Environmental Tolerance	–1D
Fast Reactions	–1D
Fear	–2D
Glider Wings	–2D
Hypnotism	–2D
Immortality	–3D
Infravision/Ultravision	–3D
Invisibility	–3D
Limited Regeneration	–3D
Long Life Span	–2D
Multiple Abilities	–2D
Natural Armor	–1D
Natural Weaponry	–2D
Omnivorousness	–1D
Resist Energy Attack	–2D
Resist Heat/Cold Attack	–2D
Resist Interaction Attack	–2D
Resist Physical Attack	–2D
Shapeshifting	–3D
Silence	–1D
Sixth Sense*	–1D
Speed	–1D
Telekinesis*	–2D
Telepathy/Empathy*	–2D
Teleportation	–3D
Transmutation	–3D

* designates a new special ability described later in this section

New Special Abilities

Elemental Control: The alien can manipulate one type of element, such as earth, air, fire, or water. The exact nature of the control should be determined prior to using the cast member in a scenario, or discussed between the player and the Director before using the new character. Examples of effects include turning a light breeze into a gust, causing small tremors, turning water to steam or ice, or affecting preexisting fires.

Flaws

Flaw	Starting Skill Dice Modifier
Ability Limitation*	+1D
Ability Loss	+2D
Alien Appearance*	+1D
Alien Outlook	+2D
Atmospheric Incompatibility	+3D
Cultural Allergy	+1D
Environmental Incompatibility	+2D
Major Vulnerability	+3D
Metabolic Difference	+2D
Minor Stigma	+1D
Nutritional Requirements	+2D
Side Effect*	+2D
Stench	+1D
Substance Allergy	+1D
Symbiosis	+2D
Unpredictability*	+3D
Vulnerablility	+2D

* designates new flaws described later in this section

Energy Control: As with *elemental control,* an alien with this ability can manipulate one form of energy. This energy type should be specified before using the character. Possible energies include magnetism, x-rays, infrared radiation, visible light, and so on.

Sixth Sense: This ability allows the alien to sense the presence of other minds. Someone with *sixth sense* cannot be surprised (unless a flaw restricts this ability in some way).

Telekinesis: The alien can move objects with her mind. She is limited to what she could normally move with her *Strength,* but the difficulty number is not affected by having to move the object over rough or uneven surfaces or around other objects or by an inability to get a good grip (on the object). The alien must concentrate on moving the object in order to keep it levitated.

Telepathy/Empathy: The alien can either read other people's thoughts *or* emotions. The more people the alien attempts to read at once, the less specific the information received. Characters with *willpower* get the chance to resist the invasion of their minds, whether or not they know that someone is trying to get in. The difficulty number for the character resisting the invasion is 11; this can be affected by how much stress the resisting character is under. Increase this difficulty to 18 for those characters who do not possess the *willpower* skill.

New Flaws

Ability Limitation: The alien is restricted in her use of a particular ability. She can only use it under certain conditions or does not have full use of the ability. For example, she may be able to communicate telepathically only through images or only to animals. Or the ability is only activated if he eats a certain food or smells a particular perfume.

Alternately, the ability may have a limited duration. For example, an alien with *natural armor* may be able to use her armor for twelve hours before she must enter a twelve-hour rest period (she sheds her damaged shell and then must secrete a new one). An alien may have multiple limitations.

Alien Appearance: Due to his inhuman looks, the alien is unable to go out in public without a disguise. The disguise, however, hinders him in some way by increasing the difficulty number when using certain skills (such as *hide* or *lockpicking*) or abilities (such as *natural weaponry* or some forms of *multiple abilities*).

Side Effect: Whenever the alien uses a specified special ability, an additional negative effect occurs. Whatever effect you choose, it should make the use of the special ability quite obvious. Some possibilities include the alien glowing brightly or making a loud sound. Feedback from the special ability could cause light bulbs to explode or radios to lose the station they were receiving. At the Director's discretion, an alien could have a severe side effect (+3D, instead of +2D), which causes temporary harm to the alien or someone nearby. For example, an alien with *telepathy* who attempts to read the mind of another person may cause that person to faint.

Unpredictability: The alien's special abilities have a chaotic element to them. Either the alien never knows how long she will be able to use her special abilities or she's not sure when she can use them (though when they appear, she knows it).

Physical Appearance

Keeping in mind your species' attributes, special abilities, and flaws, what does an average individual of this species look like? The more detailed you can be in your account, the better you can visualize the alien species. This will likewise help you to describe a member of the species more vividly to your players.

Some questions to consider include:

Study Tip: Special Abilities and Flaws

If, after you add up the dice values, you come up with a negative number, subtract this number from the species' starting skill dice. If the number is positive, increase starting skill dice by that amount.

Height range: You can either give a specific range in feet or be more vague (tall, short, medium, microscopic).

Weight and build range: Weight indicates the average poundage of an average member of the species. Build provides a more accessible notion of the individual's physique rather than merely giving a weight range. A species could be stocky, bulky, lumpy, skinny, well proportioned, or any of a number of descriptive words. Very large aliens will have a more difficult time avoiding undue attention by humans. Very small aliens would need special accommodations to help them to exist in human society and to prevent themselves from going unnoticed (and possibly crushed underfoot).

Use ranges for either weight, build, or both to describe your species, depending on how specific you want to be concerning individual members' appearances.

Heads: How many? Where is the brain (or brains) located?

Sensory organs: Sensory organs are used to gather information about a being's environment. What kind does the alien have? Where are they located? How well is each sense developed? For example, humans can see in color and in three dimensions, but they can't hear as well as a rabbit.

Eating: Consider the alien's dietary requirements and habits. What an alien species eats will also affect how their mouths are structured, including size, shape, and teeth (if any).

Although there are typically (at least, for humans) five senses, your alien species may have additional, specialized organs to detect other aspects of their environment, such as barometric pressure changes or seismic activity.

Facial features: On humans, this includes eyes, ears, nose, and mouth. Alien species may have these located elsewhere. Decide what features are on your alien's face, and then specify number, location, size, shape, color, and other aspects of each.

Respiration: Aliens breathing substances other than Earth's oxygen mix require special equipment. Depending on where a landed alien chooses to live or how visible the apparatus is, this equipment may or may not go unnoticed. Additionally, consider how the alien breathes. Is it through a mouth, gills, or an organ designed solely for the purpose of respiration?

Movement: How does the alien get around? If the alien moves in a way unlike humans, decide how he could disguise his means of locomotion. Frank the Pug in the training film, for example, passed himself off as a dog.

Manipulators: Determine how the species manipulates objects. If the species has hands, how many fingers? Do they have claws? Tentacles?

Limbs: Consider type, number, length, and the like.

Tail: If the members of the species have tails, how long are they? Are they tipped with any natural weaponry? Can they be used like additional arms?

Skin: Is the skin scaly, smooth, slimy, hairy, or something else? What color is it?

Skeletal structure: Is it inside, outside, or both?
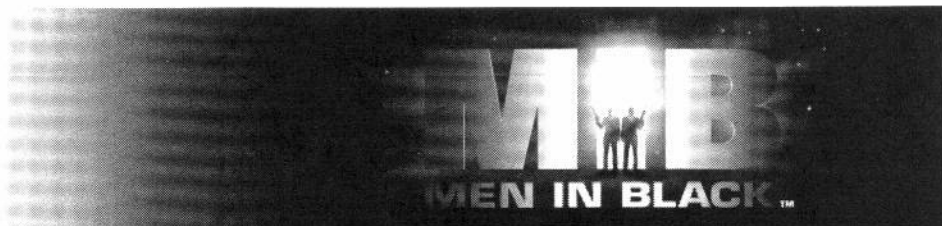
Body temperature: Can the alien's body regulate its own temperature, as do humans and birds? Or is the body more influenced by temperature changes in the environment, as are reptiles and fish? Determining this will affect what kind of clothes and preferred climactic conditions.

Decorative features: These include hair, skin flaps, horns, frills, feathers, and other features that may not necessarily serve any function for the body. Describe color, shape, texture, and location.

Effects of aging: Do any of these features change as the alien gets older? For example, members of a species might loose their tails as soon as they reach puberty.

Society

Establishing significant features of the alien species' society can assist you in determining motivations and goals. It also helps in giving more depth to characters created using the template by placing them in a larger context.

Consider your species' ideas of family and community. How do they raise children? What sort of groups are formed? Are they based on age, sex, life stage, relation, or something else? What size are the groups? What does one group think of another?

Decide how the members typically resolve conflicts. Do they have any particular rituals (such as firing a shot each before trying to come to terms, as the Andromeda Convention protocol states)? Are there different methods of conflict resolution for different groups? As just one example, it has been found that in general, human women attempt to come to a compromise, whereas human men prefer a clear winner. If there are rituals or varying methods, what are the penalties for not following the rules?

Determine the aliens' type of government. It could be a military dictatorship, a democracy, an oligarchy, or one of the many other forms. If the species has leaders, how are they picked? The style of government would depend on the types of groups formed and on the methods of conflict resolution.

Create some "unwritten rules," customs that are taken for granted. These include traditional means of performing actions, ritual greetings, table etiquette, and other ways in which life has been formalized. As well, determine the consequences of deviating from those unwritten rules.

What do typical members of the species do for fun? What are their goals for recreation? To determine a single winner? To have no losers? What kinds of games are played: intellectual, physical, or emotional? Are they based on teamwork or individual skill?

What is the species' view of science, arts, and religion? Do they consider any of these more or less important than the others? Describe some significant aspects of each. How advanced is their technology? Even if the species has starships, they may prefer lower-tech weapons.

Devise samples of the language. This language may depend on the group that the alien lives in, or the species may have developed a common tongue. Decide if it's based on gestures, sounds, colors, scents, telepathy, or some combination. If sound-based, does it incorporate frequencies that humans can't perceive? You may wish to write down a few key terms (such as insults or ritual greetings). Foreign-language and etymology dictionaries can provide you with ideas on which to base new languages.

Name

In naming your new species, first pick the name of its home planet or system. For example, the home planet of humans is Earth, which is also know as Terra. Planetary and system names can be created in a number of ways: Scramble the letters in a friend's name or a favorite word. Pick a home star, planet, or moon that has already been named. Select an interesting word from a foreign-language dictionary. Randomly choose letters (for instance, by drawing letters out of a container, writing the letter down, then returning the letter to the container, and repeating the process until you have a satisfactory number of letters). A word of two to four syllables is optimum because it's easier to remember, but a longer name may be more appropriate for the species you have in mind.

A word of caution: make sure that whatever name you choose, you can pronounce it. If necessary, write the correct pronunciation in parentheses after the name. This provides consistency from one session to the next, so that your players aren't confused about which species you're describing.

After you've selected an appropriate homeworld name, decide what the species is called. Typically this is done by taking the planet name and adding a personifying suffix to it. For example, an alien from Venus is called a "Venusian." Check the Alien Naming Table for some suggested suffixes. You may need to change or drop a letter at the end of the name in order to make the individual member name sound correct. For instance, the "s" in Mars was changed to a "t" in order to make the species name flow smoothly (that is, Martian).

Sometimes, though, what a species calls itself is significantly different than what it calls its home planet. An obvious example is that those who live on Earth call themselves humans. If you decide to go this route, you can use the same suggestions to design a species' name. Then use the Alien Naming Table to determine a suitable name for the species.

Alien Naming Table

-an	-id
-ar	-ine
-er	-ite
-ese	-ling
-et	-oid
-ian	-on

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Name: _____

Height minimum/maximum: _____

Weight/Build minimum/maximum: _____

Attributes	Minimum/maximum die code
Reflexes	_____ / _____
Coordination	_____ / _____
Strength	_____ / _____
Endurance	_____ / _____
Knowledge	_____ / _____
Perception	_____ / _____
Confidence	_____ / _____
Charisma	_____ / _____

Starting dice pools, attribute/skill: _____

Special abilities: _____

Flaws: _____
_____

Physical description: _____
_____
_____

Social description: _____
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Notes: _____
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Name: Stroodwa (the name is both singular and plural)

Height minimum/maximum: 3 to 5 feet for adults

Weight/Build minimum/maximum: Bloblike in their natural form, they otherwise take on the build of whomever they are mimicking. Their weight ranges from 70 to 150 pounds

Attributes	Minimum/maximum die code
Reflexes	1D/3D
Coordination	1D/3D
Strength	1D/3D
Endurance	1D/5D
Knowledge	2D/none
Perception	3D/none
Confidence	2D/12D
Charisma	4D/none
	4D/none

Starting dice pools, attribute/skill: 24D/7D

Special abilities: Shapeshifting, telepathy

Flaws: Ability limitation: time limit, ability limitation: telepathic communication, alien appearance, allergy: chocolate, minor stigma: shape limitation

Physical description: In their natural form, Stroodwa look like unpitted, flat-bottomed green olives with two big, round eyes set in the front. Eye color varies. Their skin is rough to the touch. They move by sliding.

