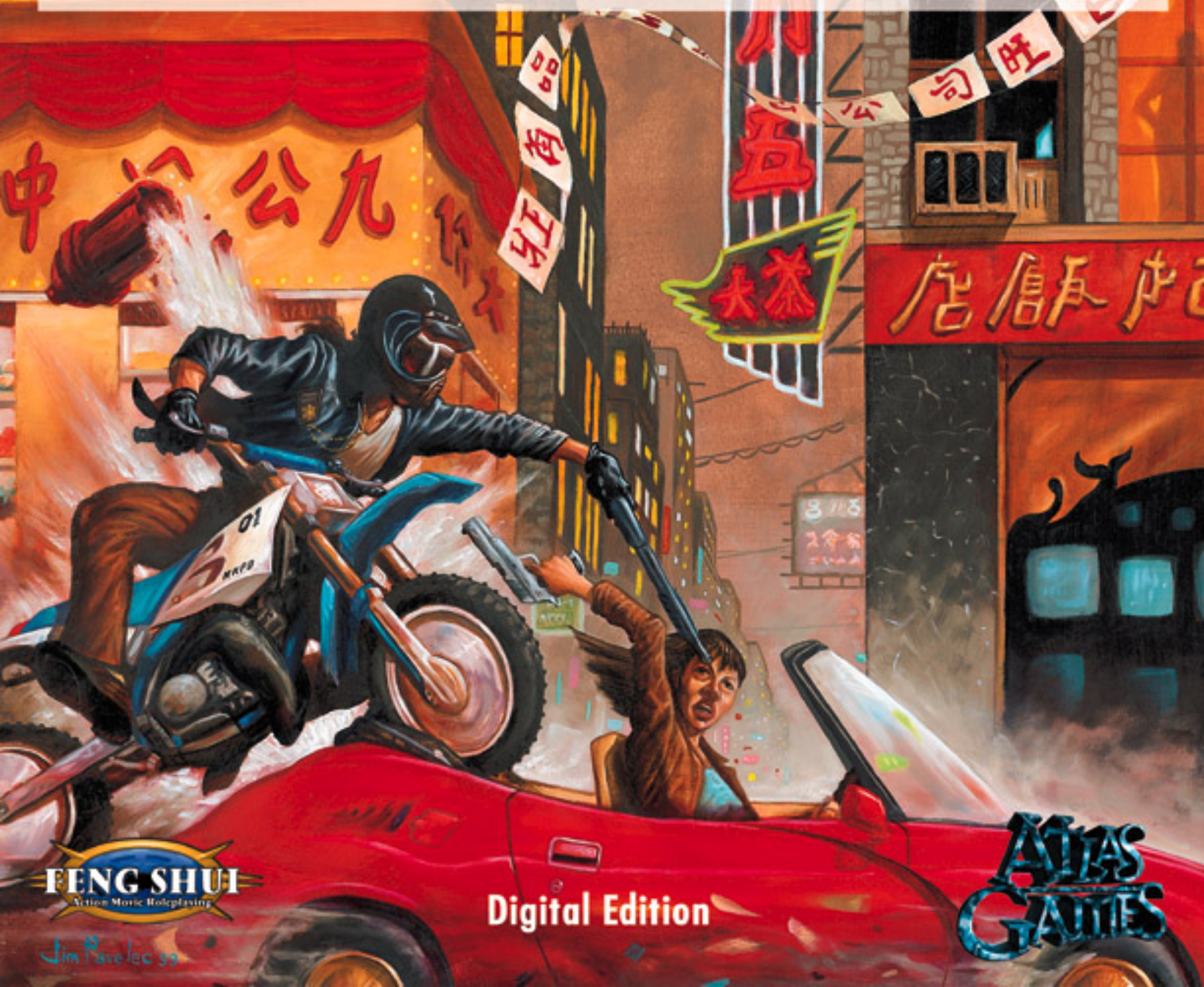


# GOLDEN COMEBACK

The Feng Shui Player's Sourcebook



FENG SHUI  
Action Movie Roleplaying

Digital Edition

ATLAS  
GAMES

Jim Paolello '99

# GOLDEN COMEBACK



by **Bruce Baugh, Tim Dedopulous, Geoff Grabowski,  
Rob Heinsoo, Andy Lucas, Hal Mangold, John Snead,  
Greg Stolze, Tim Toner, and Rob Vaux**

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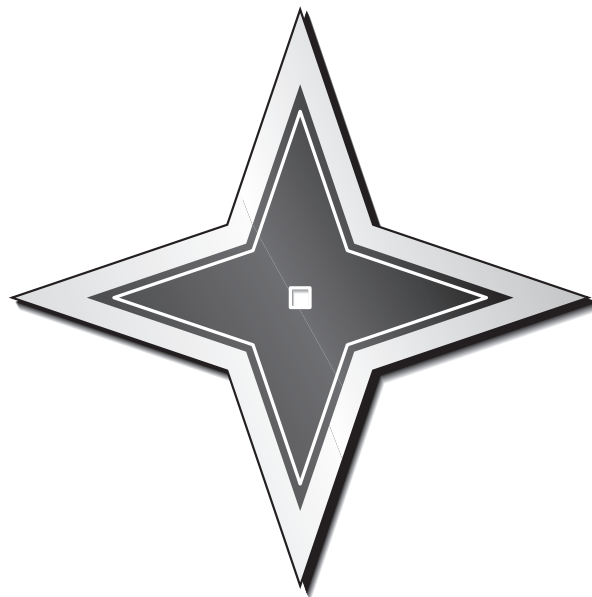




Illustration by Toren Atkinson

# Heroes

THOSE WHO DO NOT LEARN FROM HISTORY ARE DESTINED TO BECOME IT

## THE HISTORY OF THE DRAGONS

By Geoff Grabowski

*In the darkness, outside of space and time, it twists, reaching ever outwards, bathing in the energies emitted as our world rotates around the inner kingdom. It is out there in the dark, burning: too hot to touch, too bright to look at, whispering to us, telling us of the glory of its infinite song. It is the dragon, and even if it does not exist, its voice is the voice of freedom.*

The universe is more than just a collection of forces. There is more than light and gravity and electromagnetism, more even than the strange, nameless forces manipulated by the Buro's arcanotechnicians. There is love, and honor, and courage. Though immeasurable, they are as powerful and important as the magic, superscience and focused self-discipline brought to bear on the Secret War by the various factions of Innerwalkers. Though all factions utilize these forces (just as all factions in one way or another use science, magic and the focussed power of chi), there is one group which holds them in the highest regard.

That group, the so-called "Dragons," are viewed with contempt and concern by most of the Secret War's factions. In a

war dedicated to the manipulation of humanity on a gross scale and the destruction of free will, the Dragons stand for individualist virtues like honesty and heroism. Under normal circumstances, rebellion is an event, to be manipulated or co-opted. But as Innerwalkers, the Dragons are not susceptible to the various factions' control of destiny. As heroes, they are immune to bribery. Rather than easy pawns, the Dragons are free agents, wildcards who threaten the Secret War's paradigm of collectivism and control. This terrifies the other factions—there is nothing more dangerous to the plans of would-be reality despots than idealism and free will, especially not when harnessed to the Dragon's brand of ass-kicking, two-gun righteousness.

## ANCIENT HISTORY

*Jiang Zemin walked along the parapets of West Qi City, his troops assembled in the vastness of the courtyard, the golden banners snapping in the artificial breeze, the scene lit by the soft illumination of the false sun that hung above them. His troops carried crystalline blades and fire-projecting fans, and rode to war on mounts so strange they could only be described as "nondescripts".*

*"Sergeant?"*

*The NCO leapt to attention, his chrome-silver prosthetic arm glittering brightly as he snapped a crisp salute. "Sir!"*

*"Are the men ready?"*



*"YES SIR!" they shouted in unison.*

*"Sergeant! Tell the men to prepare! An army of demonic beasts has begun massing near the uncapped entrance to the Underworld! First, we shall disperse these unrighteous rabble! Then, we shall seal off their kingdom of wickedness. Finally, we shall descend into Hell itself to bring justice to the Inner Kingdom!"*

*The men cheered, not a single shout from many throats, but an impenetrable din, each one shouting as loudly as he could, at his own pace. It was impossible to make out what they said by listening, for their optimism raced out to the distant cavern walls and returned, and all speech was made impossible. Still, Jiang Zemin had heard it often enough. He knew the words they shouted: Jiang Zemin Lung! Jiang Zemin Lung!*

*"Jiang Zemin, Dragon!", the hero whose name would last a thousand centuries. And indeed, it did.*

There has never been a time, even in the memory of the Netherworld's most wizened denizens, when the Dragons did not exist. It seems inevitable that when removed from the tyranny of the chi flow, there are some individuals who cannot help but see the injustice of the Secret War, but who resist the siren song of nihilism. It could well be that the Dragons represent an immutable part of human nature, or of the natural order. Regardless of the reason, the effect is the same—hope, it seems, springs eternal. Though the Dragons would seem to be often decimated, they are never destroyed.

The original group of heroic crusaders to go under the Dragon moniker are (apocryphally) the Silver Dragons, Chinese knights brought together by the great warrior Jiang Zemin to fight corruption and wickedness at the end of the Shang Dynasty. Though most of them died horribly, storming the gates of Hell or standing alone against tremendous odds, it is said that they were given places in the Celestial Bureaucracy when Jiang presided over the creation of the gods.

What precisely this means is anyone's guess. There are three primary ideas. One is that the Silver Dragons are pure fancy—a synthetic legend that that popped out two or three or ten critical shifts ago as an unconscious

projection of anxiety by someone who helped bring the shift about.

Another theory is that there was a Secret War faction known as the Silver Dragons at one point. The real-world history of these heroes has been hopelessly distorted by repeated critical shifts, and all those Innerwalkers who knew the truth have either died, or chosen not to talk about it. There are rumors of a stronghold deep in the Netherworld, somehow mysteriously still remaining Shaped, even after all these centuries.

This fortress is often connected with "West Qi City", the stronghold Jiang and his legendary champions defended. If this is the case, the place isn't just a curiosity for Netherworld archaeologists and explorers. In the legends, Jiang Zemin and the Silver Dragons wield an immense variety of Universe-Muddling Dippers, Demon-Cleaving Halberds, Wind-Fire Wheels and other such euphoniously-named implements of martial arts mayhem. Quan Lo, the Ascended and servants of the Lotus and the Four Monarchs would give their eye teeth for such magical weapons, if they really existed—to say nothing of the current-day Dragons!

The place may not exist, but every time a rumor crops up that it's been found it invariably sends a half-dozen expeditions haring off into the gray and mazy depths of the Netherworld. Sure, maybe it's a waste of time, but who's going to risk it being real and letting the other guy get an edge in the Secret War?

This treasure-hunting bandwagon isn't limited to Secret Warriors who also happen to be butt-kicking kung fu killers. If you listen to the right Netherworld rabble, you'll hear rumors that the Silver Dragons were Transformed Dragon predecessors to the Ascended, supertech warriors in powered battle armor, or masters of a power source radically different from anything in the Secret War today. When the Innerwalkers go looking for the lost city, it's a game *everyone* can play.

Regardless of the theories, the truth is that if anybody knows, they're clammed up tight about it. Nobody who's telling has found the "true origins" of the Dragons or the location of their secret base, despite an awful



lot of looking and hoping on the part of everyone involved, including most of the modern Dragons' rank and file.

## YESTERDAY'S NEWS

Since the legendary days of the Jiang Zemin's Silver Dragons, there have been countless heroes who have carried the banner of freedom high. But these heroes, however great their accomplishments, are now nothing but historical footnotes, more names on the roll of heroes to have fallen in battle against the many-headed hydra Tyranny. Of greater interest is the history of the faction's most recent incarnation, that founded by the rebellious monk Kar Fai and the renegade Arcanotechnician known as the "The Prof."

### Kar Fai

#### Mid-Morning, Kar Fai's House, China

*"Master, Master, come quick!" The young man was breathless, his face smeared with dirt and with dried blood below his nose. Kar Fai opened one eye as he lay on the cot, and scratched himself improperly.*

*"Your voice is the melody of stone bells rolling down a flight of temple steps, Zhen Yi Quan. Why is it that you come to me and awaken me before noon with your clothes torn? My head is ringing like a struck gong and I'm hungry enough to eat like a Buddhist monk. I trust there is some incipient disaster requiring my attention."*

*The student nodded. "Yes, Master!"*

*"Well don't keep me in suspense. Let the story out."*

*"Master, Chiu Bao was beaten up by Golden Candle toughs this morning!"*

*"And?"*

*"So was I! I went to complain to them about how they had treated him. Three of the Color Principle priests jumped me! I was given quite a beating!" Here the young man smiled awkwardly and rubbed his head.*

*"And?"*

*"And they hauled me in front of the Perfect Master, and he knew me! He said to tell you that soon he'd be coming here, to give us all*

### What's With The Longevity?

So why *are* the Dragons so hard to kill? There's no reason to spell it out for certain here in this book. If it becomes relevant, GMs should take their pick of one of the following, or make something up.