Social description: Stroodwa seem to have no formal governing system. They follow whomever has a "good idea" until they are bored with that; then they seek someone else or suggest a new idea. They usually travel in at least pairs, sometimes larger groups, because they always need to have someone to show off to. Stroodwa appear to roam the galaxy in search of fast vehicles, violent computer games (but not real violence), good jokes, and opportunities to otherwise have fun. They hate Bugs, considering them to be dull and crude.

Notes: Stroodwa can take the shape of any human, alien, or animal that is approximately the same size as the individual Stroodwa (never more than a foot longer or shorter). They can hold the shape for a number of days equal to their *Endurance*. Adult individuals have the option of taking the new *Endurance* skill *shape holding*, which can be used to lengthen the amount of time a certain form can be maintained. Those with *shape holding* do not increase the length of time they can hold their shapes until they reach the next whole die. That is, 2D to 2D+2 is two days, 3D to 3D+2 is three days, and so on.

In order to walk freely in human society, Stroodwa must take a human or animal form, which means they are unable to use their telepathy with each other. They can only communicate as normal members of the species they are mimicking. Stroodwa believe it to be a sign of limited creativity to take the same shape twice in a row.

Stroodwa can communicate telepathically with each other. As a result, they are often viewed suspiciously by others, even when they are in physical contact with each other. They communicate telepathically with each other. As a result, they are often viewed suspiciously by others, even by their own kind, because conversations can't be overheard. These "private conversations" give the impression that the Stroodwa are sharing an inside joke, which in fact is just what they want other people to think.

Stroodwa eat by absorbing their food. Those in human and certain alien forms may forget to chew. Their tastes run toward salty and bland foods, and they especially can't stand chocolate, either the smell or taste. Stroodwa characters who come within five feet of any form of chocolate suffer a –1D penalty to all actions until the offending substance is removed.

This species loves to play practical jokes. A favorite involves assuming the shape of a person's friend and tricking that person into handing over something. Most Stroodwa will return the item at a later time, since they derive most of their enjoyment from witnessing the reaction of the tricked individual.

An equally favored pastime is to tell outrageous stories and see how far they can go before their audience stops believing them. Thus, characters of this species must always take at least one pip in *disguise* and *con*. Stroodwa also have a weakness for fast vehicles. If they are allowed to drive, they do so recklessly (increasing the difficulty of all stunts by 10)—more to show off, of course, than to hurt anyone.

FOLDER 3
TECH

In this lesson, you will learn how to create superscientific weapons and gadgets, which can be used as rewards or obstacles for your player characters or as the foci of new adventures. The Men in Black Roleplaying Game *provides you with the excuse to design numerous amazing wonders. Only you can decide just what the aliens have brought to Earth.*

As an added bonus, we include a method for designing vehicles, from bicycles to interplanetary habitat ships.

Superscientific Weapons and Gadgets

Over the years, the Men in Black agency has acquired a number of extraterrestrial weapons and gadgets. Unless otherwise specified in the description of a particular weapon or gadget, allow more than one of any item to exist on Earth. This means not only will Men in Black agents have access to the devices, aliens and other humans could have them, too.

Devices can be used as foci of adventures: An alien runs rampant with superscientific technology—and if the Men in Black don't stop her, the public will know more than it should. Or, someone has stolen an item and it's up to the Men in Black to get it back. Or…you get the idea.

Because the theory behind creating both weapons and gadgets is similar, the rest of the lesson discusses them simultaneously. Of course, as you design your items, skip over the irrelevant steps. For most gadgets, you won't need to worry about damage, ammunition, or rate of fire, for instance.

The information has been gathered here for your convenience, so that you may quickly refer to it as you create your fantastic new weapons and gadgets (and your ordinary ones, for that matter). For more details on using equipment, please refer to Folders 5 and 6 of the *Men in Black Roleplaying Game.*

Purpose

The first step in creating superscientific weapons and gadgets is deciding which of the two you want to build. A weapon is used for offensive purposes. A gadget has a primary function other than offense, although some gadgets can be used as weapons. (Bopping someone on the head with a toaster will hurt, even if toasters aren't meant for that purpose, which, of course, they are.)

When creating your weapons, think big. This could be in size or in destructive power (such as the Noisy Cricket).

For gadgets, think useful. What can make cast members' or characters' lives easier? Of course, you might also devise gadgets whose sole purpose is recreation.

This method works just as well for ordinary items. Particularly if your players prefer to play characters other than those associated with the Men in Black, you may find yourself in situations where you want to generate statistics for ordinary gadgets (such as a ham radio) or a particular gun model that someone is found of. Obviously such categories as "name" and "ammunition" will already exist—not to mention the fact that you'll have an easier time describing the object to your players.

Weapon and Gadget Templates

Once you've determined the purpose of your new device, you'll need to begin a log of its details. A Weapon Template and a Gadget Template have been included to assist you in recording your new devices. They can be found at the end of this part of the lesson.

You may wish to copy the information onto index cards so that you can readily pull out an appropriate one when you need it. The cards can be kept in a file box or a photo album with pockets.

If the description is too long to fit on a card (which will probably be true for rare and powerful items), then put the information on a separate sheet of loose-leaf paper and store all such pages in a binder. If you decide to keep them in a binder along with other information for your adventures (such as characters and adventure ideas), then you may want to invest in divider tabs so you can grab any piece of information easily.

Name

You can select a name first and create a weapon or gadget based on that name. Or you can go through the rest of the steps and select a name once you have the concept completed.

The name you choose could be based on a combination of the device's function (such as MetaSus for "metabolic suspension"). Or you select a name that

Weapon and Gadget Generator Table

Column 1	Column 2	Column 3	Column 4a		Column 4b
			Weapon	Gadget	
amorphous	anti-, counter-	atom, atomic	blaster	adjuster	-ad, -ade
automatic	co-	bio, bionic	bomb	assessor	-ant, -ent
chaotic	de-	carbon	cannon	calibrator	-cide
dynamic	dys-	cryogen	detonator	controller	-ar, -er, -or
electrostatic	extra-	electronic, electric	displacer	detector	-stat
ionizing	hyper-, super-	energy	disrupter	filter	-oid
linear	gryro-	laser	emitter	generator	-ite
nonlinear	inter-	magnetic	explosive	gauge	-izer, -iser
oscillating	meta-	molecule	gasifier	indicator	-et, -ette
pneumatic	multi-, poly-	nerual	grenade	instrument	-ist
randomizing	non-	oxygen	gun	meter	-ifier
remote	para-	phase, phasic	inducer	modulator	-ater, -ator
reversed	pyscho-	photon	launcher	reflector	
sublimating	re-	plasma	mine	regulator	
synchronous	retro-	ray, beam	projectile	separator	
systematic	semi-	solar	projector	transponder	
variable	sub-	sonic	reducer	tuner	
volatilizing	trans-	thermal	rifle	viewer	

Miscellaneous Column 4

apparatus
artifact
device
mechanism

metaphorically describes the device. The "Noisy Cricket" gets its name from being small (like a cricket), but containing a lot of firepower (and thus noisy). Another option is to call the device by its model number (like the Korlian XT-17).

You could also use the table provided here or the one at the end of Folder 5 in the *Men in Black Roleplaying Game* (or both) to help you come up with names. These tables represent a mere sampling of techno-babble. They (and their suggested use) are meant as a starting point. Feel free to adjust the tables or your results to suit your purposes.

Suggested use of the Weapon and Gadget Generator table: First decide whether you want a new weapon or a new gadget. Next, select one word each from either column 3, columns 1 and 3, columns 2 and 3, or columns 1, 2, and 3. Then choose one word from the appropriate column: 4, 4a, or a suffix from 4b. (The miscellaneous column 4 includes words that can be used with either weapons or gadgets.) If there is a choice between similar forms of a word (such as "anti" and "counter" or "izer" and "iser"), choose only one of those. Finally, combine the words. You may need to change the endings of some of the words in order to make them fit together.

For example, you decide that the leading cast members of your next adventure, Dr. White, a mad scientist, has taken an interest in freezing aliens so that he can examine them at his leisure, maybe even create a little extraterrestrial zoo. You know that the characters will come across his lab notes, in which they will find the chemical Dr. White intends to use. But you need a snappy name for it. You consult the table, taking "systematic" from column 1, "super-" from column 2, "cryogen" from column 3, and "-ent" from column 4b. Combining these suitably together, you get "systematic supercryogent." (In order to make "cryogen" and "-ent" flow together better, eliminate the repeated letters.)

Range

For gadgets, the Range: indicates the maximum distance at which the device has an effect. Beyond that distance, no one will have any idea that the item is operating.

For weapons, the Range: may indicate a factor or a distance. As a factor, the Range: offers a way to measure a weapon's effectiveness at various distances. Values should be given for point-blank, short, medium, and long distances. They indicate the penalty or bonus to the attacking skill roll when using the weapon. Use a dash (—) to indicate distances at which the weapon is ineffective. (For more information on using Range: factors, see Folder 6 of the *Men in Black Roleplaying Game*.)

For small thrown items, the Range: is expressed as a distance (instead of a factor). The value in these instances takes into account that the Range: of these

items depends on the thrower's *Strength*. Items that are easier to throw gain a larger bonus in determining distance than bulkier objects.

Weapons mounted on space vehicles will have an infinite Range: in space (there's nothing in a vacuum to slow a shot down). However, their effectiveness in striking their targets grows more difficult as distance increases (try hitting a crazy Skook flying an interstellar rocketship in the Xi Bootian system from an Arquillian warship in orbit around Earth and you'll see what we mean.

There are two other characteristics for weapons under the Range: category: *blast radius* and *fire arc*.

If you've created an item that explodes, you will need to note here the blast radius (given in feet), which the varying amounts of damage suffered by individuals at different distances from the point of detonation. Anyone closer than or at the same distance as the first value takes full damage. Anyone between the first and second values takes half damage. Anyone between the second and third values takes quarter damage. Anyone farther away than that takes no damage. Note that characters behind walls or some other form of shielding may take less damage or no damage depending on how well the shield itself resists damage (at the discretion of the Director).

If you've created an item that must be mounted (either on a vehicle or a some sort of stand), then you must indicate its fire arc. This represents the direction in which a weapon can be pointed. It can be expressed either descriptively or quantitatively (that is, as degrees of a circle). For example, you could describe the fire arc for a laser cannon mounted on a tripod as "any" or "360 degrees," whichever you prefer.

Fire Control

The fire control code comes into play for weapons mounted on vehicles or for those that are souped up with targeting attachments. It expresses how much the weapon enhances the operator's ability to hit a target (such as with sights or a targeting program). The fire control code is added to the operator's *marksmanship* value when attacking.

Rate of Fire

This is a measure of how many times ammunition may be spent per round. Be certain to indicate whether this rate is fixed or can be controlled by the user. Rate of fire has no effect on how much damage is done, but it does affect how quickly ammunition is used. Note that the rate of fire does not indicate how *much* ammunition is spent per round. You may wish to indicate that amount in the "additional information" section of the template.

Damage

The damage code indicates how much harm a weapon inflicts on its target. You may decide that the

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Rate of Fire Examples

Weapon	ROF
Crossbow	1 every two rounds
Small hand gun	1
Light rifle	1
Assault rifle	2
Shotgun	1 or 2
Machine gun	1

Note: A shotgun can be single or double barreled. If the gun is double barreled, one or two barrels may be fired. As Director, you may wish to adjust the damage done depending on how many barrels are fired.

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damage varies depending on the type of ammunition used or the settings on the weapon. Use the tables herein as guides for determining destructive power. Note that the values are for common ammunition; other types of ammunition can affect the amount of damage done and/or the range.

Ammunition

Indicate here the standard type of ammunition used and the number of rounds the weapon holds. Some types of ammunition include bullets, pellets, cartridges, rockets, primers, fuses, shells, shots, electricity, lasers, explosives, and chemicals (liquid, solid, or gas)—anything that can be fired out of something else.

Enhancement Modifier

This value is associated with gadgets. Unless it's a multipurpose tool, weapons will not typically have this value.