- **Metaphysical Function:** The Dragons are the expression of a metaphysical rule. Just as the Netherworld adopts modifiers that balance out the Junctures, there are also karmic balances. There must be a certain amount of freedom in the world, and control of the feng shui sites eliminates that freedom. The more control the various Secret War factions gain, the more they undermine their own reigns.
- **Secret Patron:** Someone, or *something*, takes care of the Dragons. It might be a powerful supernatural being, refugees from an extinct reality, or even the ghosts of former Secret Warriors working behind the scenes. It could be that this support is provided out of a sense of philanthropy or obligation. It could also be that the Dragons' secret patron has more than the common good in mind. It might be a heroic demigod, or the Dragons might be a front for the Vivisectors—it's up to the GM to decide.
- **Nothing:** The operative word behind the Dragons' seemingly eternal nature is "seemingly". So far, they've gotten by on the fact that they're generally composed of class-A asskickers, and that most would-be dictators of reality are the sort of megalomaniacal lunatics whose repressive policies breed the very resistance they try to quash. Sooner or later, someone is probably going to wipe the good guys out and be supreme lord of everything—at least for a little while. Remember, *Feng Shui* is *Hong Kong* action movie roleplaying. It's okay to have everything end in a giant gunbattle where all the heroes buy the farm. Just make sure there's a big montage of how everyone met and saved each other's lives and became the best of friends cut into the blood-spattered death scene.

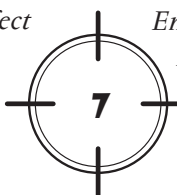
*a beating and teach you a lesson about keeping your temple in order!"*

*"And?"*

*"Then they beat me up more and sent me home!"*

*"Well, Chiu Bao probably deserved it, and you probably just approached things in a confrontational way that made them worse. Still, beating up me and my students is something I think I don't like. We all joined the Guiding Hand in hopes we'd get*

*Enlightened. So far, all we've gotten out of this Perfect Master is criticism, abuse, and treatment more fit for novices at a Buddhist tem-*







## Kar Fai, Old Master

**Sample Dialog:** "What an unfortunate development. I had hoped to spend the night drinking plum wine. Instead... I will have to spend it kicking ass."

**Attributes:** Body 5, Chi 10 (For 2), Mind 7, Reflexes 8

**Skills:** Info/Wine 12, Info/Taoist Poetry 12, Info/Eastern Philosophy 10, Info/Chinese Painting 10, Info/Noodle Making 10, Info/Secret War 10, Leadership 9, Martial Arts 18

**Fu Schticks:** All Path of the Healthy Tiger schticks.

**Unique Schtick:**

*Tough Old Buzzard:* You don't get to be as old as Kar Fai without being able to take a licking and keep on ticking. +3 AV to death checks.

**Weapons:** fist (6), kick (7), spear (9)

*ple. Let's go down to Canton later today to meet him, and see if we can talk to him and get better treatment."*

*Zheng nodded, "Thank you master."*

*"You're welcome, now go away. I want at least another hour of undisturbed sleep before you drag me off to the city for a beating."*

A great many terrible things have been said about the last living Great Grand Master of Furious Tiger kung fu. There are some who say that he is a thief, a murderer and a rapist. They are wrong. Kar Fai only took what he needed to survive, only killed in face-to-face combat, and all the women were quite willing, no matter what they told their husbands. Drunk or sober, Kar Fai had never regretted a day of his lecherous, irascible and perversely virtuous life.

It was inevitable that Kar Fai should hear about Quan Lo the Magnificent, Quan Lo the Perfected, Quan Lo of the jasmine-scented farts. It is said that when the last living master of the Shadowfist heard of the Guiding Hand, he scratched himself in an improper fashion, tied his few belongings to the end of his fishing pole, and set off to learn from this amazing new teacher with a gaggle of bewildered disciples in tow.

It was hard to get an appointment with the Perfect Master, so Kar Fai settled for joining up with the Kung-Fu cult and actually learning the exercises—a terrible mistake. Everyone expected him to goggle at how wise they were and be satisfied with learning one form

every few years. Added to that, they didn't want him to teach *his* forms to the students any more! After Kar Fai's disciples suffered a little too much harassment from his superiors, Kar Fai went down to Canton to chat with the Perfect Master.

After seven disciples and eleven masters of the Color Principles were dispatched to nearby doctors on litters, stretchers and crutches of various sorts, the Perfect Master deigned to speak with the scruffy looking old disciple who had turned up at his door to express discontent. It is wildly improbable that matters actually progressed as popular gossip portrays them. Certainly, the two did not recognize one another immediately. The fight which erupted between the two—and which rapidly expanded to encompass their respective followers—obviously did not begin over a matter so trivial as a woman whose favors the two had at one point competed over. And it is quite unlikely indeed that Kar Fai ended the fight by kicking the Perfect Master squarely in the genitals, or that he was laughing so hard as he fled the scene of the altercation that his disciples had to carry him through the streets of Canton, lest he be caught by the furious followers of Quan Lo and hanged.

Such empty-headed chattering is suitable for magpies and housewives, not educated men of the world.

Regardless of how matters *actually* progressed, it was definitely the case that Canton became a bit too hot for Kar Fai shortly after his encounter with the Perfect Master. Not only were Golden Candle disciples combing the countryside with hooks and nets, the authorities were most displeased over the dozen or so shops which had been demolished in the fighting, and someone had to be held accountable for the subsequent riot.

The circumstances which led Kar Fai to evade capture by sneaking into a Guiding Hand stronghold in the guise of a Yellow Principle monk are quite convoluted. What is important is that while there, the last living master of the Shadowfist made a surprising discovery—he had assumed that the tightly



locked gates led to the base's armory and treasury, not a cave complex that must have gone all the way down to the Yellow Springs. After a little careful eavesdropping, he found the true extent of Quan Lo's sinister plans. The answer was clear—anywhere that Quan Lo's disciples hated as much as modern Hong Kong sounded like it had a lot to recommend it, and it was far, far away from the Emperor's troops and judges. With a pair of commandeered "sun-glasses" and a plastic letter of credit known as a "maccard," Kar Fai set off for the twentieth century. If only he had thought to pick up one of those maps on his way out.

## The Prof

### Midnight, CDCA Manila Research Station, Philippines

*In some places, the rain was like cat's feet, or like gravel against a roof. Here, the weak typhoon could only be described as roaring, punctuated by the artillery-fire crash of tropical lightning. Inside the lab it was the soft glow of fluorescents, the gentle caress of climate controlled air, the comforting solidity of well-insulated concrete, and the well-ordered click-click-click of someone typing rapidly.*

*Anita Dao worked on her reports—months behind, as usual. Damn the United Nations bureaucracy, and damn Boatman for not being able to keep a secretary without either his temper or his lechery sending them off to find another job. She was going to get these reports finished, damn it. It would be her last favor to the project. When she left, all the books would be up to date. Some parting gift, but at least it meant her successor wouldn't have to pick up the pieces the way she'd had to.*

*Behind her, in the dark of the deserted lab, Curtis Boatman slipped the arcanometric transport cuff around his wrist. The permanent ports were supposed to be on-line already, but thanks to Anita's disorganization, they were months behind schedule. Still, he gasped as the suddenly-animate tentacles of the Experimental Small Unit Support Weapon slid around his lower arm, and the weapon pulled itself snugly into firing position. It was so... sweet. He could feel the changes in him already. They had wondered about addiction, and he had to admit—it was definitely... something else. It*

## The Prof, Techie

**Sample Dialog:** "We've seen this effect before, but we don't know yet quite what causes it. Don't worry about getting cancer—that we can treat. Just worry if you start growing horns."

**Attributes:** Body 5, Chi 2, Mind 8, Reflexes 6

**Skills:** Driving 15, Fix-It 17, Guns 12, Info/Science 12, Arcanowave Device 14, Info/Secret War 12, Shaping 14

**Unique Schticks:**

*Techie:* Can spend a Fortune point to have any necessary item.

*Weird Science Metabolism:* Regenerates 1 wound point per sequence due to her arcano-mystic implants, but if she leaves the Netherworld, she is cursed to die from cancer in fairly short order.

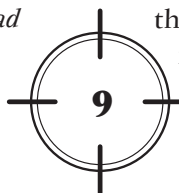
**Weapons:** fist (6), kick (7), M-1911A1 (9/2/7+1)

*was as if the gun knew, was eager, wanted to set about its task. The targeting display printed itself across his retinas, blurring into green unreadability when he hesitated or lost his will. "This," he thought distantly, "is one hell of a feedback loop."*

*Anita Dao stared at the popup that silently placed itself on top of her laptop's workspace. It was a crude drawing of the lab; the monitors in the space behind her had suddenly gone active. Something was emitting in there. Not a surprise—she had installed the arcanomatricies with the possibility in mind that some of the experimental gear might... crawl around on residual power or something. She alt-tabbed over to the low-light cameras, and tabbed the one behind her live. She paused, but only for a split second. Boatman trying to whack her was hardly a shocking revelation. She'd been preparing for this moment ever since he'd gotten into Project Helix Ripper and started running with those ex-Staszi creeps.*

*"Well," she thought to herself as she thumbed the Activate control of her portable Gatemaker, "it looks like the paperwork won't be brought up to date after all."*

*Anita Dao, the revolutionary mind behind the discovery of arcanowave technology, is missing. She vanished from her lab one weekend without a trace—it was as if she was suddenly no longer part of the world. This dismayed many in the UN, who had been counting on her research to help prop up an increasingly unstable world order. It certainly dismayed*





her research partner, Curtis Boatman, who witnessed the event. How, he wondered, could she have disappeared through a flash of grey-white light? Certainly the prototype helix ripper he had been aiming at her couldn't have caused such an effect. He hadn't even pulled the trigger yet, and the arcanowave equations didn't *seem* to allow for gross causality violations. Still, just as long as she didn't pop back up again, it made things even easier. Without a body, there wasn't any chance that in five years, when the weapon was going into widespread deployment, someone might notice how similar Ms. Dao's terrible accident was to the damage inflicted by a helix ripper. Even with Johann running the investigation, you couldn't be too certain.

It was years later, after he discovered the Netherworld, that Boatman began to suspect that his departed former superior might have anticipated his treachery. When the Jammers started using temporary Netherworld portals that vanished in an eerie grey-white flash, Boatman's concern redoubled. Not only was Anita Dao alive, there was abundant evidence she had attuned herself to a number of feng shui sites prior to her disappearance—the idea that she might still be in the Netherworld somewhere performing research was terrifying. Fifteen years ago, she had pulled a trick that Boatman's best people *still* couldn't figure out.

Boatman carefully concealed the matter from Johann—one of his global witch hunts wouldn't do anything positive for the situation. Still, even without Bonengel's help, Boatman has a lot of throw. Every monster-hunter who hit the Netherworld for the last five years has been given a computer-aged photo of Dao and told to look for her, with the story that she's a lost operative. Unfortunately for Boatman, not only is Anita Dao not going to walk up and introduce herself to a team of Architect monster-hunters, she hasn't aged a day since she disappeared.

When Dao escaped Boatman's assassination attempt, she had been planning to vanish for quite some time. The increasingly amoral character of the CDCA had been bothering her. It was pointless to protest that

her discoveries should be used only for peace, and that wasn't how science worked, anyway. More importantly, it was obvious that people thought she had about outlived her usefulness. Curtis Boatman's newfound friends down in Security were obviously about as ambitious as could be, and as a major obstacle, it looked as if a vacation Elsewhere was in order.

For Anita, the choice was simple: life or death. She chose life. Dao stayed "topside" as long as she could, making sure that certain parts of her research notes were destroyed. There were some things Boatman and his fascist pal Bonengel *didn't* need to know. Boatman was too poor a scientist to discover them on his own, and too egotistical to ever bring anyone onto the research staff who surpassed his ability, so at least for the duration of Boatman's career, the secrets of the Netherworld would remain safe.

That was the theory, anyway.

## Enter The Dragons

### A Time Like Every Other Time, The Prof's Lab, The Netherworld

*The world before Kar Fai's eyes blurred in and out of focus. One greyness was like every other, and without intense concentration, they would run together, and double or triple. With so little water in his body, even chi-balancing exercises were useless.*

*He stumbled onward, toward another hallucination of a building. What was the difference—stumbling towards hallucinations, or towards real buildings? The old man could feel the butterfly's wings flex as it prepared to awaken, and he steeled himself. He would stagger through the hallucinatory building with the dignity inherent in his station as the last living master of the Shadowfist, the Great Grand Master of Furious Tiger Kung Fu, and he would die, likewise with dignity, when he found it was false.*

*Unfortunately for Kar Fai's dignity, but luckily for the butterfly's continued dreaming, the building was quite real, and he knocked himself silly after striding resolutely into the stout oak door. His last visions were of a plump, white-haired Chinese angel peering down at him and saying something that sounded like "Hyu liu-ka pre tai fyu kyai yip." Wondering what sort of crazy moon language*



*they spoke in Heaven, he faded into blissful unconsciousness.*

Dao quickly picked up the nickname Prof among the Netherworld denizens she associated with. While she wasn't exactly a hermit, she kept a low profile. Almost a decade later, when the Jammers first appeared, she couldn't resist providing them with the portable portal technology she herself had developed. For security purposes, she made them out of especially durable Shaped material, and almost impossible to reverse engineer. The Prof rationalized that even if it tipped off the Buro about her continued survival, it would bring their scouts down on a nest of short-tempered and heavily-armed primate killing machines, not her lab. Maybe it wasn't the best rationalization. Maybe it was mostly because she saw the Buro as a bunch of repressive bastards who were using her research to systematically enslave the population of planet Earth. Anita didn't spend too long worrying about whether it had been a really wise move or not—there were authoritarian pigs catching bullets from guns wielded by their former simian slaves. Smart idea or not, the Prof was pretty positive on the outcome.

If it hadn't been for Kar Fai, Dao would probably have stayed where she was: pursuing her research and occasionally giving the Battlechimp an ingenious new way to blow up buildings and turn abomination shocktroopers inside out whenever her rage at the Buro hit the boiling point. Luckily for the world, and unfortunately for her research, Dao was awakened one morning by a single loud thud on her door. The thump had been the head of the lost and seriously dehydrated last (barely) living master of the Shadowfist passing out from exhaustion on her doorstep.

Shaking her head, she dragged him into her lab and laid him out on a cot she kept for just such occasions. Twelve hours and a great deal of delirious mumbling later, Kar Fai awakened to find himself being tended by a strange (and not entirely unattractive) Chinese woman. It was a credit to the Great Grand Master that even in his exhausted condition, he managed an impressively suggestive leer.

The Prof, however, was a veteran at the leering old man game, and quickly made it clear that she'd have none of that. Kar Fai was never one to argue with a strongly put point, and in any case, it was abundantly clear that whatever the hell came out of the thing she was pointing at his nose, it couldn't possibly be fun or enjoyable. Having established clear channels of communication, the two of them proceeded to actually become acquainted and (much to the surprise of both) became fast friends. Though they were fundamentally different people, both had a deep love of freedom, and both had similar inner demons that drove them to overperform even as they acted as if they didn't care.

The Prof taught Kar Fai what he needed to know about the "modern" world, but when the time came for him to depart, the techie found herself encouraging him to do something more than kick evil in the snout. There needed to be something bigger than fisticuffs, an organization that could oppose the plans of the various Secret War factions, a fraternal brotherhood (and sisterhood) like the Outlaws of the Marsh. Kar Fai would do the recruiting, and the Prof would lend her know-how, research abilities and contacts among the Jammers. The old man hesitated, then agreed.

Kar Fai was getting too old to be fighting every day of the week. He needed weekends off, and time to rest between battles. With youngsters around, there would be people to handle the light work. More time for fishing, and relaxing, and drinking plum wine. Kar Fai nodded curtly and stepped through the portal to Temple Street. The Prof should prepare, he said. The last living master of the Shadowfist would be back soon, and he would bring heroes with him.

## KAR FAI'S HEROES

### Jake Donovan

Late Morning, LAPD Vice Headquarters, America

*O'Shea leaned in the door of Donovan's office, "There's a chink here to see you."*

*"Why thank you, sergeant. I love to hear*

## Jake Donovan, Maverick Cop

**Sample Dialog:** "Look, pal, I don't want to hear your story. I just want to know what you know. I don't even care if you tell me the truth, but the African guy with the lightning shooting out of his eyes sure does. Frankly, if I were you, I'd start talking—fast."

**Attributes:** Body 8, Chi 0 (For 2), Mind 5, Reflexes 7

**Skills:** Driving 16, Guns 15, Martial Arts 12, Police 8

**Schticks:** Eagle Eye, Lightning Reload, Carnival of Carnage x3

**Weapons:** fist (9), kick (10), Glock-18 (10/2/14+1)

*racial derogation immediately after the DA rips me a new asshole for daring to arrest one of Los Angeles' biggest smack pushers. Please use more offensive slang in my presence. I love it. Now show the fucking 'chink' in."*

*O'Shea left, muttering, and Donovan reached into the left desk drawer for the bottle. He pushed his fingers through his hair—Christ, still grit in there from the cement plant—and poured the Old Crow down his throat. It was wrong, but he couldn't stop himself, and frankly, he didn't care any*

*more. He wasn't the only booze hound on the force, and they wouldn't be firing him any time soon—at least not over the booze. The DA had sounded like he was in a "have your badge" mode fifteen minutes ago, but Bates was always an asshole during election years.*

*The booze was just starting to make everything a little bit warmer and brighter when O'Shea showed two Chinese men into Donovan's office. One looked old enough to have helped build the Great Wall, the other was probably a nephew or number one grandson here to act as an interpreter. Great—ten in the morning and the problems were already multiplying. O'Shea smiled smugly over their shoulders, and Donovan dismissed him curtly. An officious racist desk sergeant today, like that was a change for the LAPD.*

*The Chinese bowed, and Donovan waved for them to sit down. Before they could even start trying to warm up the guanxi, Donovan stopped them with a curt cut of his hand. "Look, I am a vice detective. I don't know how you got my name, or*



Illustration by Toren Atkinson



*why you're here, but if it doesn't involve drugs or hookers, you probably want to talk to someone else."*

*The old man smiled and said something in Chinese to the youngster. The young man said in mildly accented English, "Master Kar Fai says that you are the one who arrested Johnny Tenfeathers last night, in the gunfight at the cement plant, yes? And that Tenfeathers is already back on the street."*

*Donovan raised his eyebrow, "He told you all that in five words?"*

*"No, he told me to tell you what I had already rehearsed. Now, we would like to buy you lunch."*

*Donovan nodded. "Look, are you guys the world's least-clever hitmen or what?"*

*"No," said the old man in slightly accented English, "We are simply better-informed than yourself about the reason for Tenfeathers' release without arraignment, but your office is probably bugged. Please, let's step out for some lunch."*

*Donovan sighed. This was almost sure to either be bunk or a whackjob, but something told him to go with the two Chinese, and Donovan had learned that if he played his hunches, he'd rarely go wrong. Right now, he was having a hunch that he should have taken a substantially bigger drink.*

Kar Fai's first stop was back in Canton, where he hunted up his best pupil Zheng Yi Quan. No easy task, that. When he found him, the young man was passing himself off as an actress in Wuhan, hoping the Golden Candle Society heat would die down soon. Petticoated minion in tow, Fai decamped to the contemporary world, where he filled his most trusted underling in on the situation of the Secret War. After an orientation period (that is, going to all the local theme parks, learning modern slang from old Kojak episodes and picking up on how to drive) they began tracking Ascended agents.

Both Fai and Quan had known about the Transformed Animals previously. You couldn't be in the martial arts world forever without learning of them, they were just too good at kung-fu to not stand out. However, prior to meeting the Prof, the two had no idea of the Ascended were anything more than fugitives from karma. After finding out that the transformed animal conspiracy controlled the modern world, the two martial artists

decided it would be the easiest to watch in the 1990s—after all, its agents would be the most numerous. After some "surveillance" (that is, going to dance clubs and parties), the two of them latched onto a likely suspect—a high-rolling opiates wholesaler named Johnny Tenfeathers. After tracking the suspect to a chemical plant, the two of them witnessed an incredible battle between a police investigator and Tenfeathers' men.

The two decided to approach the investigator, Jake Donovan. Though he was initially reluctant to believe them, the alcoholic Donovan was won over by their concerted attempts at persuasion, which included a trip to the Netherworld. Together, the three of them destroyed Tenfeathers' drug operation. Though the Transformed Eagle escaped, his mooks and a number of Pledged bodyguards were killed. More importantly (at least for the war effort), his arsenal and about a million dollars in small bills fell into the would-be heroes' hands. Suddenly, the heroes were a going concern.

## **Mad Dog McCroun**

### **Late Night, Bangkok Freight Terminal, Thailand**

*"What are they shouting?" Donovan had to bellow over the crowd gathered around two bleeding men in a pit. One, a huge hulking brute, stood over the broken, gasping body of his opponent. The bruiser stared up at the crowd around the edge of the sand-floored pit as they waved their betting slips and cheered him on.*

*Yi Quan leaned close and shouted back, "Just what you think!" The sentence was punctuated by the wet sound of tearing gristle and the bloodthirsty roar of the crowd. Money changed hands among the spectators at a furious pace.*

*Donovan leaned the other way, toward the old man. "You want to hire that guy? He's a fucking pit-fighter! He just broke that man's neck!"*

*Kar Fai shouted back, "And have you not also killed? This McCroun does not kill of his own volition. Like all the fighters in the Death Ring, he is owned by his manager. That is why I had you bring with us the money from Johnny Tenfeathers' mansion. We are not here to*



## Mad Dog McCroun, Big Bruiser

**Sample Dialog:** "I don't kill because I like it. I kill because I have to. If these people aren't stopped, they'll enslave the world. I've been a slave—I won't let it happen, not to anyone."

**Attributes:** Body 11 (Tgh 12), Chi 0 (For 3), Mind 6 (Cha 7, Int 7), Reflexes 7

**Skills:** Guns 10, Info/English Literature 9, Intimidation 12, Martial Arts 13

**Unique Schticks:**

*Big Bruiser:* Makes Death Checks only at 50 wounds. -1 impairment at 40 wounds, -2 impairment at 45 wounds.

**Weapons:** fist (12), kick (13), Winchester 1300 (13/5/8)

*recruit him, we are here to buy him, free him, and hope that he will consent to join us."*

*"And what if his manager won't sell? It looks to me like McCroun is pretty hot property."*

*Kar Fai nodded and thoughtfully took a bite of his chicken shihkabob. "That is why I had you bring not just Johnny Tenfeathers' money, but his arsenal as well."*

America was too hot for the Dragons, and the two martial artists didn't quite feel comfortable taking Donovan into the past with them. Before deciding to pursue Tenfeathers, the two had participated in streetfights to build their meager bankrolls. While fighting, they had learned of the so-called Death Ring, an underground martial arts circuit where the fighters were slaves and the matches to the death.

Such a place seemed like an excellent way to recruit future Dragons, and the three set off for Bangkok, the world capital of Death Ring fighting.

There, masquerading as two fighters with an American owner, the three infiltrated the Death Ring society. Once on the inside, they quickly picked out the infamous Mad Dog McCroun, a enormous pit-fighter with a heart of gold and two brutal meathooks of pure tungsten steel. He, Kar Fai decided, would be their next recruit. The three made an attempt to purchase the fighter, but his "manager" was unwilling to part with such valuable merchandise. This manager, the notorious One-Hand Billy King, was also a fawning slave to the powers of the Underworld, who reduced his fighters to drug-slaves with potions provided by his

Lotus masters. After a rescue attempt went terribly wrong and spawned a battle that reduced King's rural mansion to a smoldering ruin, McCroun asked his liberators what had brought them to his rescue.

The three informed the wounded giant of the facts of the secret war, and sent him with Zheng Yi Quan to the Netherworld. There, the pit-fighter received treatment from the Prof for years of physical abuse and his addiction to the Lotus' mind-control serums, and Quan recuperated from wounds suffered in the fiery battle to liberate McCroun. Both knew the time to strike their blows for freedom would come soon.

## The Golden Gunman

### Early Afternoon, Marrakech, Morocco

*The Golden Gunman: More deadly than Carlos the Jackal, better funded than Osama Bin Laden, and without the high profile that had been the kiss of death to the careers of both. To those who knew of him, he was the most feared hit man in the world, a dagger pointed at the heart of the West. A hundred assassinations in the Middle East, India, the Balkans and the former Soviet Union all bore his trademark precision touch. They still couldn't even get his picture right for their composite sketches—as if every Muslim in the world was a dark-skinned arab!*

*Each car bomb was a blow against the dogs who would hold the Islamic nations in chains. Each assassination was a lead fist raised against the bastards who had transported all the men in his village for harboring "counterrevolutionary tendencies." It had been nothing to the Russian MVD troops—to them, it was just another village of blackasses, off to the uranium mines. To the tearful six year old boy who had watched his father dragged off to what even his child's mind realized was certain death, it had been more than that. He remembered, as if it had just happened, the tail lights of the truck as it drove off down the highway, the pale faces of village's men. From such sights are born the death of empires.*

*And now there were two men here to see him here at his Marrakech office—one white, one Chinese. They could be from anyone, and they were presenting him with a most improbable*



story. "So you mean to tell me, gentlemen, that not only have you put together this so-called 'story of my life,' but that you want me to believe that the forced transport of this entire village where I am alleged to have grown up, it was done not for political reasons, but to secure the land the village stood on? And that you know who gave the orders that this be carried out?"