If the device somehow gives an advantage to the user, note that amount here, in addition to the attribute or skill the device modifies. For example, if the device functions as armor, then note the armor bonus here. The armor value is added to the character's *Endurance* when resisting damage.

Enhancement Modifier Example: Armor

Armor	Bonus
Padded leather	+1D
Bulletproof vest	+2D
Light Kevlar	+2D+1
Flak jacket	+2D+2
Standard Kevlar	+3D
Kevlar ceramic	+3D+1

Common Weapons Statistics

Firearm	Damage	Range
Small hand gun	3D	+2/0/-2D/—
Light rifle	3D+2	0/0/-1D/-3D
Shotgun	5D+1	+2D/+1D/0/—
Machine gun	6D+1	35/150/370

Missile Weapon	Damage	Range
Slingshot	STR+1D+1	+1/0/0/—
Short bow	STR+1D+2	0/0/–1/–1D
Composite bow	STR+2D+1	+2/+1D/0/–1D
Crossbow	STR+3D	+2/+1/0/–2
Compound bow	STR+3D+2	+1/0/0/–2

Thrown Weapon	Damage	Range
Small rock	STR+1	+1D/+2/0–2
Dart	STR+1	+2/0/–1/–2D
Big rock	STR+2	0/–2/–1D/–3D
Throwing star	STR+2	+1/0/–1/–2D
Large throwing knife	STR+1D	+1/–1D/–3D/—
Hunting (nonreturn) boomerang	STR+1D+1	0/–1/–2D/–3D

Melee Weapon	Damage
Small rock, pocketknife	STR+1
Big rock, small knife	STR+2
Blackjack, knife	STR+1D
Small club	STR+1D+1
Billy club, baseball bat	STR+1D+2
Small sword	STR+2D+1
Large sword, hand axe	STR+2D+2

Explosive	Damage	Blast Radius (feet)
Grenade	6D	3/8/16
Plastic	3D	1/—/—
Dynamite	3D	2/5/10

Scale

This factor represents the mass of an object relative to the mass of other objects. It allows you to take into consideration that something tiny typically does not do much damage to something gigantic; thus the factor modifies damage. Likewise, this factor can be used to adjust attacks, based on a similar idea: something gigantic attempting to hit something tiny will have a harder time than vice versa. Typically, in character-to-character combat, you won't have to figure these values (since the scale code for both opponents will typically be zero).

For more information on determining the attack and damage modifiers, consult Folder 6 of the *Men in Black Roleplaying Game*.

Body Strength

This is the weapon's or gadget's equivalent of a character's *Endurance*. It is used in the same way as *Endurance* when determining the amount of damage done to the device.

Body Points

This value represents the amount of damage the device can take before it is rendered useless. A device with no body points remaining immediately ceases operation, and must be repaired (if possible) before it can be used again.

Common weapons or gadgets and ones that are too easy or too difficult to destroy don't require a body point value. However, there may be other circumstances that will render the item useless; you will have to use your best Director's judgment when these situations come up.

Optional Scale Rule

To cut down on the number of dice that come into play for objects of vastly different masses, you may wish to instead convert the scale code into a scale value. Simply multiply the die code by three, and add that value as a bonus to the attack skill or damage resistance roll.

For example, rather than adding 4D to a tank's body strength of 3D to resist damage, add 12 (4 x 3 = 12) to the result of the 3D body strength roll when generating the damage resistance. You can think of it as a die code of 3D+12.

Using this option, you don't have to determine the difference in scales, i.e., don't subtract one scale code from the other and then multiply by three. Just translate the scale codes into values for both opponents and start rolling.

Skill

Decide if this item requires any special skills to use it properly. Be sure to note whether the skill is absolutely needed to use the weapon or gadget. That is, can the device only be operated by trained individuals?

Requirements and Restrictions

Requirements and restrictions for use include minimum attribute or skill die codes, the number and size of hands, temperature conditions, weather conditions, and so on. For example, a hand-held gun can be used by one person with one hand without any difficulty number modifier. A small cannon, however, requires two people to be operated without penalty.

The device might also have a limitation on the number of times a person can use it: it's not that the device runs out of ammunition; rather, each person is limited in the number of times they may operate the device.

You might also include the difficulty number or level for operating the item. For weapons, this would be in addition to the roll needed to aim the device correctly.

Weapons mounted on vehicles will usually require an operator, someone who is not also piloting. This area of the template is a good place to indicate the number of crew required to handle the weapon.

Side Effects

Side effects are additional negative effects that oc-cur whenever a character uses a weapon or gadget. They can be temporary or permanent, the result of glitches or built in, occur at every use or only occasionally. Side effects are only recommended if you want to discourage frequent use of a particularly powerful tool.

Make certain that the side effect you pick is appropriate for the item you create. For example, unless the user has a particularly large weapon braced or a minimum *Strength* to handle it, he will suffer damage from the recoil. As another possibility: a gadget that needs to be placed on the head in order to function also causes the wearer to become dizzy.

If you think your characters are getting too powerful, try making the game more difficult (such as throwing tougher cast members at them) rather than adding a side effect to a new piece of equipment. This will cause the players to rely more on themselves than on things, and it should improve the roleplaying. Unless, of course, you *want* a Monty Haul campaign…

Here are some suggestions for side effects. You, as Director, should decide how long they last or how much damage the side effect inflicts.

- The device becomes too hot or cold to handle.
- The user suffers damage.
- The device becomes more difficult to use each time it is operated.
- The device produces a large amount of static electricity, which causes the user's hair to stand on end. Unless properly grounded, anyone touching the user one round after the device is operated receives a mild shock (1 body point).
- The user receives a mild electrical shock (1D damage).
- The user is temporarily blinded, deafened, or disoriented. The user suffers a –3D penalty to all rolls for two rounds.
- The user temporarily looses his voice.
- The user is knocked out. He may or may not take damage, but he is at least unable to do anything during the next round.
- Operating the device causes the user to become extremely hungry. Only simple actions may be taken until the hunger is abated.
- The device causes temporary insanity. The Director should pick a specific effect, which might be a new

Scale Code Examples

Character	0
Cannon	3D
Tank	4D
Starship	9D

Body Strength Examples

Gun	0
Rocket launcher	0
Car, full-size	1D+1
Van	2D+1
Tank	5D
Starship, fighter class	6D+2

phobia or an insatiable passion for something.
• The user has a sneezing or hiccupping attack.

Physical Description

Specify the appearance of the weapon or gadget. Determine the location of the "on" switch or button, as well as anything else that needs to be pushed, pulled, or twisted in order to make the item work. Decide on the color and whether it generates any sound when it's idle. Describe where the ammunition or energy pack is inserted and where things (bullets, rays, holograms, etc.) come out. Specify whether the device needs to be mounted in order to be used: an item might need to be set on a hand, wrist, head, tripod, or vehicle. You may find it useful to make a diagram of the object with a key that indicates what each part is.

Indicate, as well, the size of the device. Record its dimensions, weight, or both. You might also note here how any optional attachments increase size, as well as whether the device can be made smaller (for example, by folding).

Also include in your description any significant sights, sounds, smells, or sensations the object produces when activated. For example, characters using devices that discharge electricity may note the sharp scent of ozone, as well as see a crackle of bright light.

Additional Information

This section includes all the miscellaneous data that doesn't really fit anywhere else or is not a common enough trait to have its own category.

If you decide that operating the device is not intuitive, but doesn't require any special skill, then be sure to include a description of how to use the item. This might be switching a dial to obtain a desired setting, pushing a sequence of buttons, or typing in the correct command. These notes will be especially helpful if the device doesn't come with an instruction manual or instructor. The notes will help you to judge the results of the characters' attempts to get it to work. You may also wish to indicate what happens to the device if the characters don't use it correctly.

If the device you create detonates, note whether it explodes after a set fuse (and how long that fuse is) or upon impact. For firing weapons, you could determine whether it shoots singly, in bursts, or either. This characteristic, if you choose, could have an effect on how much damage is caused (burst doing more damage than a single shot, for example).

Some weapons and gadgets require a power source. Be sure to mention in this section what this power source is. The device could need batteries (AA, lithium, alien, etc.), an external power source (an electrical outlet or solar radiation), a specific gas or liquid, or something else entirely. The more exotic the power source, the more difficult it will be for the characters to recharge the device.

For weapons, you may also want to indicate how the ammunition is stored in the gun. Must each shot be put in separately, or is there a magazine, belt, or drum? If the weapon uses gases or liquids, then these will most likely come in canisters. Other weapons may use battery packs. Or you could decide that the ammunition is integrated into the weapon and there is no way to replenish it.

If the device you create works automatically once it's turned on, you should note the skills (and their die codes) it possesses.

As well, you might want to establish the history of the device. Doing so can help you work the new equipment into your scenarios in a plausible manner. Decide if it is fairly unique or if many aliens carry or have access to one, though not necessarily on Earth. Or, one species may favor or guard the device. If it's a rare or at least uncommon item, you might want to specify who the last owner was and what happened to that person.

Vehicles

Though aliens don't bring as many modes of transportation to Earth as they do other…things, they still need some way to get from there to here—and something to carry all their stuff. Likewise, should your alien fugitive decide to abscond with a vehicle not listed in the *Men in Black Roleplaying Game,* you'll probably find this section to be just the thing you need to whip up some suitable stats.

Vehicle Template

For your convenience, a Vehicle Template has been included at the end of this part of the lesson. As with your weapons and gadgets, you may wish to copy the information onto index cards so that it is conveniently available.

Name

The name of the vehicle is typically some descriptive phrase (compact car) or the make and model (Ford LTD). If you are only concerned with one particular vehicle—perhaps a certain space freighter that makes regular trips to Earth—then include here the specific name of that vehicle.

Scale

This is the same term described in the "Creating Superscientific Weapons and Gadgets" section earlier. Some example die codes are listed there for your assistance in deciding on an appropriate value.

Size

In the size section of the template, record at least the length or diameter of the vehicle. If other dimensions are unusual or significant (such as the wing span for an airplane), this is the spot to put those measurements.
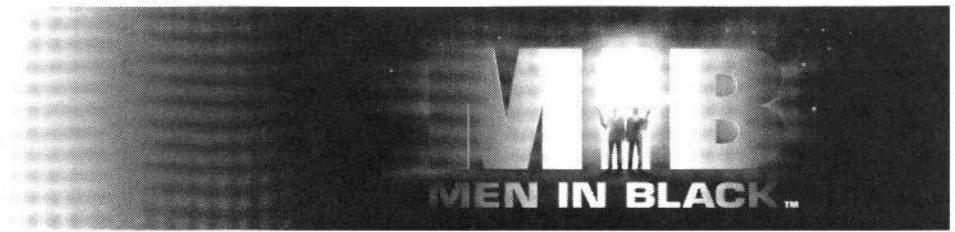
Weapon Template

Name: _____

Range: _____

Fire Control: _____

Rate of Fire: _____

Damage: _____

Ammunition: _____

Scale: _____

Body Strength: _____

Body Points: _____

Skill: _____

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Requirements and restrictions: _____

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Side effects: _____

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Physical description: _____

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Additional information: _____

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Gadget Template

Name: _____

Range: _____

Enhancement modifier: _____

Scale: _____

Body strength: _____

Body points: _____

Skill: _____

Requirements and restrictions: _____

Side effects: _____

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Physical description: _____

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Additional information: _____

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Crew

The crew characteristic delineates the number of people needed to operate the vehicle. You may also which to indicate here people whose services are occasionally or peripherally required for the vehicles operation. A gunner on a fighter-class starship or a stewardess on a commercial jet would be examples of such people.

Passengers

This value indicates the number of people in addition to the crew that the vehicle can carry.

Cargo Capacity

Cargo capacity is the amount of extra room in the vehicle for luggage, souvenirs, weapons, and other stuff.

Cover

Cover indicates the amount of additional defense the vehicle provides to its crew and passengers. The value in this characteristic is added to a character's base defense value (or *dodge* roll) when calculating the success of an attack by another character. *Full* means that characters within the vehicle suffer no damage from outside sources.

Maneuverability

Maneuverability represents the vehicle's handling. Vehicles with higher die codes do better in stunts than those with lower ones. The maneuverability value is added to the driver's or pilot's appropriate skill only if that person is attempting to do something fancy. More information on operating vehicles can be found in Folder 6 of the *Men in Black Roleplaying Game.*

Speed

Speed expresses the maximum velocity of the vehicle. If the vehicle can travel in two or more different mediums (such as water and atmosphere or space, atmosphere, and land) and it does not have the same maximum speed in each, then be sure to indicate each of the different velocities.