The old Chinese man nodded, but his white companion just kept staring stiffly forward. "Your friend doesn't like me, I don't think, Mr. Kar," the Gunman paused and smiled sharply. "What exactly is it that you want? Money? Power? The names of my contacts in the 'Islamic terror underground'?"

The Chinese man shook his head. "No, we just want you. This is not a war that will be won by armies, but by heroes. You are the most talented killer alive today. We know who caused your family and village to be destroyed, and there are many others who have been victimized. Someone must fight for them, for they cannot defend themselves. We would like your help in our secret war."

"You want me to abandon my cause to chase off after the killers of my father? What makes you think that I would abandon a holy war to pursue personal vendetta?"

"Nothing. The people who stand behind this also ultimately stand behind the governments and societies you oppose. This is not abandoning your cause, it is simply taking the battle closer to the true enemy."

The killer stroked his chin thoughtfully. Maybe they were insane, but if the papers checked out, then perhaps there was something to what they said. He had not become the man he was today without taking risks. The Gunman opened his hands and smiled winningly. "If your evidence is legitimate, then I am 'on board,' as you would say. I have only one condition."

The Chinese man nodded and gave a beatific grin. "Yes?"

"That Mr. Donovan smiles." He absorbed the look of shock on their faces. "Yes, I know who you are. The restaurant where you enjoyed lunch with my associate yesterday has friends of my cause on the staff. Your fingerprints were taken and run through all the major databases." The Asian hit man smiled thinly, "I must say, Mr.

### The Golden Gunman, Killer

**Sample Dialog:** "The souls of those who die in the pursuit of a righteous cause travel straight to Paradise. I am not afraid to die, but you, I sense, may have some compunctions otherwise."

**Attributes:** Body 5, Chi 0 (For 5), Mind 7, Reflexes 9

**Skills:** Deceit 12, Driving 14, Guns 15, Info / "Islamic Terror Underground" 14

**Schticks:** Lightning Reload, Both Guns Blazing x 5

**Weapons:** fist (6), kick (7), Beretta 92 (10/2/15+1)

Donovan, for a 'free' nation, your country does an admirable job keeping track of its citizens. So please, smile. If it pains you to work with a blood-thirsty terrorist such as myself, imagine how I feel, giving an interview to a former Los Angeles police inspector."

The policeman smiled ruefully and extended his hand, and the assassin shook it. "You know, Mr. Donovan, you remind me of myself, had I not pursued the path I currently follow."

The detective shook his head, "I don't know if I should be flattered or offended."

"Be both, by all means. And please, have a drink. While I of course do not partake, I do keep refreshments on hand for the unsubmitted."

Donovan shook his head once, firmly, as if performing an act of great will. "No, thanks. I'm trying to stop."

While McCroun sweated through his withdrawal and Zheng Yi-Quan discovered how much flesh wounds itched as they healed, Kar Fai and Donovan headed west. They travelled into the Middle East and the former Soviet Union, in search of the elusive Golden Gunman, a Muslim assassin infamous in underground circles. Data stolen from Tenfeathers' mansion had described something called Project Prometheus in Russia, an attempt to build a network of feng shui sites hidden in our modern era, but destined to become active in the future, bringing the transformed animals into dominance in the 2056 juncture as well.

The process of securing these sites had dispossessed the Gunman's family, his father sent to a death sentence in the Soviet labor camp system. After months of futile searching, the two managed to arrange a meeting



with the killer in a Moroccan safe house. There, they confronted the Asian Muslim with the brutal facts of the Secret War, of the Ascended tyranny over the modern world and of their role in the murder of his father and the destruction of his village.

While the Gunman was reluctant to work with Westerners or Chinese, both of whom had persecuted his co-religionists, he was willing to make an exception, given the circumstances. Some battles were larger than any human differences. Using the Gunman's extensive web of contacts in the Muslim underground, the Dragons began their campaign. At first, the heroes struck primarily at the Ascended's Project Prometheus, travelling the southeastern Soviet Union, burning the transformed animals' ring of Russian feng shui sites.

Of course, when you're burning the feng shui sites of the secret masters of the world, they get pissed off, especially when you're wasting Pledged and transformed animal assassins along the way.

Though the Dragons destroyed the Ascended's lethal time capsule of geomantic power, the contemporary juncture was too hot for the heroes. For Jake Donovan, it was off to the Netherworld, for "R&R," meaning training with McCroun and a crash course in the Secret War. For the others, there was no rest, only missions to recruit new Dragons in other the other junctures.

## Iala Mané

### Early Morning, SS *Englebreit*, Mogadishu Harbor

*"I see why you brought me, rather than the American."*

*Kar Fai nodded, "He is a good and honorable man, but handicapped by his background. Besides, you speak Swahili. I would actually have sent the two of you, if I didn't know you would be at one-another's throats before the first day ended."*

*The Gunman nodded and peered out at the bustle of the Mogadishu docks from the third deck of the steamer. Teamsters and dockhands were waiting at the pier, ready to unload supplies from Europe and Palestine, or laden with*

*bundles of bananas and bully beef. "It's much more prosperous now than in my time."*

*Kar Fai nodded, and there was an almost imperceptible bump as the harbor pilot brought the steamer to against the dock. Already, even as the dockhand struggled with the tiedowns, cargo handlers were horsing the loads off the ship.*

*"And this 'Leopard Man' is worth walking all the way across Africa?"*

*"The Leopard King is a hero like few others, and Pledged agents control the Gold Coast. We do not need to recruit him, no, but then we did not need to come to Marrakech for you, either."*

*The Gunman smiled, "Point taken, old man."*

*Kar Fai nodded and walked casually toward the passenger gangplank. The assassin followed. There was no need to hurry—they had a two month trip to reach the Temple of the Leopard King, and untold hazards along the way. Conservation of energy would be the key to success.*

Kar Fai and the Golden Gunman travelled to 1850s Africa where they investigated rumors of the so-called Leopard King, a legendary figure in Colonial Africa of whom they had heard. Said to be a warrior exiled from his people and invested with power by the Leopard spirits, he lived in seclusion deep in the central-African wilderness. It was said this fiercely independent warrior was a champion of the oppressed and an enemy of the various Imperialist nations, and so the two went to see if he could somehow be recruited into the Dragons, or if he was simply a territorial creature.

After months of hazardous foot travel from Mogadishu to the Congo, the two reached the Temple of the Leopard King where Iala Mané ruled his refugee people. Fugitives from oppressive colonies and tribes all across Africa, the people of the Leopard King sheltered in his shadow.

The two heroes brought news of the Secret War to the King, but he was disinterested. What did he care for the rest of the world, or for fate? Leopard lived free, in the here and now. Only by passing the gruelling Trial of the Jungle and proving themselves also worthy of the title

Leopard King did the two manage to attract Mané's undivided attention. The needs of his fellow predators were not so easily



ignored, and now that the arguments were coming from equals, the idea that the control of the world's chi flow essentially amounted to slavery for all living beings seemed more reasonable.

With many regrets, the Leopard King entrusted his people into the hands of the Leopard Guard, and set off to fight the Secret War with these strangers from afar. But before he left, he swore an oath before the Iron Crucible that had forged him into the being he was: He would return victorious, or his spirit would forever haunt the tyrants who had torn him from his land and people.

## Ting Ting

**Mid-Evening, Somewhere Outside Canton, China**

*"Would you believe you're just the people we're looking for?"*

*The Brothers of the Green Wood looked unconvinced. Brothers of the Green Wood—what a poetic name for bandits. There were reasons for their banditry, of course: limited opportunity, poverty, flights from prosecution and oppression. That didn't make them any less bloodthirsty, though. Luckily, Yi Quan knew just how to deal with such situations.*

*It was difficult to perform the Torrent of Fury's intricate dance without causing serious injury. As he spun through his reverse backflip and kicked out at opponents on both sides of him, Quan reminded himself how important it was that none of the bandit leader's followers be killed, or even seriously injured. As a result, he kicked for the sternum, and not the solar plexus or throat.*

*Some seconds later, Yi Quan stood in the midst of a field of groaning bodies, his breathing deep and regular. Like all acts of supernatural martial arts, the Torrent of Fury depleted the body's reserves of breath at a stupendous rate. A Kung Fu practitioner who did not replenish his chi properly would soon sicken and die. Not that they didn't teach you breathing years before they taught you the secret katas, but it was worth reflecting on at moment like this, when one was waiting for some members of a bandit gang to regain their breath.*

*Finally, one of the brigands raised himself unsteadily to his knees. Excellent. Yi Quan smiled, "Now, I presume you will take me to*

## Iala Mané, Pulp Occult Hero (Ghost)

**Sample Dialog:** "Leopard hungers."

**Attributes:** Body 8, Chi 0 (Mag 8, For 4), Mind 5 (Cha 8), Reflexes 8

**Skills:** Creature Powers 14, Info/1850s Africa 10, Leadership 14, Sorcery 14, Martial Arts 14

**Creature Schticks:** Flight, Insubstantial, Inevitable Comeback, Damage Immunity: Bullets, Immunity: Summoning

**Sorcery Schticks:** Weather, Influence

**Unique Limitation:** Cannot be healed via the Medicine skill unless the practitioner is schooled in 69 AD.

**Weapons:** fist (9), kick (10), lightning bolt (10)

*your leader, the girl-sage known as Ting Ting?"*

*The Brother of the Green Wood nodded unsteadily, and looked over Quan's shoulder. Zheng was almost frightened out of his sandals by the sound of the young woman's voice speaking behind him.*

*"He will not need to take you anywhere, warrior. I am already here."*

Meanwhile, Kar Fai's student Zheng Yi Quan had gone to the 69 AD juncture, there to recruit the famous scholar and bandit queen Ting Ting. Fabled with Chih the Brigand as one of the great "wise outlaws" of Taoist myth, she seemed like a fine choice to recruit. As in their quest for Iala Mané, the Dragons had nothing to go on but the legends of yesterday. Quan found Canton of 69 AD to be not so very different than that of his own era. Both were unsettled—his own from the fall of the Manchu dynasty, and 69 from the end of the Warring States era and the tumultuous rise and fall of the First Sovereign Emperor.

Zheng Yi Quan spent months tracking the stories of the bandit queen, following her and her Brothers of the Green Wood across a landscape devastated by centuries of warfare and rife with supernatural monsters. The stories of Zheng Yi Quan and his travelling companions are a compelling tale in and of themselves.

In the end, he found the woman—more a girl, really—with her bandits. To his surprise, she had already *founded* the Dragons on her own.

She and her band of bandit-heroes battled oppression, borrowing their name—as always—from Jiang Zemin and his leg-



## Ting Ting, Bandit-Scholar (Ninja)

**Sample Dialog:** "You say that I am young. That is true. You say that I am innocent. That is also true. You say that I am weak, and I can only point out to you how many of your men's bodies I stepped over to confront you face-to-face."

**Attributes:** Body 8 (Tgh 9), Chi 0 (For 3, Fu 8), Mind 6, Reflexes 6

**Skills:** Deceit 12, Info/Chinese Classics 10, Intrusion 15, Leadership 13, Martial Arts 15

**Schticks:** Friend of Darkness, Dark's Soft Whisper, Braid Strike (Blade of Darkness), Gathering the Darkness, Strike from Darkness

**Weapons:** fist (9), kick (10), hook sword (11)

## Zheng Yi Quan, Martial Artist

**Sample Dialog:** "He looks pretty small to me. I think if you want a fight, you should try me."

**Attributes:** Body 7, Chi 0 (Fu 8, For 3) Mind 7, Reflexes 7

**Skills:** Info / Eastern Philosophy 12, Leadership 10, Martial Arts 16

**Schticks:** Prodigious Leap, Abundant Leap, Flying Sword, Vertical Charge, Gathering of the Clouds, Awesome Downpour, Rain of Fury, Torrent of Fury

**Weapons:** fist (8), kick (9), straight sword (10)

endary band of heroes. Zheng recruited her into the "larger" Dragon organization and took her and her men into the Netherworld so they needn't worry about an unfortunate turn of events laterally reincarnating them into secret policemen. She wasn't willing to abandon her juncture and her men to fight the Secret War on other fronts, but if the Dragons needed aid in 69, she and her bandits would be there.

## Early Triumphs

**Late Night, Database Complex N-27, North American Administrative Region #23452 ("Northern New York")**

*Iala Mané was brutal and assured, full of the Leopard Spirit. He gestured, and lightning flickered from his fingers. Bullets rained on him like water, and he laughed as they ran off like the rain. Amused, he killed those who would enslave the world. He pushed in their heads, and ripped out their ribs, and ate nothing of the remains. Leopard killed, even when it did not hunger.*

*The doorway hissed open, and the abomination stepped through, its steel-clawed feet clanking on the metal floor grate. It had been*

*some sort of rhinoceros-headed demon before the treatments. Now its limbs were wreathed in arcanocybernetic augmentation, and its soul chained with neuro-spiritual implants. Its cybernetic third eye scanned over Mané, and it rose up to its full eight-foot height.*

*"Yes," shouted the African. "Come to Leopard. Come and I will liberate your spirit before I plunge it unto the Underworld."*

*As the two crashed together in savage combat, Donovan took a swig from his flask and grimaced. He nodded to Kar Fai, and the two slipped along the edges of the room, past the combatants, towards the auxiliary interface for the Project Orpheus databank.*

*As the door hissed closed behind them, the Chinese man shook his head. "I am glad the Leopard King fights for us, and not against us."*

*Donovan nodded, "You aren't kidding. Is he even human?"*

*The old man shook his head, "Not precisely. The spirit of the Leopard has made him its own. He is not precisely inhuman, but he was definitely changed by the experience."*

*Donovan laughed. "No kidding," he said, as he pushed the door release to the auxiliary database interface. The door snapped upwards with the sinuous speed of a magentic or pneumatic drive, and the mooks behind it leveled two dozen rifles at the pair.*

*"I thought you said this was going to be easy, Kar Fai," muttered the cop out of the corner of his mouth.*

*"No, no, I distinctly recall it was you who said that," the old man replied, and then the battle began.*

After the group gathered again, new recruits in tow, the heat had cooled down a bit. The Dragons' operations had two rough directions, though they went up against pretty much everyone in the Secret War in the three years between their attack on the Architect's offshore casino base in the South China Sea and the terrible bloodshed of Operation: Killdeer.

The first major target was the Guiding Hand, and its efforts to take root in the 69 AD juncture. Quan Lo was backing the palace scholars in an attempt to create a great purge among the eunuchs and institute



Confucian reforms. The reforms would of course include the construction of Hand-run temples and academies on certain key feng shui sites. Kar Fai, Ting Ting and Zheng Yi Quan spent many months blackmailing or eliminating certain key martial artists and Confucian scholars to side-track this reform effort—a gambit which caused them no small amount of heartache. While it meant that the Hand wouldn't seize control of the future, it also meant that Gao Zhang's terrible plots could continue undisturbed.

To assure themselves that Gao Zhang's schemes didn't mature, Mad Dog McCroun, The Golden Gunman and Iala Mané stood on watch in the modern day, gunning down the possessed madmen, the walking corpses and the unnameable horrors that the Lotus hurled at the modern Sodom of Hong Kong in an attempt to seize the city's powerful feng shui. Indeed, so effective were they that the Lotus had to retreat from the modern juncture and regroup, pinning their hopes on the demonic island Kun Chau and otherwise refocusing their efforts on the 1850 juncture.

The Dragons were not alone in their fight, however. Zheng Yi Quan had made contact with not only Ting Ting's band of heroes, but also cells of self-initiated Dragons operating in the China of the 1850s as well. Pui Ti, the Queen of the Ice Pagoda, had begun to regret her family's somewhat unfortunate record as despot lords of reality, and lent the Dragons covert aid. This aid may also have been inspired by the Queen's infatuation with Jake Donovan, though it's believed their romance was never consummated.

Likewise the Jammers shared the Dragons' sentiment, if not their methods, and owed the Prof some pretty serious favors. Many a Dragon operation ended in the apocalyptic crashing of Furious George's weaponry, as the Jammers swept in to torch the remains and loot the survivors for pocket change. This wasn't just useful for heavy firepower backup: If a feng shui site was burnt to the ground and covered in bright orange Orangotank fur, there weren't going to be too many questions asked about who was responsible. The Jammers didn't just

back the Dragons up, they took the heat for them as well.

## OPERATION KILLDEER

### A Time Like Every Other Time, The Prof's Lab, The Netherworld

*The voice rasped over the NCell. "This is the Gunman—I'm calling from one of my safehouses."*

*The Prof nodded. "What happened? Why hasn't anyone reported back in from the Red Lantern yet?"*

*The Asian's voice was distant over the crackling line. "They're dead. McCroun, Donovan, Mané—all dead. Adrienne Hart was there as well, and she's dead too. There is no God but God, and no fate but that which he prepares for us."*

*"No."*

*"Yes. Please—tell Kar Fai. I'm going to lay low for a while and try to gather information through my sources. I'll be in touch."*

*The dialtone buzzed ceaselessly in her ear, and decades of chi-suppressed age weighed on the Prof. God—Donovan, McCroun, even Mané—just like that, they had been snatched away. Her feet like blocks of wood, Anita Dao stumbled towards the door of the lab. "Kar Fai! Kar Fai! Come quickly—there's horrible news! Horrible news."*

### Seconds Later, In A Hidden Fortress, Afghanistan

*The Gunman turned to the bandaged Leopard. "You do well?"*

*"Leopard lends me his strength, and your doctors as well."*

*"Thank you. Please, make yourself comfortable. My brothers and I are quite used to being hunted, we have learned to make the most of it. Think of it as a chance to catch up on your reading. Would you like some fruit juice?"*

*Mané nodded, and the hitman poured him a large glass of something tart, he couldn't tell what. Sipping it, he glanced around the small but tidy cave. A game of Civilization blinked silently on the screen of the laptop across the room, and several books lay open on the desk. "You don't trust the Dragons any more—you told them I was dead."*

*"Let's not use unkind words like suspi-*

cion. However becoming that eye patch is, you need time to recover. It makes no difference if I use that time to ascertain you were not betrayed by one of our own people.”

Mané nodded, “Where are we?”

“A monastery of Sufi cenobites, in 2056 Afghanistan. Hiding in the belly of the beast, as it were.”

Mané nodded, “Leopard seemed stronger.”

The Gunman smiled and sat down at the laptop to continue his play. Mané’s predatory eyes slid across the desk and lighted on the silver flask that sat beside the laptop screen. “That is Donovan’s flask—how did you get it?”

“He gave it to me, before he left—he said he thought he might not be coming back. It’s funny—I had thought to have a drink to his memory when I found out he was dead. I would never do such a thing normally, but he was a hero, and it was how he would have wanted it.”

“And?”

“It was filled with water, and had been for

Allah only knows how long: there wasn’t even a hint of liquor in the taste.”

Mané nodded, and as he met the hit man’s piercing, troubled eyes, he saw them full of tears. The Asian turned away to the screen, where a rifleman flashed plaintively, asking for directions. The Gunman muttered something that might have been a prayer, and issued directives of conquest to fictitious armies while the noise of the night faded into the silence of the desert day.

Alas, all good things must come to an end, including the Dragons’ glorious career of heroism. The Ascended hadn’t forgotten the damage the Dragons did to Project Prometheus. When the Lodge needed an example to impress Huan Ken and Ming I into cooperating in the construction of the Molten Heart, destroying the meddlesome humans who had thwarted their plans to take the 2056 juncture was first on the list of possibilities.

In order to accomplish this, the Ascended “leaked” to the Dragons that the Lotus was



Illustration by Toren Atkinson



moving in on the Red Lantern Inn, a feng shui site in 1850s Canton that the intercepted message made out to be much more important than it in reality was. The Dragons scurried to intercept, sending Iala Mané, Mad Dog McCroun and Jake Donovan to the location posthaste. Meanwhile, the Lotus had been likewise maneuvered into believing the Tavern would be the site of major emergency meeting of the Dragons. Both sides came packing for bear, and the Ascended sent Adrienne Hart—one of the Pledged—to make sure that whoever was left standing at the end went down.

But that wasn't the only purpose of Operation Killdeer. Adrienne Hart had herself become a liability. She and the Unpoken Name were obviously involved or about to be. To make matters worse, her hesitation in Caracas, when she failed to kill Mad Dog McCroun, had led to investigation into her past. Careful screening of records had shown her to have spent seven years in the same orphanage as McCroun, and interviews with other children and staff of that orphanage showed them to be closely linked. After Hart had dispatched anyone on the scene at the Red Lantern, she herself was to be removed by the shadowy assassin known only as Mr X.

Matters didn't work out quite as well as had been hoped, however. While McCroun, Donovan, Jueding Shelun and the Thing With 1,000 Tongues were dispatched, Mané lived, blind in one eye but still breathing. Likewise, Kar Fai, Zheng Yi Quan and Dragon recruits Johnny Tso and Tricia Kwok survived alive and well, as did the bandit queen Ting Ting. Mister X was as good as his contract, however—Adrienne Hart died on the cobbles in Canton that day.

## Post-Killdeer

### A Time Like Every Other Time, The Prof's Lab, The Netherworld

*Zheng Yi Quan leaned towards Kar Fai as they left the Prof sleeping quietly on her cot. "Is she as bad as she looks, master?"*

*The old man nodded, "She is not dying—her chi is artificially regulated by some sort*

*of implant system. She does, however, wish she could, and her physical condition is deteriorating because of it."*

*Zheng pursed his lips, "It was the death of McCroun, was it not?"*

*Kar Fai nodded again. "Yes. They were close—I think she saw him as the son she cannot have. It may be quite some time until she recovers."*

*Now it was Yi Quan's turn to nod thoughtfully, as he began to sweep up the broken glass shards that littered the lab. Kar Fai helped him clean for some time, then turned to his student. "Mané is still alive, isn't he?"*

*"My intuition, and my interviews with those who saw the battle, tell me that this is so. Ting Ting and Johnny Tso went to the Temple of the Leopard King, and they say the Iron Crucible is cold, and there was no sign of a new King. I think he is with the Gunman."*

*"Kidnapped? Have we been betrayed?"*

*"I don't think so, Master. I think Iala Mané and the Golden Gunman no longer trust us completely. Despite their brutality, both are righteous men. Even if they do not return to us, both will continue to fight the Secret War on their own."*

*Kar Fai nodded. "We must begin recruiting again, Quan. Even if only Donovan and McCroun are gone, that is too many. We must grow, not shrink. It would please me if you would assist me in the search for new Innerwalkers."*

*Zheng smiled, "It would be a pleasure for me as well, Master."*

*Kar Fai put his hand on the young man's shoulder, "Zheng Yi Quan, you are no longer my student. Please, we have gotten drunk together. Call me by my name."*

*His former student blushed, "Yes, Master Kar Fai, as you wish."*

*The old man shook his head. To be young and incorrigible again.*

After the debacle at the Red Lantern Tavern, the Dragons were shattered for long enough that the Jammers, the Ascended and two of the Monarchs could use the Jammer's black-box portal generator in a sorcerous machine known as the Molten Heart. It was only through the direct intervention of The Prof, pleading with Battlechimp Potemkin



that the Jammers were certain to be betrayed, that the Jammer security cordon around the Fire and Darkness Pavilion was opened. Though it poured Ting Ting, Johnny Tso, Tricia Kwok, Kar Fai and even the Prof herself, to destroy the Heart before the Ascended could cement their victory.

Today, the Dragons are a shell of their former selves. Ting Ting resides in 69, attempting to single-handedly hold off the Guiding Hand, while Tricia Kwok and Johnny Tso stand an unsteady watch in the modern day, and Zheng Yi Quan and his “students”—the Dragons of the 1850s—walk the moral knife-edge between supporting the British and Manchus while still foiling the Hand’s political ambitions. The Golden Gunman is gone, back into the Muslim underground, and he has taken Iala Mané with him. Perhaps he will return, or perhaps not. Kar Fai and the Prof both know that the Dragons need new blood, if they are to do anything but watch as the Secret War continues. This is where the players come in. The world needs heroes, and they, perforce, must be them.

## YOUR FRIENDS & NEIGHBORS

By Geoff Grabowski, Hal Mangold  
and Tim Toner

The Dragons may be gone, but anyone who’s spent time in the Netherworld knows that almost nothing is ever gone for good. The faces, names and stories may change, but pretty soon there will be Dragons again as there were Dragons before, as there have always been selfless heroes dying pretty deaths to save the world from tyranny.

When the new Dragons show up, there are a number of people who are ready to provide advice, support, comfort and aid to them. They’re not going to call themselves “Dragons”—just like they’re not going to paint big bullseyes on their foreheads. But they’re sympathetic to the cause. What follows is a passel of characters who may be ready, willing and even eager to help out the next

batch of heroic types. Of course, they may also be treacherous, backstabbing turncoats, ready to set up the next pretty death in exchange for some power or wealth.

Try to figure out which ones are the spies and quislings. I think you’ll be surprised!

### Sonny “The Pakman” Pak, Arms Dealer

For some people, guns are merely tools. For others, they’re phallic symbols and proofs of manhood. For Sonny Pak, they are neither. For the Pakman, guns are life itself. For the last 20 years, Sonny Pak has roamed the American southeast with his gym bag full of gun, selling his wares to those in need. Times change, of course, and like any good businessman, Sonny Pak changes with them. Sonny used to drive a conversion van in the late ’70s and early ’80s, now he rolls in a minivan. Likewise, his regular schedule of bar and strip club appearances (“Just leave a message for the Pakman!”) has been replaced by an “unassigned” Iridium number. But one thing never changes—the unflagging devotion to his job.