Body Strength

Body strength for vehicles follows the same concept as body strength for weapons and gadgets. It is, essentially, the vehicle's equivalent of a character's *Endurance*, and is used the same way when determining damage. See the Body Strength Examples table earlier in this lesson for some suggestions.

Body Points

This value represents the amount of damage the vehicle can take before it is rendered useless. When the vehicle reaches zero body points, it immediately ceases to operate.

Physical Description

Indicate the appearance of the vehicle in this section. You could include such particulars as size and color, as well as type of windows, interior, trim, and anything else that helps you and your players better visualize this mode of transportation. You may even want to describe any unusual sights, sounds, smells, or sensations the vehicle produces when operating.

Additional Information

Under additional information, cover anything else of significance regarding the vehicle. Required skills could be noted here, as well as any special operating instructions. If the vehicle performs any additional functions or contains special, built-in weapons and gadgets, this is also the place to put that information. Likewise, you could describe the vehicle's limitations, weaknesses, known glitches, special amenities (such as a radio or a lighted dash), and the like.

If the vehicle is unique or in limited quantities, you might include some of its history, such as details on past and present owners, the creator or manufacturer, place of origin, and so on.

Tech from the Men in Black Database

For purposes of space, in the descriptions below, some categories have been dropped if they would have been left blank. Some categories have been retained for clarity.

Weapons

Biocarbon Neutralizer

Range: Touch
Rate of Fire: 1
Damage: 2D per round
Requirements and Restrictions: Must be stored in glass bottles; dissolves plastic. Only affects objects containing carbon.
Physical Description: The biocarbon neutralizer is a liquid, about the same color as a rose blush wine. Eight ounces is all that is needed to do the damage listed.
Additional Information: Sounds pretty harmless, but this is actually an off-world poison. If this liquid is spilled on any carbon-based life form, that being must take 2D of damage per round until it is washed off. It can be neutralized with baking soda and water. It is, of course, illegal.

Bowling Bomb

Range: 9.5 miles
Blast Radius: 300/350/400 miles
Rate of Fire: 1 every two rounds
Damage: 20D
Ammunition: None
Scale: 9D
Body Strength: 10D
Body Points: 70

Vehicle Template

Name: _____

Scale: _____

Size: _____

Crew: _____

Passengers: _____

Cargo Capacity: _____

Cover: _____

Maneuverability: _____

Body strength: _____

Body points: _____

Physical description: _____

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Additional information: _____

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Physical Description: This eight-inch-diameter object looks exactly like a bowling ball, including having finger holes. A small image of a nuclear mushroom cloud is printed on it in gold. The ball itself has a marble pattern and a purple hue.

Additional Information: In order to activate the weapon, it must be swung back and forth three times (each swing counts as one action). It can be disarmed by doing the same thing. After arming, the ball is released on a relatively flat surface (such as a sidewalk).

The ball rolls at a steady pace of fourteen feet per second, even uphill. It can dodge pedestrians, cars, mailboxes, signs, and so on. It even stops at crosswalks until the light changes to "walk." It pauses if it senses a car coming toward it before it crosses a street (very much unlike a squirrel). The ball can continue in this manner for one hour, at which points it explodes. If it comes to a wall, it rolls a foot to each side to see if there's a way around it. If not, it just sits there until time runs out.

If a character picks it up any way other than by the finger holes, the ball becomes hot, forcing the character to drop it. The ball suffers 1 point of damage from the fall but continues rolling.

Supposedly, the only bowling bomb on Earth is currently stored at Men in Black headquarters.

BOPper (Burst of Plasma Weapon)

Range: -2D/0/-1/-1D
Rate of Fire: 1 every two rounds
Damage: 5D
Ammunition: 50 bursts of plasma
Body Points: 30
Requirements and Restrictions: Must be held with two hands.
Side Effects: Operator must make a Moderate (12) *Strength* roll or be knocked out for 1D rounds.
Physical Description: This weapon looks like a one-foot-square box with a two-foot-long, four-inch-diameter pipe (the barrel, actually) sticking out one side. There are two handles on either side of the box. The "battery" cartridge is replaced in the back.

Additional Information: This gun fires a three-inch round blob of plasma. It contains enough energy to fire fifty bursts before needing its "battery" replaced. There is no means of recharging the "battery" on Earth, though the Men in Black are able to trade for new cartridges.

Because this weapon's original name is difficult to pronounce, the Men in Black have nicknamed it the BOPper.

MG-72 Minibomb

Range: +1/0/-1D/-2D
Blast Radius: 20
Rate of Fire: 1 every two rounds
Damage: 0
Requirements and Restrictions: The bomb must be in a thickly padded carrier since it explodes on impact. It takes two rounds to remove the minibomb from its padding.

Physical Description: The minibomb looks like a black table tennis ball.

Additional Information: The minibomb explodes on impact and produces a thick cloud of smoke. The smoke adds 15 to a character's defense total and subtracts 2D from all skill rolls requiring sight. Anyone caught within the blast radius is blinded for three rounds.

This device was created by the Puchans. Being fond of causing trouble but not of fighting, they often use this weapon to blind their opponents so they can get away without engaging in combat.

Nostrya Walking Stick

Range: +1/—/—/— (if fired)
Rate of Fire: 1 per round
Damage: STR+1D+2 (as cane) / 2D
Ammunition: 100 electrical discharges
Physical Description: Appears to be an ordinary, although elaborately carved, wooden cane with a large round knob on the top.

Additional Information: The walking stick can be used as a hand-to-hand combat weapon. Additionally, when the stick is pointed at someone or something and the knob is turned, a small bolt of electricity shoots out from the top.

Paralyzing Net

Range: 0/–2D/—/—
Damage: 0
Requirements and Restrictions: The character using this weapon must have *nets* as a *hand-to-hand combat* skill specialty.
Body Points: 50
Physical Description: This weapon is made of quarter-inch-thick wires set in concentric circles with spokes linking them together. The device measures approximately five feet in diameter.

Additional Information: The weapon is activated when thrown. If it lands on an inanimate object, it deactivates. If this device can be tossed over a character's or cast

member's head, it paralyzes that person until the net is removed. If the net only brushes against another character, that character feels a tingling sensation where the net touched but otherwise suffers no additional effects.

Sharp Streak

Range: Unlimited
Rate of Fire: 1
Damage: STR+1
Physical Description: Sharp Streaks appear to be quarter-inch thick darts, about five inches long.
Additional Information: Once thrown, these devices continue in a straight line until they hit something. For chase situations, the speed (in feet) of the Sharp Streak is equal to 10 times the *Strength* die code (disregarding any extra pips) of the thrower. Thus, a Sharp Streak will move at a rate of 20 feet per round if someone with a *Strength* of 2D+1 throws it.

Gadgets

ELN 1148

Range: Personal
Body Points: 10
Requirements and Restrictions: Must be worn on the body to be used effectively.
Physical Description: The device resembles a necklace made of large (two-inch diameter) disks. The entire necklace is about eight to ten inches in diameter, depending on how many disks were used to make it.
Additional Information: The ELN gives off a false spectral reading. If the ELN is destroyed, it explodes in a bright flash that blinds anyone who sees the glare for five rounds. Anyone looking away or covering (not just closing) their eyes will be unaffected.

ELN devices are jealously guarded secrets. The Untxa, the species who created these devices, know that it could do a lot of damage to their master plan.

Although ELNs are difficult to create, a member of the species would sooner destroy it than allow it to fall into anyone else's hands.

Freezing Vat with Systematic Supercryogent

Range: One creature
Body Strength: 1D (vat)
Body Points: 50 (vat)
Requirements and Restrictions: Requires a large supply of electricity in order to accomplish the freezing process.
Physical Description: The vat looks like an oversized bathtub, but with a lot more wires attached. It measures eight feet long, six feet wide, and six feet deep. The systematic supercryogent is a thick, viscous fluid colored ice-blue.
Additional Information: When a being is immersed in the vat filled with systematic supercryogent, it allows freezing of the creature without tissue damage. Unfortunately, the victim is killed. The only one in existence was built by the mad scientist Dr. White. Its current whereabouts remain unknown.

Ham Radio

Range: Several thousand miles
Requirements and Restrictions: In the United States and Canada, operators are subject to international and federal regulation. They need to know International Morse Code and radio theory and regulations. Transmitter power is restricted, and many frequencies available for amateur operators must be shared.
Body Points: 15
Physical Description: This device consists of a transmitter/receiver combination, a headset or speaker, microphone, and an antenna. The transmitter/receiver is about eleven inches wide, ten inches deep, and three inches thick; the antenna is six feet tall.
Additional Information: These stats are for a small home unit. The better the quality of the equipment, the better the reception and transmission and the greater the expense. Additionally, a larger and more powerful antenna will improve reception and transmission. A licensed operator will also have maps of the world, an international time-zone clock or a time-conversion table, and a log book to record broadcast activity (required by the government).

Remote Bio-image Recorder with Programmer

Range: 660 feet
Body Points: 30
Requirements and Restrictions: Needs a special card in order to be programmed in English or any other Earth language.
Physical Description: This device looks like a small, shimmery white figurine. It resembles an art nouveau abstract sculpture standing about four inches tall. The
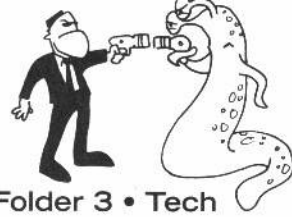
programmer is baby blue and about the size of a shoe box. There is a receptacle at one end, a four-by-six-inch display screen in the middle, and a microphone/speaker grille at the other end. On the side by the grille is a small slot that accepts language cards.

Additional Information: The ReBiRePro only accepts voice commands. It can be programmed to follow movements of a particular species (if that species is listed in its database). The device can extend small wheels from its bottom, providing it with a movement rate of one inch per round. The material the device is constructed of operates on a polarized, refracted system that prevents viewers from looking inside. The camera can be rotated 360 degrees and can display images in color or infrared. It can record continuously for up to 27 hours. To display the recordings or program the device, the device must be set into the receptacle of the programming box.

Sky Lights

Range: 1000 feet
Body Points: 20
Requirements and Restrictions: The device can only be used in light breezes or on still days.
Physical Description: This gadget is a silver sphere, about six inches in diameter, with a band of colored lights. It comes with a controller that looks like a TV remote. The propulsion unit is not visible.
Additional Information: The unit is remote controlled. The lights can be made to flash in a series of patterns, such as alternating, running, flashing, and so on, creating enough evidence to justify another documentary on UFOs.

Ultrabeam Emitter

Range: 5 miles
Body Points: 20
Physical Description: This gadget looks like an ordinary hand-held flashlight. It comes with various disks that can be inserted into a holder in front of the beam.
Additional Information: The beam of this light is the equivalent of a 500-watt halogen lamp. The disks change the color and pattern projected. The device works best on cloudy days, kites, and low-flying aircraft. One rumor suggests that a prop person on a late 1960s television show got a hold of an Ultrabeam Emitter and incorporated it into the plot of an episode.

The Zapper

Range: 0/—/—/—
Body Points: 30
Requirements and Restrictions: To avoid the effects of this device, the user must wear dark sunglasses (with UV protection; need not be the type issued by Men in Black). Does not require any roll to use (just press the little button—and don't look).
Side Effects: The victim must make a Difficult (19) *Endurance* check or faint and possibly suffer damage from the fall.

Physical Description: The eight-inch-long device has a tubular shape, much like a neuralyzer but of shoddier construction.
Additional Information: This is an illegal form of the neuralyzer. Men in Black agents who find this automatically confiscate the device and take the possessor in for questioning. Like the neuralyzer, it wipes out memories (for the past twenty-eight hours—no alternate settings), but it does not allow new memories to be inserted.

Vehicles

Bicycle, Mountain

Scale: 0
Size: 5 feet 10 inches
Crew: 1
Passengers: 0
Cargo capacity: 0
Cover: 0
Maneuverability: 2D+2
Body Strength: 0
Body Points: 20
Physical Description: This is an ordinary mountain bike, complete with rugged tires, sidepull caliper brakes, a kickstand, and a welded steel frame. It has eighteen-speed index shifting.
Additional Information: There are some places a car won't go, yet the destination is too far to walk. The mountain bike has superior handling in traffic jams. Use a backpack as "cargo space."

Truck, Delivery

Scale: 2D
Size: 18 feet
Crew: 1
Passengers: 2 (in the cab)
Cargo capacity: 1,012 cubic feet
Cover: +6
Maneuverability: +2
Body Strength: 1D+2
Body Points: 75
**Physical Description:** This vehicle looks like the average delivery truck—a large box on wheels. It is a midsize representative of its class.
Additional Information: This vehicle includes automatic transmission, a radio, power steering, and power brakes. An annoying back-up alarm warns unsuspecting bystanders that the vehicle is in reverse. A hydraulic lift gate offers easy access to the cargo area.