That devotion earned the young Korean man his moniker in the early 1980s, when Mickey “the Finn” Ironbay observed that Sonny Pak sells guns and makes money the way Pac Man eats up dots. And how true it was. Mickey the Finn has been dead for nearly ten years now, but Sonny Pak is still there, selling to hit men, terrorists, gun enthusiasts and government agencies who wish to go untroubled by traceable purchases.

But other than his holy mission of providing firearms to the gun-needy of the world, few know much about Sonny Pak. You can hide a lot behind a personality that’s nothing more than an ethnic stereotype, and the Pakman has a lot to hide. Since he was seven years old, Sonny Pak has known he wasn’t like the other children. His work as an arms dealer has been a rebellion, of a sort. True rebellion against the Ascended is impossible, after all. Like his father before him, and like *his* father before *him*, Sonny Pak has been one of the Pledged since he



can remember, part of a family loyal to the Lodge since their ascent to power.

## “Suckerpunch Suzy” Wei, Two-Fisted Sysadmin

The Pacific and Carribean are lands of vast opportunity if you’re a system administrator. All you need is a willingness to work for people who aren’t exactly criminals—at least not by the laws of the places from which they operate. So what if you can pencil in any name you want on your Antiguan passport application? It’s legal in Antigua.

Susan Wei was a sysadmin in Hong Kong who decided that sticking around to see if the Chinese would be rolling in the tanks sooner or later was probably a poor idea, and cut out before the holiday rush. As a fairly talented admin, she had little trouble finding work with a Javanese bank. Suzy was also a pretty heavy-duty party grrrl, and the fact that the Javanese night life was rumored to be mighty fine didn’t hurt either.

The problem is, trouble seems to find Suzy as easily as she finds jobs and parties. The Javanese club scene was great, but the bank turned out to be a front for Islamic militants, and she got out of the country three steps ahead of the secret police. Then it was off to Russia, and hoo boy, did that come out badly. Luckily, she’d been thrown in the drunk tank for starting a fistfight at the discotheque the night before they raided the bank. Now she’s in Antigua, working for this Chinese expatriate named Johnny Tso—he’s some kinda young businessman with some really really weird friends. And hey, once you get past the tit-clubs aimed at offshore businessmen, the nightlife is pretty hot too.

Still, something tells Suzy that trouble can’t be too far behind.

## Denise Levoussier, Genteel Sorceress

Denise Levoussier grew up in the early Victorian era as the daughter of privilege.

### Sonny Pak, Gun Dealer

**Sample Dialog:** “You want guns? I got crazy gun! Got in shipment from Europe this week—Russian AK-74s! So bad to get hit by, the Afghanistanis called them ‘poison needle,’ eh? This time, they even come with the firing pin!”

**Attributes:** Body 4 (Con 5, Tgh 6, Mov 3), Chi 0 (For 3), Mind 5 (Int 7), Reflexes 4

**Skills:** Guns 8, Info/History 8, Info/Guns 15

**Unique Schticks:**

*Van Full of Firepower:* Whatever it is, however big or rare it is, if it’s a gun, bomb, missile or other man-portable implement of havoc, Sonny can spend a fortune point and pull it out of his van or rucksack.

**Weapons:** fist (5), kick (6)

### Susan “Suckerpunch Suzy” Wei, Two-Fisted Sysadmin (Everyman Hero)

**Sample Dialog:** “Great. My boss turns out to be an interdimensional terrorist and I get dragged off to the ‘Inner Kingdom’ where I’m forced to maintain computers that don’t really exist running operating systems from alternate realities and there’s only one dance club.”

**Attributes:** Body 6, Chi 0 (Fu 1, For 10), Mind 7 (Wil 8), Reflexes 6

**Skills:** Driving 12, Guns 10, Info/\*nix 13, Info/Geek Culture 12, Info/Clubs 12, Info/G&I-EBM-Darkwave 10, Martial Arts 14

**Fu Schticks:** Hands Without Shadow

**Unique Schtick:**

*Everyman Hero:* Spent fortune points do not subtract from Fortune stat. +1 AV bonus with improvised weapons until they get boring.

**Weapons:** fist (7), kick (8)

Born to a major player in the Paris commercial bond market and a British aristocrat, she inherited her mother’s beauty and her father’s business acumen. She also inherited both parents’ sorcerous aptitudes, and learned her mother’s Western occult magic and her father’s Mediterranean practices with equal aplomb.

Even though she was quite a handful to raise, the family was happy enough. Denise didn’t want to devote herself entirely to sorcery, and studied classical history as well. Though she couldn’t take a degree, she studied privately with the greatest scholars of the day. After her debut, she married an ambitious young Prince of Wales Square lawyer who was so





## Denise Levoussier, Sorceress

**Sample Dialog:** "You have two options—you can put down my daughter and step away from her, or you can know the calm of permanent celibacy. Pick."

**Attributes:** Body 5, Chi 2 (Mag 8), Mind 7 (Cha 9), Reflexes 7

**Skills:** Info/History 12, Info/Western Occultism 10, Info/High Finance 12, Sorcery 14

**Schticks:** Blast, Fertility, Movement, Divination, Heal

**Weapons:** fist (6), kick (7), blast (10)

## Richard Armitage, Gambler

**Sample Dialog:** "Look, I don't care what these 'Architects of the Flesh' do, you're gonna have to pay me if you want me to take their boss to the cleaners—he just doesn't have enough money to make it worth my while"

**Attributes:** Body 7, Chi 0 (For 7), Mind 7 (Cha 8), Reflexes 8 (Spd 10)

**Skills:** Gambling 15, Guns 12, Martial Arts 10, Seduction 13

**Gun Schtick:** Eagle Eye

**Unique Schtick:**

*Gambler.* Armitage can make a fortune check at any time with a difficulty of 4. If he succeeds, the GM must tell you the difficulty of an upcoming action. He must be able to observe the situation to estimate the odds.

**Weapons:** fist (8), kick (9), .357 Derringer (11/1/2)

unfortunate as to have his indiscretions exposed. While she was considerate enough to not curse him with impotence or anything so unpleasant, she did separate and extract from his shocked family quite a hefty pension for herself.

Since then, Levoussier has lived in rural England, working her investments during the day and writing monographs on Greek fragmentia in the evenings after a spell at the pub. She has recently attuned herself to a local feng shui site, and her investments have been benefiting accordingly.

Levoussier isn't an active member of the Secret War—yet. It wouldn't take much to involve her, however: As both an idealist and a strong-willed individualist she'd find almost any of the non-Dragon factions repulsive. She's also a powerful sorceress and well-heeled to boot, just the sort of ally the Dragons need, particularly in the 69 Juncture, where the Lotus' sorcerous evil is hard to stop without equally powerful magic.

## Richard Armitage, Gambler

Few indeed are the casinos that still open their doors to Richard Armitage. It's not that he's dishonest. It's just that he's *that lucky*. He still gets his seats at the high stakes poker games in the rooms upstairs, of course. He's not taking the house's money, and it's good publicity, in the sort of circles where that sort of thing counts. They just don't let him on the floor.

Armitage isn't a gentleman by any stretch of the word. He's a short-tempered bastard used to getting his way and buying what people won't give him. But there's one good thing to say about Armitage: he *never* welches. If he says he'll do something, he'll do it. He's also a pretty good guy underneath all the self-absorption. Oh, he's out for number one and not bashful in the slightest about admitting it, but he's not out there to wreck anyone just for standing around. He'll step on you if you get in his way, but there's no malevolence about it—just don't get between a dog and his bone.

Armitage isn't much special, if you look at his past. He grew up just another kid in suburban middle America, a product of the Chicago suburbs. It was in high school that he first learned how to gamble from his Uncle Frank, a talentless horse fan that Armitage still supports as a way of saying thanks. Richard found he was good at gambling, far better than Frank or, really, anyone. After cleaning out the local American Indian populace, he took his show on the road, first paying his way through college (well, three moderately successful years of it, anyway) and then giving up on higher ambitions and supporting himself solely as a professional poker hand and card sharp.

Armitage makes a great rival or ally for PC gamblers, or a possible contact if the characters decide to trot the globe's golden spots of gambling. Really, what's a *Feng Shui* game without a trip to Monaco, Macao, or at least the Ho-

Chunk casino?



## Tommy Donovan, Maverick Journalist

Tommy Donovan was a product of the same broken household as his brother. Despite their father's absence from a young age, he certainly had at least some effect on the young men—both grew up to be alcoholics, like daddy. Both also devoted their lives to exposing the sort of filth that they were forced to grow up surrounded by in the Detroit slums. But while the younger Donovan turned to the law as a remedy for society's ills, the elder took aim at the government and social institutions that facilitated it.

The two were brothers, but never close. Jake thought Tommy was too interested in the fame and money, and Tommy saw his brother traveling down the ever-tightening spiral towards psychotic madness. As his younger brother became Los Angeles' toughest vice cop, the elder became one of the nation's most feared investigative reporters. Then his brother dropped out of sight, and Tommy was interviewed—none too gently—by ATF agents who claimed he was part of some sort of “revolutionary brigade.”

Tommy knew it was a lie until the two Chinese men approached him in the mall near his Vermont home. One was an old man, educated but hard, the other a silk-suited, diamond-edged youngster in slatted sunglasses that the elder Donovan brother could recognize as a professional killer from a mile away. They told him with great regret that his brother had been killed in the pursuit of a righteous cause. They told the speechless young reporter that if he should need anything, that there were certain ways he could contact them. Smiling apologetically, they departed as quietly as they had approached.

That night, there was another forcible abduction by the ATF, more interviews, more accusations of his brother's complicity with terrorists. Picture were produced of Jake in the company of the elderly Chinese gentleman and the Muslim terrorist known only as the Golden Gunman. Dropped off shaken on his snow-covered doorstep the next morn-

### Tom Donovan, Maverick Journalist

**Sample Dialog:** “Enough with the fucking cross-time conspiracy crap! I want to know who killed my brother!”

**Attributes:** Body 8, Chi 0 (For 5), Mind 8, Reflexes 6

**Skills:** Detective 13, Guns 13, Info/Booze 10, Info/World Politics 10, Info/Muckraking 10, Journalism 12, Martial Arts 11

**Unique Schtick:**

*Journalist.* May spend a fortune point to guarantee a contact met through the Journalism skill won't attempt to murder him.

**Weapons:** fist (9), kick (10)

ing, Tommy Donovan knew only one thing—he would find out the real reason his brother died, and it had better be good, or there would be hell to pay.

## Jade McGovern, Thief

Some thieves are ladies and gentlemen of the highest caliber, who pursue their careers out of boredom, or to fund their exotic lifestyles. Not Jade McGovern. For her, stealing from the ultrawealthy is purely a matter of evening up the score.

McGovern grew up in Hong Kong, the child of a Chinese washer-woman and a British aristo who paid her mother a pittance of “support” and an occasional kind word to keep news of her bastardy out the way. McGovern put paid to that when she was old enough to know the truth of the matter. Certainly, her visit to daddy's “only” daughter's debut ball informed all present of Mr. McGovern's true situation vis-a-vis offspring.

That generated quite a stir, and left Jade purposeless. She didn't stay that way for long, and transferred her hatred of her father onto people like him. The wealthy, the privileged; all of the rich bastards that rode on the backs of the poor and did as they pleased without penalty.

Terrorism was out of the question. One failing act of defiance wasn't enough. “Infiltrating” wasn't an option either: Jade was already old enough to know how privilege co-opted good intentions in short order. No, Jade would be a modern Robin Hood. She would steal from the rich the things they



### Jade McGovern, Thief

**Sample Dialog:** "Animals. I've always known they were animals, you know that? Somewhere in my heart. So anyway, it's a freebie. Tell me what you want stolen, and what's between me and the target, and I'll get it for you faster than cop on black."

**Attributes:** Body 6, Chi 0 (For 3), Mind 7 (Cha 9), Reflexes 8

**Skills:** Deceit 13, Detective 13, Guns 10, Info/Vile Corporations 10, Info/Vile Rich People 10, Intrusion 16, Martial Arts 10

**Weapons:** fist (7), kick (8)

### Madame Li Chan

**Sample Dialog:** "All things can be known for a price. Are you prepared to pay it?"

**Attributes:** Body 4, Chi 0, Mind 8, Reflexes 5

**Skills:** Deceit 15, Intrusion 15, Seduction 18

**Weapons:** fist (5), punch (6), poisoned knife (16)

### Li Chan's Girls

**Sample Dialog:** "Of course I won't tell anyone Ambassador. [Giggle.] You know everything you say is safe with me."

**Attributes:** Body 4, Chi 0, Mind 5, Reflexes 5

**Skills:** Deceit 9, Intrusion 8, Martial Arts 6, Seduction 10

**Weapons:** fist (5), knife (6)

most desperately needed, and give them to the poor, and she would help herself to their money while she was at it.

And Jade is very, very good at what she does. Concealed evidence of product hazards distributed to news agencies around the world, stolen bearer bonds, leaked video tapes, and sabotaged shipments to corporate mercenaries in the third world; all of them courtesy of one little blue-eyed Chinese girl whose father thought it was okay to screw the help, just as long as you paid them off, especially when the Chinese poor came so cheap. McGovern has had occasional relations with the Golden Gunman and the Muslim underground—she isn't Submitted, but she sympathizes with their plight. Someone has to be there to videotape the plans for the motorcades, after all. They pay well, and their targets are, as a rule, pretty repulsive. Really, how bad can you feel about helping to arrange the assassination of a Shin Bet torturer or a Soviet mob boss? She won't pull the trigger—yet—but everything up to that point is fine.

## Madam Li Chan, Madam to the Elite

When the rich and famous men of Hong Kong need a little discreet companionship, the list of people to call is pretty short. As the madam of one of Hong Kong's most exclusive prostitution rings the beautiful and mysterious Madam Li Chan always makes that list.

Li Chan's clients are the cream of the crop. After all, only a select few can afford the price she charges for her girls' affections—but Li Chan's girls live up to their price. Ambassadors, cabinet ministers, CEOs of major companies—all of them come to Madam Li Chan when they need a beautiful, cultured female escort. They are all beautiful, intelligent and—*ahem*—physically talented.

They are also some of the best spies in Hong Kong. Trained by their mistress in the arts of seduction and subterfuge, Li Chan's girls gather some of the hottest information in town. While Li Chan's reputation is as a high-class madam, the majority of her income comes through a combination of blackmail and information brokering.

Information on Li Chan herself is sketchy at best. She seems to have come over from Mainland China in the early 1970s and set up her operation. Beyond that, her past is shrouded in mystery. Even her age is unknown. She looks like she is in her early thirties at most, but if she's been in business since the '70s...

Madam Li Chan has proven a valuable, if erratic, ally to the Dragons in the past. Through her many contacts, she knows a lot about the Secret War in Hong Kong, Japan, and even mainland China. Her information is always top drawer, but her prices are high. And cash isn't the only currency she trades in—the woman's appetites are legendary. For one particularly juicy tidbit about the location of an Architect arcanowave manufacturing plant, Jack Donovan had to spend the weekend in Li Chan's company. While Jack didn't exactly complain, he couldn't walk straight for three days afterward.

Of course, she's just as likely to sell any information she gets from you to your



enemy as she is to sell your enemy's secrets to you. To her credit, she makes no secret of this, and at the same time all transactions are held in her strictest confidence.

It's interesting that Li Chan claims to know nothing about Operation Killdeer, despite her vast information resources. Kar Fai has speculated that she may know a lot more than she is telling.

## Leo Mahoney, Crazy Drug Kingpin

Once upon a time there was a patriotic, idealistic Special Forces soldier named Leo Mahoney. One day Leo left his friends and family behind and went off to fight for his country in Vietnam. He never returned.

Somewhere deep in the jungles of Southeast Asia, something happened to Leo Mahoney that changed him forever. He's not saying who or what he encountered, but aside from turning him into a twisted and brutal thrill-killer with a paranoid and sociopathic personality, it also introduced Mahoney to the worldwide conspiracy known as the Lodge, and its two puppet organizations, the Order of the Wheel and the Jade Wheel Society.

Not much is known about what happened to Mahoney after the war. Reliable witnesses place him smuggling heroin for the Triads throughout the 1970s, and Mahoney was definitely working as an enforcer for the Jade Lotus triad in Hong Kong by the middle 1980s. His savage brutality earned him the nickname "the White Devil" among the Jade Lotus mooks. By the early '90s, Mahoney was second-in-command to "Six-Fingers" Lao, the Jade Lotus' leader. Then Leo found out "Six-Fingers" Lao was a member of the Jade Wheel Society.

They say it took Lao six whole days to die.

Few of the Jade Lotus' rivals questioned Mahoney's assumption of control of the cartel, or the way that he has run it since. Under his leadership the Jade Lotus has diversified into arms dealing as well as drug smuggling, and the profits just keep flowing in.

What the other triad leaders don't

### Leo Mahoney

**Sample Dialog:** "The Lodge picked the wrong gwailo to fuck with."

**Attributes:** Body 7, Chi 0, Mind 6, Reflexes 6

**Skills:** Driving 8, Guns 16, Info/South East Asian Underworld 18, Info/The Lodge 8, Intimidation 16, Martial Arts 8

**Gun Schticks:** Hair-Trigger Neck Hairs 3, Eagle Eye 2, Lightning Reload 1

**Unique Schtick:**

*PainShot:* Mahoney's Special Forces training—along with years of torturing informants and beating up on his underlings—have made him an expert in inflicting pain. If Mahoney takes a full shot to aim an attack, whether using gunfire or martial arts, he can elect to go for a pain shot rather than a killing one. The attack does half damage, but the target, named or not, takes 2 points of Impairment for 2 sequences as he deals with the pain. Robots and other creatures without nerve endings aren't affected by this attack.

**Weapons:** fist (8), kick (9), AMT Automag V (12/3/5+1) and for discreet occasions a Glock 18 (10/1/17+1)

### Jade Lotus Mooks

**Sample Dialog:** "Look, the boss said we help you, so we help you. Don't ask so many questions."

**Attributes:** Body 6, Chi 0, Mind 4, Reflexes 5

**Skills:** Driving 8, Guns 8, Info/South East Asian Underworld 8, Info/Half Truths About the Pledged 5, Intimidation 8, Martial Arts 6

**Weapons:** fist (7), kick (8), Glock 17 (10/1/17)

know about is the secret campaign that Mahoney has been waging against the forces of the Lodge. Although he seems to know nothing of their arcane origins or of the larger Secret War, Mahoney has found out enough about Lodge activities in Hong Kong to hit them where it hurts. Jade Lotus enforcers have taken or destroyed several minor Lodge-held feng shui sites in the past year. Mahoney seems to know nothing about the significance of these places. He just knows that if the Lodge wants them, he intends to see to it that they can't have them.

Lodge attention is bad for business, of course. Mahoney spread out his attacks and covered his tracks well enough that the Pledged have only recently figured out the Jade Lotus has something to do with them. They still don't know exactly how big a thorn in their side Mahoney actually is or they would have squashed him like a bug.



In addition to his own operations against the Ascended, Leo had also been funneling information—and occasionally arms—to the Dragons. Mad Dog McCroun and Leo were especially chummy, in a “I’m not sure I could kick the crap out of you, so I better respect you” sort of way. The drug lord has had no contact with the Dragons since Operation Killdeer, but there’s no reason to think he wouldn’t pick up the relationship with the Dragons right where he left off.

Some might find it strange that a man like Leo Mahoney has waded into the Secret War on the Dragon’s side. After all, it’s a well known fact that “the White Devil” has absolutely no regard for anyone but himself, and one doesn’t maintain one’s place in a triad hierarchy through acts of charity. But for whatever reason, Mahoney’s hatred for the Lodge eclipses even his paranoid sense of self-preservation. Whatever happened in that Vietnamese jungle seems to have set the man’s opinion of the Lodge in stone. So, the Jade Lotus’ assistance to the Dragons is a classic demonstration of the old adage that “the enemy of my enemy is my friend.”

Many of the Dragons think the prospect of taking Jade Lotus help is repellent at best, and downright immoral at worst. Some have even suggested to the Prof and Kar Fai that the drug lord’s assistance is all an elaborate Lodge scheme to infiltrate the Dragons. But so far Mahoney’s help has come with no strings attached—at least no visible ones. In the wake of Operation Killdeer, the Dragons need all the help they can get.

### **Ho Li Kwan, Public Works Inspector**

Ho Li Kwan’s life used to be so normal. He grew up in a middle class neighborhood in Kowloon, got average grades in school, got an ordinary job with the city, married an ordinary girl, had two ordinary kids, and expected to live out the rest of his ordinary life doing ordinary things. As a Deputy Inspector for the Hong Kong Department of Public Works, Ho had the thankless task of making sure the

sewers and drainage systems of Hong Kong and Kowloon ran smoothly and efficiently.

Over his twenty years in the job, Ho came to know every inch of the watery tunnels, pumping stations and sewer treatment facilities. He developed an almost Zen-like appreciation for the beauty of it all and sometimes spent hours just watching the system work, meditating on its orderly and efficient beauty.

Of course, good chi doesn’t just flow above ground. The sewer system contains quite a few auspiciously configured sites and, quite by accident, Ho Li Kwan attuned himself to several of them. To this day, Ho has no idea what he’s done. He just “knows” when something is wrong at a few different places in the system, and has learned to trust his instincts.

One day, while investigating one of those strange feelings, Ho came face to face with a Buro scout abomination. The creature attacked him, but Ho managed to beat it to death with the pipe-wrench he was carrying. As he stood and watched the horrific melding of metal and flesh dissolve into a pile of liquid goo, the shocked public servant realized that no one would believe what had happened. There was no evidence of the abomination left except a foul stench in the air. If he told anyone about it, he’d end up in the booby hatch for sure.

Ho was going to have to deal with this problem himself.

Following this little encounter, Ho started training. He was driven by the knowledge that there were things out there, things that threatened his domain—his sewers. With months of covert practice (and the benefits of auspicious feng shui), the forty-year old man became a good shot with a variety of weapons. The next time something strange popped out of a sewage settling pool, Ho was ready.

Ho has killed eight Buro abominations ranging from scout units up to an actual combat cyborg! (He had a heck of a time explaining to his wife how his brand new uniform got trashed, as well.) He’s also foiled two Jammer sabotage attempts, one on a sewage treatment plant, the other on a pumping station. Of all of the factions in the Secret War, so far only



these two have thought to look under the streets of Hong Kong to find feng shui sites. (The Eaters of the Lotus and the Guiding Hand still aren't even all that used to indoor plumbing yet.)

Ho's family suspects nothing about his secret life. If his loving wife or two teenage daughters ever saw the firepower the pudgy, balding, bespectacled man packs in the trunk of his car these days, they'd probably have him committed. Ho's bosses are still in the dark as well, which is all for the best. Ho's boss is a Pledged operative, and reports of odd events in the sewers would certainly make it into his next report to his secret masters. If the Ascended found out about the sites in the sewer systems, Ho and his family would be in deep trouble.

As he patrols the lower tunnels of his beloved sewers, flashlight in one hand, Mossberg in the other, Ho tells himself that he is still just a public servant, protecting his place of employment from an unknown threat. But down in his gut, he knows that something bigger is going on. Something much bigger.

Up to this point, Ho Li Kwan has had the luxury of being a reactive participant in the Secret War rather than an active one. As the conflict escalates around Hong Kong, he may not have that option much longer.

The Dragons have yet to actually make contact with Ho Li Kwan. In fact, the only reason they know about the gun-toting sewer inspector is because of one encounter between him and the old Dragons. If the man is to be drafted full-on into the Secret War, someone's going to have to have a big talk with him.

The Prof and Kar Fai both know how valuable a contact Ho could be. His position in the Department of Public Works allows him access to sewer maps, power grid layouts, blueprints to civic buildings and the like. He's become quite handy with guns, and his unflappable nature and freakish luck also come in handy in a fight.

## Billie Cho, Kung Fu Chanteuse

Billie Cho was just another street kid from the slums of Kowloon. At the tender

### Ho Li Kwan

**Sample Dialog:** "No, nothing interesting happened at work today."

**Attributes:** Body 4, Chi 0 (For 10), Mind 5, Reflexes 8 (Agl 3)

**Skills:** Fix-It 12, Guns 13, Info/Hong Kong City Bureacracy 18, Info/Hong Kong Sewer System 20, Intrusion 10, Martial Arts 8, Sabotage 10

**Weapons:** fist (6), kick (7), Sig-Sauer P-220 (10/2/9+1) Mossberg Special Purpose (13/5/9), Ruger MP-9 (10/3/32) (both the Ruger and the Mossberg are in his car.)

age of 14 she was quite the budding criminal. Car thief, purse snatcher and pickpocket, that was Billie Cho. Thrown out of her house by her father, it looked like Billie was headed for a short and brutal life of crime—until the day the young girl picked the wrong pocket to pick.

All Billie really remembers was that one moment the man's knife was at her throat beginning to cut, the next he was flying through the air, propelled by the foot of a lithe and beautiful woman. "My name is Ting Ting," Billie's rescuer had said, pulling the bruised and battered girl to her feet. "Come with me."

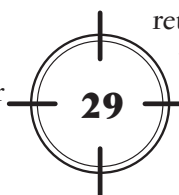
"You have guts," the martial artist had said once they reached her apartment. She tossed Billie a few ice packs for her many bruises and looked at her solemnly. "But unless someone teaches you how to use your chi, those guts are going to end up decorating someone's wall."