FOLDER 4
PLACES
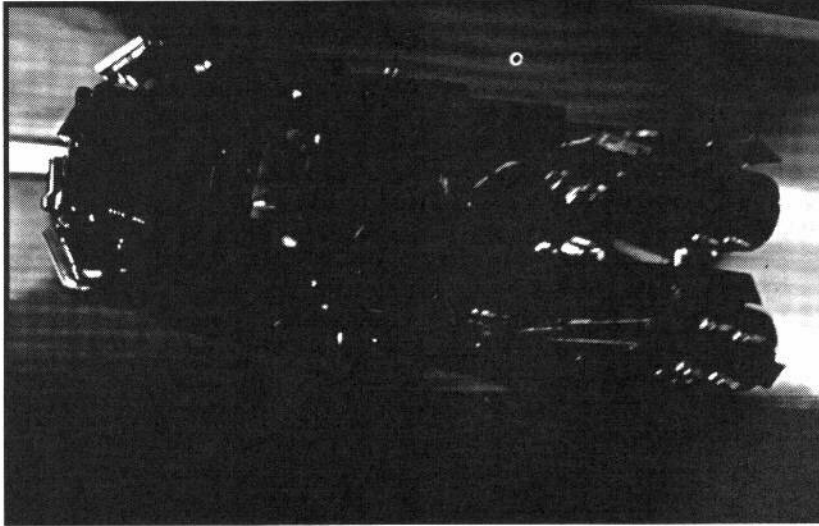
In this lesson, you'll learn about creating locations for your adventures. Although many details of a setting may never come to play in a scenario (just as many details of characters are not always expressed), the more you know about a place, the easier it will be for you to respond to player questions.

Towns

When you choose the locales for your scenario, consider foremost the characters' goal and the sort of cast members and obstacles the players will encounter. Although a quiet little borough such as Honesdale, Pennsylvania, is good for small-time robberies and first appearances, for a major chase on a subway you'll want a large city (say, Chicago or New York).

You should also consider how much work you want to put into creating the location. You could choose a place more well known to you and your players. This allows you to easily reference sights without having to go into an excessive amount of description. However, unless your players are willing to suspend some of their knowledge of the area, your freedom with details is limited. Because your players will know there isn't that kind of building at the site you describe, you can't as easily add new locations at whim.

You may instead wish to create a new town from scratch. This provides you with the freedom to decide exactly where you want everything. Of course, since your players have no reference points, you'll need to do more describing.

A hybrid option is to create a town "very much like this one." That is, use many features that are familiar to both you and your players, but change the names slightly (including the town's). This enables you to use shorthand in your description. For example, if you tell your players that their quarry just ran into a hobby shop just like the one on the road near the railroad overpass, they'll have an immediate image of the locale in their minds. Additionally, because the town is

only "very much like this one"—but, of course, not exactly—you still have the freedom to move features around (for instance, by relocating the museum to a more convenient location).

Just as you need to decide what cast members to include in a scenario, you need to decide what buildings are required and where they are located in town. Although it isn't essential to map out every establishment, for the ones necessary for completing the scenario, you may find it useful to describe a few major details about them. (Some generic structures are given in the "Buildings" section of this lesson.)

As well, adding a few irrelevant buildings around the essential ones can add depth to your town. These additional buildings won't need much description beyond what type they are (music store, post office, game company, etc.). Should you realize that the players need more challenges, the extra buildings can help with that. For example, if the characters discovered their quarry too easily, you could have a pedestrian direct them into the wrong establishment without losing the pace of the game.

Another item you may want to put in the notes on your town is the approximate distance (in feet, minutes, or some other unit of measure) between the buildings. This information is particularly important for chases and keeping track of time.

You may find it a useful aid to your memory and a means of improving place descriptions if you make a map with a key of the sites that the characters might visit. Include either in the key or with the map a few details about each place. If you've put on the map any secret entrances or the location of an item the characters need to find, you may want to have two versions of the map. On one map, put all the details you'll need to remember during the scenario. On the other, indicate only those details you want the characters to know right away. If you wish to reveal rooms only as the characters enter them, use index cards or sticky notes to cover the rooms they haven't visited. Another option, certainly more elaborate, is to draw each room on a separate card, organize the cards in the layout of the location, and turn the cards over as the characters enter each room.

Name

Although it isn't absolutely necessary to name all the locales the characters visit, it does add to the atmosphere and believability of the game. Names can also provide clues to the location itself.

If you don't already have a town in mind, you could go for the old standby of randomly choosing a town on an appropriate map. However, it may better suit

Place Signifiers
–bury
–burg
–boro/borough
–dale
–field
–land
–pol/polis
–shire
–ton/town
–ville
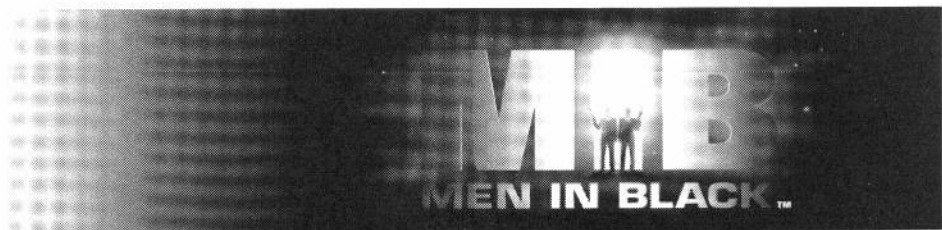
your purposes to make one up. This way you have more control over the images the name will produce in the minds of your players. When making up a name, think about what kind of place you want. Decide on one of its significant features and then work that feature into the name. Consider such features as mood, local landscape, ethnic or religious influence, and significant people in the location's history. Create a name using that feature either as an adjective or as the main part of name. You could also combine the feature with a place signifier. For example, if you want to give your players the impression that they are journeying to a small village, you might name the town "Spotsville."

Buildings

In addition to the suggestions in "Describing Scenes" in Lesson 1, here are a few more tips specifically relating to locations:

When the scene calls for action, you can get away with: "You rush into the lobby. You notice the usual potted plants, receptionist's desk, and bank of elevators, one of which your quarry leaps into just as the doors close." Your players probably aren't going to stick around long enough to figure out just where those potted plants are. But when the players won't be "just passing through," add more details. Make this lobby, park, restaurant, or whatever you've chosen for the scene's setting different from the other, similar places they've encountered.

Furthermore, it's important to describe what your players might find in the scenes. In chase scenes your players will require details on the location of any objects (crates, furniture, machinery, people, etc.) in their path. In information-gathering scenes, they'll need to know what and where they can search: bookshelves, desks, barrels, boxes, or any of an assortment of other hiding places.

Using and Adapting

These buildings are provided to save you some effort, so you can spend more time creating scenarios. Each building description includes general details on typical rooms, suggestions for cast members, and a stock encounter.

Adjust the general details to suit your scenario's mood and needs. For instance, you could combine various locations. A collection of stores and restaurants housed under one roof becomes a shopping mall. Or, you could eliminate certain areas. Perhaps the dance floor in the bar is more than you need, so you decide to just remove it.

You might also note the accessibility of each building. Poor or obstructed access can provide you with another obstacle source. Access includes not only how difficult it is to enter the building, but also how difficult it is to get to it. For example, can the characters take their car,

or must they hike it? If the cast member they are pursuing knows they are coming, striking out on foot can be dangerous indeed.

Likewise, don't limit any cast members you create to one particular location. If the characters happen to see the bar owner going to the grocery store, it makes that person more believable, as well as adding depth to the world. It shows the players that life goes on, even when they aren't around.

Use the stock encounters to pad scenarios or to help you in creating your own. If you seem to be losing your players' attention or they are bogging themselves down in details, throw in one of the encounters. You decide how much or how little meaning the extra encounters have in the context of the scenario.

Apartment Building

Apartment buildings are multi-family dwellings. A single apartment includes a minimum of a kitchen area, a living area/bedroom, and a bathroom. Larger ones have many more rooms; some even take up a couple of floors. Some apartments include balconies, fireplaces, washers and dryers, and other options. The complex itself might feature such amenities as a swimming pool, tennis courts, a health club, racquetball courts, car ports, laundry facilities, and security gates.

When an alien doesn't plan on being in town forever, he may choose to rent an apartment. It's a lot cheaper than coming up with the down payment for a house,

not to mention avoiding a lot of probing paperwork.

Sample Apartment Building

In a typical one-bedroom apartment, the front door opens into a living room. Directly to the right as upon entering is a corner sofa with a circular coffee table in front of it. Just beyond the coffee table is a television set. On the wall next to the television is a desk with a hutch on top. The desk contains a computer, a printer, and a small stereo system. On the wall to the left of the door is a bookshelf filled with knick-knacks and books.

Straight ahead of the front door is the dining area, with a large window in the wall just beyond. To the right is a small kitchen. To the left is a short hallway with doors to the bathroom and the bedroom. The bedroom contains a bed, nightstand, chest of drawers, dresser, and walk-in closet. The bathroom has the usual furnishings plus a large linen closet.

There are four of these apartments on each floor. There is another window in either the bedroom or the living room, depending on which has the outside wall. The manager lives in the one of the first floor apartments.

Standard Apartment Residents

The standard resident will have 2D in each attribute. Residents include singles, couples without children, disguised aliens, and elderly individuals.

Stock Encounter

While flipping through the tabloids, the player characters notice this headline: "Boy Turns Tables On Bullies." The subhead reads, "Kid Claims Monster Under Bed Taught Him How To Fight." The accompanying article mentions the name of the resident and of the apartment complex but doesn't give an address. If the players look in a phone book, they find the address (if the players call Zed, he says, "Why are you wasting my time? Look in the phone book," and terminates the connection). Make it challenging to get into the apartment, not to mention finding out just who the monster is. (The monster under the bed turns out to be a Varah wanted for stealing some piece of alien technology.)

House

Houses typically have a kitchen, a bedroom, a bathroom, and a living area included under one roof. Other optional rooms include a library, a ballroom, a dining room, an art gallery, a foyer, an exercise room, a laundry room, a mud room, a cellar, a study or den, a home office, a solarium, a rec room (which might include a bar), and so on. There will also be ample storage area. Some houses have balconies, attics, basements, and attached garages. The grounds may further include stables, gardens, sheds, courts, servants' quarters, hunting grounds, a dog kennel, and the like.

A simple house design can be used as a summer cottage where an alien is hiding for the winter. An alien of some means may decide to purchase a larger dwelling, one with a long driveway, to discourage visitors. The domicile we describe here is a typical farmhouse, good for setting next to fields where aliens love to land.

When designing a house, don't forget to include stairways, elevators, or ladders to get from one floor to the next.

Sample House

Kitchen: This room is huge. It has numerous cupboards and plenty of counter space. There is a large refrigerator, an oven and stove combination, a microwave, and a sink. The door to a well-stocked pantry is located in one corner. In the middle of the other half of the room is an oval, oak table with seating for six. Against the nearby wall stands a china cupboard and a buffet. A large window in the back wall by the table overlooks the backyard and the fields. Next to the window is a door leading to a small porch and to the backyard.

Front room: The front porch can be seen from the large bay window in this room. On one side of the window is the front door. On the other side is a large, potted tropical plant. There are a couple of comfortable chairs and a sleeper sofa in here. A slightly nicked, darkly stained coffee table sits in front of the sofa. There is a television set on a small table across from the sofa. The carpet is worn from years of use.

In one wall of the corner is the door to kitchen. In the other wall, a doorway opens onto a hall. The first door on the left in the brightly lit hall leads to a full bathroom and the second, to the guest room. The door on the right opens onto the master bedroom. At the end of the hall is a stairway going up.

Front porch: The porch spans the entire front of the house. At one end, a swinging chair is suspended from the rafters.

Guest room: This has a day bed underneath a win-

dow with a beautiful view of the front yard. Along one wall stands is a dresser. On the opposite wall is an antique sewing machine with a folding chair in front of it.
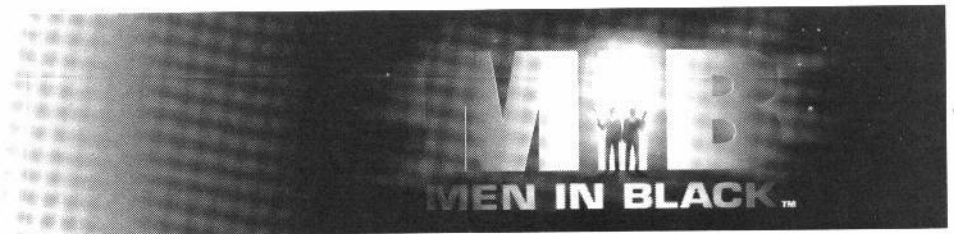
Master bedroom: Next to the door is an antique oak wardrobe. On the side wall opposite the door is a large four-poster bed with a nightstand on either side. Across from the bed is a long dresser with a mirror above it. Next to the wide window across from the door is a roll-top desk with a matching chair. Important papers are located in one of the bottom drawers.

Upstairs bedrooms: The upstairs is slightly smaller than the downstairs. A hallway divides the area in half. At the front of the house is another full bathroom and a bedroom. At the back of the house is another bedroom (about the same size as the one at the front of the house) and a large storage room. Each of these rooms contains a bed, a dresser, a comfortable chair, and a chest of drawers plus a trunk full of toys. The storage room is packed with dusty old boxes, dresses in plastic bags, and other items the family no longer uses.

Standard Family

The standard adult of the family has 2D in each attribute, while children have 1D or so in each attribute, as well as some pips in *con* or *charm*.

Stock Encounter

As the characters walk by a house, they see a couple of children playing in the yard. Suddenly, the front door swings open and a women hurries outside. She gathers her children, telling them to go inside. The woman gives a concerned glance toward the characters as she closes the door. If the player characters decide to try the door, they find it locked. No matter how hard they knock or how many times they ring the doorbell, no one answers. Forcing entry and searching the reveals only that no one is home.

Motel/Hotel

The main difference between a motel and a hotel is that a motel has a parking area adjacent to each room. (The parking for a hotel is usually not so conveniently located.) Additionally, the rooms in a motel, though usually attached to a check-in lobby, may not always be. Both types of establishments provide lodging for travelers; some may also offer rooms to rent for extended periods of time. Hotels and motels range in size from tens to thousands of rooms.

These establishments always include sleeping facilities, a check-in lobby, and storage areas. The sleeping facilities have at least a bed, a chair, a dresser, a mirror, and a bathroom. Many motels and hotels also provide a television, a telephone, a radio, and air conditioning. More expensive rooms may include a separate sitting area with a couch, a coffee table, and more chairs. Some may have refrigerators stocked with food and drink (which will be charged to the room account should any be consumed). Double rooms are at least ten feet by fifteen feet, not including the bathroom.

Other amenities include a bar/lounge, a restaurant, meeting rooms, recreation facilities, a swimming pool, and an exercise room, among other types of services. A hotel may be part of a larger shopping center, which houses restaurants and speciality shops.

Sample Motel

Lobby: The lobby is a well-lit, tiled area. On the wall opposite of the entrance is a check-in desk. At least one person is on duty at the desk at all times. Messages can be left here for guests. There is a doorway on the right side of the lobby, which leads to a hallway where the storage room and nine guest rooms are located.

Storage room: This room is fronted by a nondescript door. It is the last room at the end of the hallway. It contains cleaning supplies, fresh linens, small versions of soaps and shampoos, plastic cups, and other items. There is also a cart used by the cleaning person to take many of the supplies directly to the guest rooms.

Guest rooms: There are five rooms on one side of the hallway and four on the other. The rooms are furnished with a double bed, a stuffed chair, a dresser, and a mirror. On a separate table at the foot of the bed is a television. A lamp and a telephone are located on a nightstand by the bed. A small open closet abuts the bathroom.

Standard Motel/Hotel Employee

All employees have 2D in each attribute. Some possibilities include front-desk clerk, manager, and cleaning person. The manager typically has *business* as a skill.

Stock Encounter

The clerk at the front desk blabs about the weirdest person who just checked in a few hours before the play-

ers arrived. (This encounter can be used as a way to reintroduce an old foe or someone they encountered in the last scenario.) The clerk, when asked, will give an appropriate description.

Park

Public parks include city, regional, and national parks. Because many of these have large open areas, they can provide places for small spaceships to set down during emergencies (or out of foolishness).

Some parks are merely preserved areas of forest, meadow, and swamp. Others include playgrounds, benches, pavilions, gazebos, picnic benches, band shells, open stages, planned gardens, and so on. They may also have soccer fields, baseball diamonds, and courts for tennis, basketball, and volleyball. There might be a fountain, sculpture, statue, or other monuments. Some are surrounded by fences, brick walls, or thick bushes. Larger parks might also include a small lake or the shore of a large lake, with swimming and boating. Some have camp sites.

Sample Park

This park has a baseball diamond with a long outfield, perfect for emergency landings of small ships. Trees ring the edge of the park; picnic benches are scattered underneath them. Several yards behind home plate is a fenced-in playground. There are openings in each side of the playground. Inside the area, children can enjoy a swing set, monkey bars, and a merry-go-round. There is also a bike rack on one side of the play area.

Standard Park Visitors

The standard adult visitor has 2D in each attribute. Visitors include families, elderly individuals, and other people out enjoying the park. Young children have 1D or so in each attribute, as well as some pips in *con*, *charm*, or *thrown weapons (baseball)*. A few visitors may even be disguised aliens.

Stock Encounter

Zed calls the characters and tells them that an Altonian is at a park on the edge of the city—and he has a bowling bomb (see the stats in Folder 3 for more information). Don't tell the players how to disarm it unless they ask.

The agents arrive in time to see the Altonian arm the bowling bomb and send it rolling down the street. The Altonian runs in the other direction. The bomb will blow up the city (and the agents) if the characters don't stop it, but they really shouldn't allow the Altonian to escape either.

If you don't feel like blowing up the characters and the city, have the ball be a practical joke: When time runs out, the ball cracks open and beautiful, exotic flowers erupt from its center. The Altonian turns out to be a Stroodwa looking for a little fun.

Restaurant/Bar

Restaurants and bars serve as excellent meeting places. There's nothing like a little food or drink to loosen someone up or smooth things over. Likewise, the employees of eating establishments often know the regulars versus the strangers. They just might be able to help—if the characters can get on their good side.

The following examples can give you an idea of the rooms typically found in restaurants and bars. At some bars, instead of a disc jockey's booth, there might be a small stage where either bands or other entertainers perform. Additionally, some restaurants may have bar areas secondary to the main dining room.

If you would like to expand the dining area, figure table size at nine and a half feet by seven and a half feet for rectangular tables and at nine and a half feet by nine and a half feet for circular tables. For bars, figure at least five feet by five feet for each cocktail table. (These dimensions include circulation space between the tables.)

Sample Restaurant

Lobby: This is a little tiled area with restaurant memorabilia on the walls. There is a hostess station on the left of the front entrance. Just beyond the hostess station is the entrance to the dining area. Across from the hostess station are three doors; two lead to restrooms and one leads to the manager's office.

Dining area: There are twenty circular tables here. The carpet is dark blue, with a low pile (for easier cleaning). The walls are dark wood paneling, which matches the tables. Several Tiffany-style lamps hang from the ceiling.

Kitchen: The double-swinging door to the kitchen is directly across from the front door. This room contains a large double sink with shelves above it. There is a walk-in refrigerator with a freezer that can be accessed by going through the refrigerator. There is a grille with a fryer on the wall opposite it. Not too far away from that is a microwave. In the center of the room is a long prep table with drawers underneath. There are storage areas under the prep counter. The drawers contain knives, mixing spoons, measuring cups, and other utensils. The shelves contain pots, pans, and covers for both. Aluminum foil and plastic wrap can also be found up there, as well as seasonings.

Storage area: The storage area is located on the other side of the refrigerator/freezer. It holds dry goods, paper products, clean towels, extra cleaning products, extra dishes, and so on. There is a delivery door in one corner.

Manager's office: This room contains a couple of filing cabinets, a safe, a built-in desk, and two wheeled chairs. A phone, paper, and pens are on the desk. Accounting documents, training materials, and standards guides are kept here on shelves and in drawers.
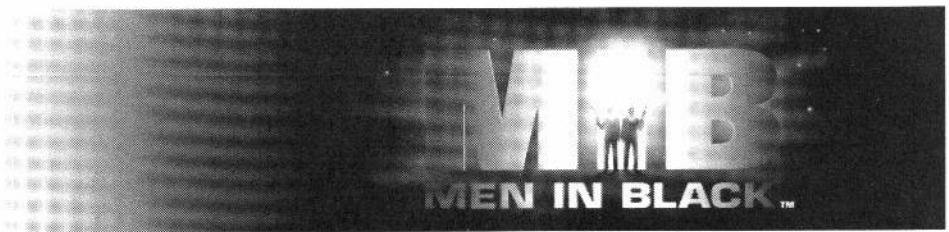
Sample Bar

Lobby: This is not so much a separate area as a tiled area where patrons first enter. A bouncer keeps watch, checking identification as people come in. A stool is nearby, nearly neglected on weekends.

Doors to the restrooms are located a few feet past the front entrance, on the left. They serve to divide the bar in half.

Bar: The bar is located directly across from the entrance. The shelves behind it are well stocked with all manner of liquors, and taps for several different beers are visible. Signs promoting various beers and other drinks glow demandingly. Arranged between the entrance and the bar are small wooden tables with chairs around them. Long windows fill the top half of the walls near the entrance and across from the restrooms. To the other side of the bar is the dance area. During busy times, two or three bartenders work the bar.

Bar storage area: The door to this area is behind the bar. It contains snacks, paper products, cleaning supplies, cases and kegs of a variety of alcohols, and so on. There is a delivery door in one of the outside walls. The office, a separate room, is also located back here.

Games area: This part of the bar is located on the other side of the restrooms. There are a couple of pool tables and some dart boards here.

Dance floor: The dance area is almost twenty feet by twenty feet. It is located next to the bar, on the wall opposite the game area. The disc jockey's booth is the one corner opposite the bar. A mirrored ball and colored lights are above the dance floor, and the disc jockey uses them as often as possible. The wall nearest the dance floor is covered by mirrors.

Standard Restaurant/Bar Employee

All employees have 2D in each attribute unless otherwise noted. Employees include servers, cooks, bartenders, managers, bouncers, and disc jockeys. In addition to any other skills you think are appropriate, here are some specific suggestions: Bartenders have *charm,* managers have *business,* bouncers have *lifting* and *hand-to-hand combat* and at least 3D in both *Endurance* and *Strength.*

Standard Restaurant/Bar Customer

The standard adult customer has 2D in each attribute. Customers include families, businesspeople, disguised aliens, and elderly individuals. Young children have 1D or so in each attribute, as well as some points in *con* or *charm.* (Children will, of course, not be at a typical bar.)

Stock Encounter

A drunken cast member bumps into one of the characters. He might apologize, ignore the character and hurry on, or raise a fuss, yelling that the character ran into *him.* He might even accuse the character of stealing from him.

As an alternate encounter, the cast member was only pretending to be drunk, as an excuse to bump into the character. He's actually a pickpocket with a *sleight of hand* of 3D. The difficulty number for the attempt should be at least 10. If the thief is successful, a character with a *Perception* of 5D or better should be allowed a roll to see if he or she notices that something was swiped.

Store

This building type includes pawn shops, second-hand stores, grocery stores, convenience stores, and speciality shops (such as a jewelers or New Age paraphernalia). Department stores combine several speciality-type shops, while superstores often combine the offerings of a typical department store with those of a grocery store. Similarly, a set of stores could be combined under one roof, as in an indoor mall, or in a row, as in a strip or pedestrian mall.

Sample Second-Hand Store

Front room: One half of this room contains a couple of mismatched display shelves. On these are various knick-knacks, dishes, cups, games, and so on. On the opposite wall of the room is a long counter. One end of this is a small glass display case containing antique and junk jewelry. A cash register is on the other side. Underneath the cash reregister side of the counter, on the side to the wall is a locked door, to which only the owner has a key. This hides some of the less dangerous off-world items. Between the counter and the shelves are some chairs (all of which are for sale) and some tables (some of which are for sale; the others are laden with working, but used, small appliances).

There is a large display window in the outside wall, along with the front door. A bell attached to the frame above the door tinkles when the door is opened. At the back of the store is the door to the back room. A different bell also chimes when this door is opened.

Back room: This room serves as a storage area, breakroom, and office. There are numerous shelves filled with an assortment of items similar to the ones out front. There are also a few pieces of furniture. In one corner is a table with some mismatched chairs around it. On one of the walls near the table is a row of coat hooks. Next to these is the door to the restroom. There is also a back service door, which is kept locked.

On the wall near the door to the front room is a locked metal cabinet. This is where the owner keeps additional off-world items, as well as the bookkeeping and other business materials. Only the owner, who is in the store during the day, can open the door. (The clerks don't know anything about the cabinet's contents or about the area under the cash register. However, if the characters can act convincingly official, the clerk will give them the owner's name and phone number).

Standard Store Employee

The clerks and managers have 2D in each attribute. The manager should have some pips in *business.* Department stores usually hire security guards, who should have *marksmanship, hand-to-hand combat,* and *security.*

Stock Encounter

A cast member enters carrying a strange-looking gun. The cast member's face is covered, but the voice is apparently that of a gruff woman, as she yells for everyone to get on the floor. If no one decides to stop her, she then proceeds to rob the place.

Warehouse

This includes all manner of places to store things, from closet-size self-storage units to sprawling, company-owned facilities. Sizes range from five feet by ten feet, to a couple of blocks. They may or may not be climate controlled (such as refrigerated). With larger doors, among other changes, a warehouse can be adapted for use as an airplane (or starship) hanger.

Sample Warehouse

Supervisor's office: This area is partitioned from the rest of the warehouse. It contains a large metal desk with drawers that lock. There is also a tall metal filing cabinet, which is also locked. On the desk are pens, paper, a telephone, and an old DOS-based personal computer (used to track shipments). A door, which locks, is set in the partition.

Lockers: Next to the supervisor's office is a double set of lockers. A bench separates the two rows. A door to the restroom is nearby.

Warehouse: The main warehouse area is filled with crates. Most of these are small and stacked two-high in neat rows. A few are about twice the smaller ones' size. The crates are grouped according to their contents. One part of the warehouse has been set aside for a pair of forklifts to be stored. One long wall of the warehouse has several openings that lead to truck wells. Buttons to open and close the steel doors are located near each well. There are two alarmed emergency exits.

Standard Warehouse Employee

Most of the employees have 2D in each attribute, although a few of the loaders have 3D or more in *Strength* (and less in *Knowledge, Perception,* or *Charisma*). The supervisors have at least one pip in *business*. Forklift drivers must have pips in *piloting: forklift*.

Stock Encounter

As the characters drive by a warehouse, they see flashing lights descending from the sky, the kind that often mark aircraft. At the rate these are falling, though, the chances are very good that these come from a flying saucer. If the characters decide to investigate and bother to search the outside of the building, they notice that, on the side away from the road, there is indeed a spaceship. (Men in Black agents will recognize it as the kind that a single Bug would use.) If this doesn't cause the characters to investigate, perhaps the screams coming from the warehouse will. Inside the characters find a family, all of whom are tied up. The Bug has the family pet and is slowly eating it. It's a safe bet that the family is next.

Reinventing the World

We provide this "place profile" to show how a real city can become the source of scenario ideas. Suggested uses for various parts of the city have been embedded within each description. We hope that you enjoy your little tour of this great locale and that it inspires you to create the truth about other places.

Introduction

Where Glenn Miller had a gal is no Shangri-La but the "Paper City," the "Celery City," the "Mall City," and the "Bedding Plant Capital of the World." Located northeast of Chicago and west of Detroit, it's hardly a utopian paradise, yet Kalamazoo is certainly a lot more real.

Michigan's fifth largest city, Kalamazoo serves as the county seat of Kalamazoo County. The city has a population of over 80,000, while the county has over 228,000 people living in about 576 square miles. The average January temperature is almost twenty-five degrees Fahrenheit; the average July temperature is about seventy-three degrees Fahrenheit. Mild, southwesterly winds from Lake Michigan usually keep the climate moderate, though they also can bring several inches of "lake effect" snow in the winter.

Kalamazoo has a full compliment of radio and television stations. Its primary newspaper is the *Kalamazoo Gazette,* though there are a number of smaller specialty papers.

Pleasant as it may sound, Kalamazoo county is also considered to be one of the most dangerous sites in the United States. High concentrations of hazardous chemicals are found in the water and ground in certain areas near Kalamazoo River and Portage Creek. The press claims the waste is from paper-mill runoff, but MiB scientists suggest it comes from alien experiments; unfortunately, due to budget constraints, the validity of this theory has yet to be tested. Public and private clean-up of the area continues.

Getting There and Then Around

You can fly, drive, or take the train or bus into Kalamazoo. Nearby Kalamazoo/Battle Creek International Airport (AZO) is served by several major airlines, as well as offering space for charter and private aircraft (not flying saucer) owners. For major highways, I-94 passes through Kalamazoo, connecting it with Detroit and Chicago, while US-131 takes travelers to northern cities (such as Grand Rapids, Michigan's second largest city). Those coming in by bus or train are dropped off at the Intermodal Transportation Center downtown.

If you didn't bring your own transportation, Kalamazoo offers bus service, taxis, and rental cars to help you travel the city.

Special Features Downtown

While in Kalamazoo, don't forget to visit the nation's first pedestrian mall, the Kalamazoo Pedestrian Mall (catchy name, huh?). The city closed off a portion of Burdick Street to encourage downtown shopping.

Just down the road from this is the State Theatre. Established in 1927, the building is still in use for concerts, movies, and other performances (such as musicians and comedians). Both national and local artists perform there, and the event schedule is quite eclectic. Except during performances, tours are available of the building, which is a sight in itself to behold: of Spanish design, the architectural elements include, among other features, balconies, towers, courtyards, and murals on the walls and ceilings.

While on your walking tour of downtown, be sure to also look for the mysterious "g" characters that randomly appear on the sidewalks and buildings. Popular opinion suggests that they refer to one of the city's founding families (Gilmore), but popular opinion isn't always right.

One other noteworthy site (actually located a couple miles west of downtown) is the Timid Rabbit Magic and Masquerade Shop. It has two wooden floors of costumes, magic supplies, and games. Of course, if you know how to ask for it, the clerks will be happy to show you some of the more exotic (read extraterrestrial) wares.

Education

Younger aliens may attend one of the many schools in Kalamazoo's nine districts, while older visitors may try for their degrees at one of its institutions of higher education. Both Kalamazoo College, a tiny private liberal arts college, and Western Michigan University, a large public institution, welcome students of all nationalities. Both offer a generous selection of degrees, as well as numerous opportunities for social development.

Festivals

Kalamazoo is proud to offer numerous festivals throughout the year, which attract visitors from around the country (and the universe). The events typically occur on weekends, and with their great variety, there surely is something for everyone. The selection includes food, music, ethnic, and arts festivals, a Thanksgiving and Christmas holiday parade, a Renaissance Festival, the Wine and Harvest Festival, and the New Year's Fest. There is also the High on Kalamazoo Air Show, which attracts over 100,000 people, and Kalapalooza, a music festival featuring local bands and lots of grunge.

Hospitals

Kalamazoo offers two hospitals within the city limits: Bronson Methodist Hospital downtown and Kalamazoo State Hospital, just northwest of downtown. On the other side of the tracks from Western Michigan University is the Kalamazoo Regional Psychiatric Hospital, with its famous 175-foot-tall water tower of 1895 Queen Anne style.

Industry

Kalamazoo County has been marked by one of the lowest unemployment rates in Michigan. This stems in large part from its broad industrial base, which includes aircraft controls, automotive parts, bedding, chemical products, fabricated metals, medical and surgical equipment, paper and allied products, pharmaceuticals, plastics, and transportation equipment. While a landed alien might work at one of a number of plants in the area, the more dangerous visitors will more than likely be found in the research divisions of Upjohn and Stryker, which both have facilities located in the city of Kalamazoo. Upjohn is the area's largest private employer, most famous for its research, development, and manufacturing of pharmaceuticals. Stryker began as a mobile hospital bed manufacturer but has since expanded its offerings to include surgical instruments, bone implants, and replacement joints.

Museums

What better place to hide that odd piece of alien technology than as part of an exhibit? If you can't find that piece of high tech in the usual locations, try one of Kalamazoo's museums, including the Kalamazoo Institute of the Arts, the Arts Council of Greater Kalamazoo Gallery, and the Kalamazoo Valley Museum. The Kalamazoo Institute of the Arts, for example, prides itself in offering the public displays of art created in a variety of media by international, national, and local artists.

Sports

If you can't join 'em, watch 'em—and start a fight if you can. Sporting events always offer the perfect opportunity for an alien to use an instigator. At the professional level (and within the city), there is semi-pro football (Tornadoes), minor league soccer (Kingdom), International Hockey League (Wings), and independent professional baseball (Kodiaks). Of course, if none of that interests you, Kalamazoo College, Kalamazoo Community College, and Western Michigan University offer collegiate sports of all kinds—from basketball to volleyball. As well, you can take in drag racing at the U.S. 131 Dragway and stock car racing at the Kalamazoo and the Galesburg Speedways.

Waldo on the Brain

You can go to Waldo in the morning to do some research. Then take in a game at Waldo in the afternoon. After the game, go over to Waldo's for a drink.

Waldo Library

If you're looking for that special document, this is the place to start. Located next to the University Computing center, the Dwight B. Waldo Library is the main

library for Western Michigan University. Its extensive collection is divided into several categories. These include humanities and social sciences, physical sciences, government, maps and atlases, business, and several special collections. The government publications encompass copies of all state documents and certain United States government documents. The library also provides patrons with terminals for accessing CD-ROM and FirstSearch databases, WESTNET, and World Wide Web resources.

It is conveniently open Monday through Sunday. Group study rooms are available on the lower level. Exchange a Western Michigan University ID for the key to one of the six rooms, and get a little privacy in your research.

Waldo Stadium

Waldo Stadium is one of Western Michigan University's sports facilities. This intercollegiate football stadium is used for WMU Bronco football and soccer games, as well as a variety of other recreational, intramural, and instructional activities. It has seating for over 30,000, making it another great place for an alien to try out his new instigator.

Waldo's Campus Tavern

Waldo's Campus Tavern is located on West Michigan Avenue, just down the street from Waldo Stadium. When you want a little local news and the library doesn't have what you're looking for, you might try here. Waldo's is actually the top half of a two-part bar built into the side of a hill. This is where the standard American beers and drinks are sold, and the atmosphere is more party-like. Here, amid an interesting collection of Old West memorabilia, is where you'll find the less mentally intense college students playing pool, darts, video games, and drinking games.

For more philosophical answers to your questions (or a better choice of beers—they stock about 150 kinds from around the world), go straight to the lower level, where you will find the Pilsen Klub. It offers a quieter, more Beatnik-like atmosphere than its upstairs neighbor. Comfortable couches dominate the center of the room, in front of a cozy fireplace. There you will discover a more refined breed of college student, who compete with one another in chess, backgammon, and contests of wit. If you want to really impress the locals, order a Pepper Stoli Shot. (One of the few places in the nation to offer this drink, it consists of a special vodka accompanied by very garlicky pickle.)

Elvis Is in the City

Kalamazoo is proud to be one of the many locales throughout the world in which Elvis Presley has been sighted. He has periodically dropped in at various locations throughout the city since the 1980s.

Actually, the Elvis in Kalamazoo is two Stroodwa, both registered aliens, who, when not impersonating anyone, adopted the human names of Ab Lib and Lu Andru. They take turns making appearances. Whenever they need a little money, one shapeshifts into Elvis, while the other takes on the form of a college student. Then they have a little fun in the community. The "student" takes pictures of "Elvis" and sells them to one of the tabloids.

When they are not pretending to be Elvis, they spend their time playing practical jokes on residents of Kalamazoo, particularly college students.

Ab Lib and Lu Andru
REFLEXES 2D
Acrobatics 2D+1, dodge 2D+2, piloting: car 2D+1
COORDINATION 1D
Lockpicking 2D, sleight of hand 2D+1
STRENGTH 1D+1
ENDURANCE 3D
Shape holding 4D
KNOWLEDGE 4D+1
Scholar: Elvis Presley 4D+2
PERCEPTION 3D+2
Artist 4D, business 4D, language: English 4D
CONFIDENCE 4D
Con 4D+1
CHARISMA 4D+2
Charm 5D, disguise 5D
Character Points: 5
Fate Points: 1
Body Points: 37
Note: S*hape holding* is a special skill only available to Stroodwa. See the species description in Lesson 2.

Lights in the Sky

With its "almost but not quite a big city" feel, its central location, and proximity to Lake Michigan (only thirty-five miles to the lakeshore), Kalamazoo County makes an ideal place for landed aliens to live. There is still plenty of farm land with big barns to hide small flying saucers, not to mention various golf courses and the Gourdneck State Game area (in Portage, Kalamazoo's southern suburb) that can be used for emergency landings.

There's nothing quite like taking the ol' ship zipping through the sky and skimming lake waters. Though the Men in Black discourage such flagrant use of extraterrestrial technology, the temptation to play a saucer's lights on the water can be too much. One of the more recent sitings reported to the National UFO Reporting Center came from several people on February 16, 1995.

Devils in the Woods

If lights in the sky aren't your style, how about some lights in the woods? Like any area with larges tracks of forest, Kalamazoo County has its share of satanic cults. In particular, the lovely community of Parchment, on the north side of the city of Kalamazoo, is said to be one of the better places to conduct rituals (not necessarily because the locals approve; rather, because it's easier to hide such activities).

MIB
MEN IN BLACK ™

Character Dossier

Personal Data

Code Name: _____ Type: MIB AGENT
Gender: ○ **M** ○ **F** ○ **?**
Height: ___ Weight: _____ Age: _____
Physical Description: Black suit, black tie, white shirt, shiny black shoes, black sunglasses, nondescript features.

Surveillance Photo

Stats

REFLEXES __
Acrobatics _____
Climbing _____
Dodge _____
Jumping _____
Hand-to-Hand Combat _____
Riding: _____
Unarmed Combat _____
_____

COORDINATION __
Marksmanship _____
Lock Picking _____
Missile Weapons _____
Sleight of Hand _____
Thrown Weapons _____

ENDURANCE __
Ignore Pain _____
Resist Poison _____
Running _____
Swimmingming _____
_____

STRENGTH __
Lifting _____

KNOWLEDGE __
Computer Ops _____
Demolitions _____
Forgery _____
First Aid _____
Linguistics _____
Medicine _____
Navigation _____
Science _____
Scholar: _____
_____

PERCEPTION __
Artist: _____
Business _____
Conceal _____
Hide _____
Language: _____
Security _____
Shadowing _____
Surveillance _____
Tracking _____

CONFIDENCE __
Con _____
Interrogation _____
Intimidation _____
Streetwise _____

Survival: _____
Willpower _____

CHARISMA __
Charm _____
Disguise _____
Persuasion _____

Miscellaneous

Speed _____
Character Points   5
Fate Ponits   1
Body Points   __
Special Abilities/ Useless Skills

History

Background:

You're one of the Men in Black. You don't have a background.

Personality:

Okay, the Men in Black allow you to have a little of that. Since you're new, you're a little too enthusiastic to go in guns ablazing. Sometimes you don't quite know whether it's better to charge headlong into danger or sit back and assess the situation first. Don't worry—you'll learn all that soon enough...

Equipment

Assortment of firearms, carte noir, neuralyzer, sunglasses.

Combat Round Summary

1. Make a Reflexes roll for initiative.
2. The character with the highest roll goes first, followed by the second highest, and so forth.
3. Determine number of actions for your character for the round.
4. Perform an action and make the appropriate roll (if necessary).
    4.a. To attack: determine attack roll modifiers, generate attack total, and compare to defense difficulty. If hit is successful, generate a damage total.
    4.b. To defend: if dodging, make dodge roll. If attack succeeds, generate Endurance total. Subtract Endurance total from damage total and decrease current Body Points by that amount.

COMBAT

Current Body Points _____   Reflexes _____   Endurance _____

Weapons

Name	Skill	Skill Level	Range	ROF	Range	Damage	Ammo

Climbing Chart

Condition	Difficulty Modifier
Slick surface	+2
Less than 90-degree angle	−2
Less than a 60-degree angle	−4
Less than a 45-degree angle	−6
Rain	+5
Darkness	+5

Rewards

Factor	Points (per player)
Accomplished the goal	1 Fate
Individual roleplaying	1–2 Character
Group roleplaying	3–4 Character
Teamwork	1–2 Character
Playing in character	1–2 Character
Humor of "Debrief"	1–5 Character
Everyone had fun (including the Director)	1–2 Character

Lifting Difficulties

Weight	Difficulty Level
20 pounds	Very Easy
100 pounds	Easy
200 pounds	Moderate
400 pounds	Difficult
1000 pounds	Very Difficult
1500 pounds	Heroic
1 ton	Heroic +10
1.5 tons	Heroic +20
2 tons	Heroic +30
2.5 tons	Heroic +40
3 tons	Heroic +50

Flaws

Flaw	Starting Skill Dice Modifier
Ability Limitation	+1D
Ability Loss	+2D
Alien Appearance	+1D
Alien Outlook	+2D
Atmospheric Incompatibility	+3D
Cultural Allergy	+1D
Environmental Incompatibility	+2D
Major Vulnerability	+3D
Metabolic Difference	+2D
Minor Stigma	+1D
Nutritional Requirements	+2D
Side Effect	+2D
Stench	+1D
Substance Allergy	+1D
Symbiosis	+2D
Unpredictability	+3D
Vulnerablility	+2D

Computer Ops Difficulties

Situation	Difficulty
Simple system	Very Easy
Complex system	Moderate
Encoded system	Very Difficult

Common Weapons Statistics

Firearm	Damage	Range
Small hand gun	3D	+2/0/-2D/—
Light rifle	3D+2	0/0/-1D/-3D
Shotgun	5D+1	+2D/+1D/0/—
Machine gun	6D+1	35/150/370

Missile Weapon	Damage	Range
Slingshot	STR+1D+1	+1/0/0/—
Short bow	STR+1D+2	0/0/–1/–1D
Composite bow	STR+2D+1	+2/+1D/0/–1D
Crossbow	STR+3D	+2/+1/0/–2
Compound bow	STR+3D+2	+1/0/0/–2

Thrown Weapon	Damage	Range
Small rock	STR+1	+1D/+2/0–2
Dart	STR+1	+2/0/–1/–2D
Big rock	STR+2	0/–2/–1D/–3D
Throwing star	STR+2	+1/0/–1/–2D
Large throwing knife	STR+1D	+1/-1D/-3D/—
Hunting (nonreturn) boomerang	STR+1D+1	0/–1/–2D/–3D

Melee Weapon	Damage
Small rock, pocketknife	STR+1
Big rock, small knife	STR+2
Blackjack, knife	STR+1D
Small club	STR+1D+1
Billy club, baseball bat	STR+1D+2
Small sword	STR+2D+1
Large sword, hand axe	STR+2D+2

Explosive	Damage	Blast Radius (feet)
Grenade	6D	3/8/16
Plastic	3D	1/—/—
Dynamite	3D	2/5/10

Linguistics Difficulties

| Situation	Difficulty
Different dialect of own language	Very Easy
Language is derived from common root language (e.g., understanding Spanish if you understand French)	Easy
Completely foreign language (e.g., Chinese is foreign from English)	Moderate
Alien language (e.g., from another planet)	Difficult
Concepts stated as simple	+3 to difficulty
Concepts are very complex	+3 to difficulty
Concepts are alien	+7 to difficulty

Range Chart

Point-Blank
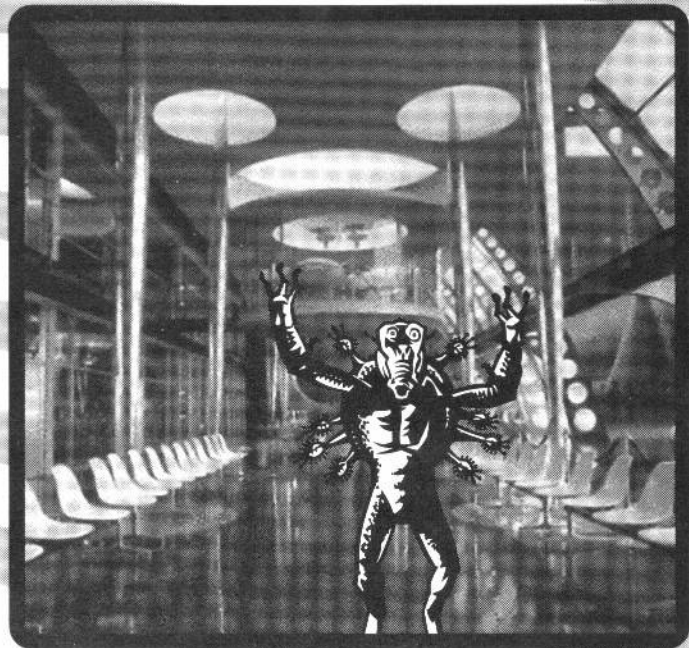
Short

Medium
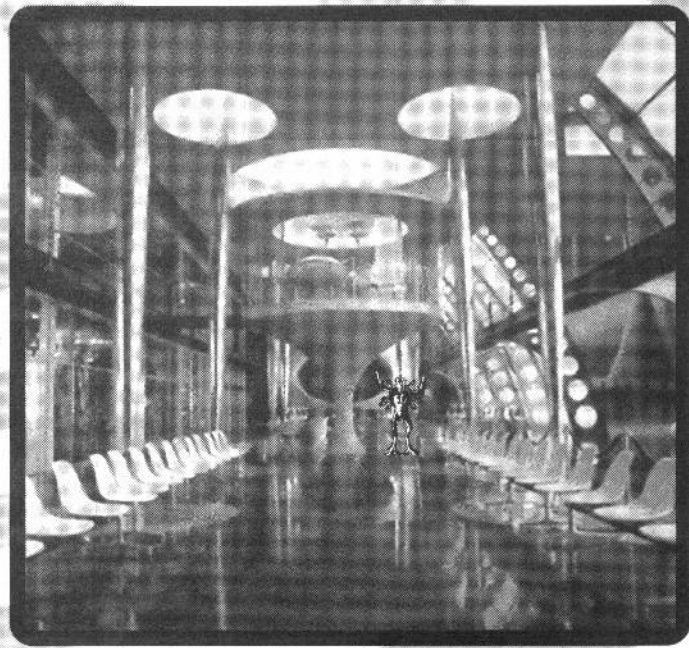
Long

Explosive	Damage	Range	Blast Radius
Fireball	3D/2D each rnd.	+1/0/–2D/–3D	5/10/15
Fragmentation Grenade	6D	+1D/+1/0/–2D	3/8/16
Heat Ray	2D+2	36 ft.	3/6/9
Midnight Assassin	5D	0	3/6/11
Pathogen Fountain	Depends on Pathogen	0	5/10/—
Phone Phrend	4D(to victim)	0	6/12/18 in.
Plastic Explosive	3D	0	1

MEN IN BLACK
THE DIRECTOR'S GUIDE

by Nikola Vrtis

You thought you'd learned enough to correctly train MiB agents...but you thought wrong.

The *Guide* features a Director's screen that allows you to confuse, befuddle, and otherwise confound your agents by hiding valuable information behind it. Plus you get more data on creating your own aliens, devising new and bizarre alien technology, and running neo-awesome assignments!

Anything can happen in a Men in Black game, but whatever you do...

N·E·V·E·R PUSH THE BUTTON

Official *Men in Black* Skill List™

REFLEXES
Acrobatics
Climbing
Dodge
Jumping
Hand-to-Hand Combat
Piloting:
Riding:

COORDINATION
Lockpicking
Marksmanship
Missile Weapons
Sleight of Hand
Thrown Weapons

STRENGTH
Lifting

ENDURANCE
Ignore Pain
Resist Poison
Running
Swimming

KNOWLEDGE
Alien Technology
Computer Ops
Demolitions
First Aid
Forgery
Linguistics
Medicine
Navigation
Scholar:

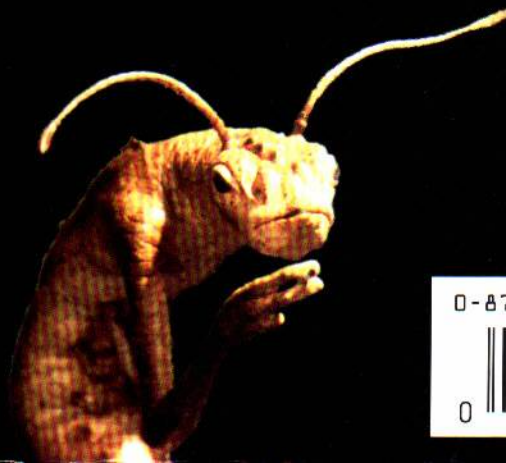**PERCEPTION**
Artist:
Business

Conceal
Hide
Language:
Security
Shadowing
Surveillance
Tracking

CONFIDENCE
Con
Interrogation
Intimidation
Streetwise
Survival:
Willpower

CHARISMA
Charm
Disguise
Persuasion

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