Ting Ting taught Billie the ways of Kung Fu and helped her unleash her inner chi. She also taught the unruly girl discipline and a sense of right and wrong. "One day you will return to your parents and honor them," Ting Ting said. When Billie was ready, Ting Ting introduced her to the Dragons. Kar Fai made it clear to the girl that it was her choice to join their ranks or not. Once she heard the stakes they were fighting for, Billie didn't even have to think twice.

Billie Cho fought the Secret War alongside the Dragons for almost five years, thrashing bad-guy ass with the best of them—and growing up from a scrawny kid into a beautiful woman. And all that time, she knew she would one day

return to see her parents, and she would make them proud. Then one day it all went

wrong.





## Billie Cho

**Sample Dialog:** "Once a Dragon, always a Dragon. I know that now."

**Attributes:** Body 7, Chi 0 (Fu 8), Mind 5, Reflexes 5

**Skills:** Deceit 12, Info/Music Production 14, Martial Arts 15, Seduction 14

**Fu Schticks:** Claw of the Tiger, Tiger Stance, Clothed in Life, The Fox's Retreat

**Weapons:** Fist (8), Kick (9)

The mission had been a simple one: Take a site from the Guiding Hand in the 1850 juncture. The mission was a complete success, but Billie's celebration was cut short when she returned to the modern juncture. The oh-so-simple mission to the past had caused a superficial shift in reality. Billie Cho found that she had gone from street punk to music superstar. She had been laterally reincarnated, and it sure seemed like she'd moved up in the world.

Then she found out the bad news. Her parents were dead. In the wake of the superficial shift, they'd died when she was just sixteen years old.

It was too much for Billie to handle. She turned her back on Ting Ting, the Dragons, the Netherworld, the Secret War—all of it. Unable to deal with the knowledge that her actions—however well-intentioned—had resulted in her parents dying, Billie Cho walked away.

She slipped into her new life quite easily. The first thing she did was take a few months off—"for health reasons" she told her adoring public—and learned all of the songs that "she" had written over the years. After some intensive voice training, she was ready to take on this new life. It's been one hit after another ever since. Billie sells out arenas all over Asia, and the commercial endorsements alone have her set for life.

Billie has buried herself in her new life for almost two years, and the glittering attraction of it is starting to fade. The fame, the money, none of it seem to matter. As much as she's tried, Billie just can't get comfortable in the new skin that reality has handed her—or forget the friends she left behind when she turned her back on the Secret War.

A few months ago, Billie started prac-

ticating her Kung Fu again. A month after that she started looking for her old friends. She was surprised and appalled by what she found—or didn't find. The Dragons were gone! All of them are either missing or dead. Even her old teacher Ting Ting was nowhere to be found.

Billie Cho wants some answers. The easiest place to get them is the Netherworld, but all of the old gates she remembers seem to be in the possession of the Ascended these days.

Billie's been using her considerable monetary resources to find out what she can about the Dragons' fate, but so far she has only uncovered veiled references to some sort of Ascended project called "Operation Killdeer."

The situation has been complicated by the return of an old flame—of a sort. A few years ago Billie had a torrid affair with the Chinese retro-rocker known as Lucien (at least that's what the tabloids she's been able to find say). Recently he's decided to try and rekindle the relationship, much to Billie's consternation. Since a chance encounter at a music awards show three months ago, the man has been unrelenting in his pursuit of her. Between the constant deliveries of flowers, insincere love letters reminiscing over "old times," pledges of eternal and undying devotion and the rather ribald songs he's written for her, Billie was almost tempted to get a restraining order.

Then Lucien started turning up in the damndest places—especially when Billie was looking for the Dragons. They've ended up fighting back to back against Pledged monks more than once, and while Lucien repeatedly claims that their encounters are just "lucky coincidences" (and then usually makes a clumsy pass at her), Billie is pretty sure there is more to the man that meets the eye.

While Billie wants to trust Lucien—she can use all the help she can get in her search—there's just something about him that doesn't seem quite right. As if that weren't enough, Billie has found herself with a growing affection for the exuberant and wild musician. If he would just stop being such a lecherous pig all the time...



## Kang Pao

When the Ascended gather to commemorate the final battle which wrested control over history from the Four Monarchs, they observe a moment of silence for the fallen, particularly one brave dragon, Kang Pao, who gave her life in a horrific battle as others attuned the last site. Her name is spoken only in hushed, reverent tones, for she is regarded as the paragon of strength, courage and sacrifice for their cause.


Pity that she's not really dead. As she finally fell to the earth, crippled from a thousand magical assaults and teetering on the edge of reverision, Kang remembered the lessons taught to her by a humble bear, long ago. She slept, and as she slept her allies came and placed her body in a hidden tomb. There she lay, and the world changed around her.

When Kang awoke, she was horrified by what she saw. She remembered fondly the nights she sat around with the others who dreamed of a better, less magical world, and what they would do if it should come to pass. It was nothing like this. She at first feared that they had somehow lost the day, but after contacting a few members of the Ascended, discovered that it was not so. They smiled pleasantly, rolled their eyes and said, "You didn't live it, as we did. This is the best we could do." They also advised her to keep her identity a secret—she deserved a rest after so much sacrifice. She knew very well why they wanted her silence. She made a better symbol dead than alive.

She walked the world for decades, and while here and there she encountered people and things that filled her heart with joy, she couldn't escape the feeling that something awful had happened in the name of righteousness. And then, one night in a seedy Kowloon bar, she overheard a heated conversation that seemed oddly familiar. A group of men and women were discussing the sort of world *they* would make, if only for the Lodge. Her heart leapt and sank at the same time. Here was the original passion, the type that would change the world, but they were too loud. Already she could hear the minions of the Lodge surrounding the bar. There would be no prisoners.







## Kang Pao

**Sample Dialogue:** "Rash actions have consequences, my child. And that was a rash action."

**Attributes:** Bod 7, Chi 9 (For 5), Mnd 9, Ref 7

**Skills:** Gambling 10, Info/History 12, Info/The Ascended 15, Leadership 12, Martial Arts 16

**Limitations:** Kang Pao isn't the dragon she once was. The final battle left her crippled (reflected in permanent reductions to Bod and Ref) and unusually susceptible to magick. Not only does she carry three permanent Reversion points—which cause weird momentary transformations, such as a hint of scales under clothes, a forked tongue, or smolderingly golden eyes—but she is affected by magic as if she came from the modern era. She is apprehensive about re-entering the Netherworld, to say the least.

**Fu Schticks:** Bite of the Dragon, Breath of the Dragon, Claw of the Dragon, Eyes of the Snake, Slither of the Snake, Strike of the Snake, Coil of the Snake, Lunge of the Snake

**Transformed Animal Schticks:** Coil, Flight 2, Fortitude, Fu Advantage 3, Hibernate 4, Impervious, Reflect 2, Slap

**Weapons:** Punch (8), Kick (9)

Kang Pao has a secret enemy in the form of Drago, the Ascended enforcer, who was to stand beside her in that final battle. When all seemed lost, Drago—great, powerful, dreadful Drago—ran like a whipped pup. Had he stayed, perhaps she would not have 'fallen.' Drago had spent the intervening years justifying his decision, to the point where he could live with his secret shame. Her return to life shattered all those illusions. Numerous times he has secretly set mechanisms in motion to destroy Kang, only to bring them to a savage halt long before they harmed their intended target. In this regard, Drago has acquired a reputation for instability. For his part, Drago is consumed with guilt. Once, he tried to kill her himself, but found himself reduced to that quivering worm of so many centuries before. He later killed those who were unfortunate enough to witness that particular display, but realized that he is somehow powerless against her, which makes her the most powerful creature in the Ascended's ranks.

Does Kang Pao remember the treachery? Occasionally, Drago will bite into a piece of food, only to discover that someone has secreted a live worm within it. It is all the hint the enforcer needs.

She acted. Against everything she once held dear, she lashed out, and bought these brave souls a chance to escape. Later she joined them, and acted as a sort of mentor, dispensing sage advice and a few kung fu schticks to all who would listen. These Dragons have no idea that their new ally is in fact one of the

architects of the world they fight to change.

Kang is conflicted, and rightly so. She will not face her former allies in combat again, if she can help it. A return to magic would most certainly be the death of her and all she fought for, but she feels a little conflict in the life of the Ascended at least keeps them honest. And always she listens to the dreams of a better world, waiting for the one big enough to make her believe again.

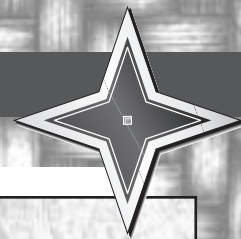
## Theo Chen

Theodosia Chen grew up in Traverse City, Michigan. From the moment Theo was born, her grandfather sensed a greatness within her, and indulged her in all things. Her grandfather taught her Mandarin and Cantonese, and at bedtime told her strange stories such as "The Fish who Rode a Horse" and "The Snake that Read a Book." Always these stories told of simple creatures who, through sheer acts of will, rose above their humble state.

After college, Theo found a job in Chicago writing for an alternative weekly. Just as her career was getting started, her grandfather died, and Theo found herself the recipient of an odd request. Grandfather wanted to go home, and he wanted Theo to take the ashes there. She agreed, and found herself heading for a shrine in Hainan providence that didn't seem to be in any of the guidebooks.

The keepers of the shrine were cold and distant, and took the ashes grudgingly. No sooner had Theo gone out of sight of the shrine than a terrible explosion rocked the countryside. Theo had enough sense to seek shelter, and from a safe distance witnessed a pitched battle the likes of which she'd never seen before. The caretakers of the shrine drove back the attackers, and Theo's curiosity got the better of her. She snuck back into the shrine, took a wrong turn, and found herself...somewhere else.

Some time later, she realized that she was wandering the streets of Hong Kong, dazed. She couldn't remember how she'd come to be there, in different clothes, with a gun hidden in the small of her back and a wallet filled with cash. Three months had passed, and



except for sudden flashes of distant memories, she couldn't recall what had happened. What she did remember was a kind face who told her of the Masters and their secret war to enslave the humanity they so admired. She tried not to believe it at first, but the evidence was overwhelming. There was one problem, though; she couldn't persuade anyone else.

She knew that it was a matter of perspective. Something had happened in that shrine that opened her eyes to new possibilities in the world. It would take legwork and solid evidence to convince others, and she had the tools and talent to see the job through. She started working as a freelance journalist for several Hong Kong papers, and established a reputation as a methodical researcher who sought out corruption in every corner. She also wrote for several Western magazines, doing feature articles on the various bits of Asian culture that were taking the West by storm. This led her to the fringes of history and culture, where fact and fantasy blurred, and she wasn't surprised to discover that there wasn't as much blurring as the party line claimed.

Of course, the Ascended Masters know. The problem is that Theo doesn't. Her grandfather was a Rat, and so is his granddaughter. Unaware of this reality, she nevertheless uses her schticks to make herself a better journalist. The Lodge sees her as a useful pawn, seeking out leaks that their jackbooted thugs can seal up. After all, Theo has penetrated no deeper than the lowest level of the Pledged, and already she thinks that she's onto something big. What they're unaware of is that Theo has unwittingly uncovered the Architects' designs on the Ascended's feng shui sites. They dismiss it as fanciful speculation, and they do so at their own peril. Theo herself doesn't comprehend the enormity of her discovery, seeing the Architects as a subversive group within the Lodge.

Theo Chen is a dangerous ally to have. The Lodge keeps their eye on her most of the time, and few who get useful information from her live to act on it. She survives only because it is against the rules for a mere human to shed the blood of the Ascended, and thus

### Theo Chen

**Sample Dialogue:** "The public has a right to know!"

**Attributes:** Bod 5, Chi 8 (For 10), Mnd 5 (Per 8), Ref 8

**Skills:** Guns 10, Info/History 8, Info/Fringe 13, Intrusion 10, Journalism 12, Martial Arts 11

**Transformed Animal Schticks:** Disorienting Strike 2, Lurk 3, Squeeze

**Weapons:** Punch (6), kick (7), Colt 1911A (10/2/7)

the Lodge clean up crews deliberately knock her out and carry her to safety before the true slaughter begins. Nevertheless, she's picked up a thing or two about the various members of the Secret War, and can back it up with solid evidence. She'll do just about anything to get a good story, and she's damn handy with a pistol. One day, she'll be dangerous, and certain members of the Lodge know it: The memo sanctioning her return to the Wheel of Karma has already been drafted.

### Art Maddox

Art Maddox's parents were loyal members of the Lodge. His father was the son of a Dragon, and his mother's line traced their ancestry to Bears. Needless to say, Art was horrified to discover that someone had lied, long ago. Somehow, a Cockroach had insinuated itself into his heredity, and he was one, too.

He learned firsthand how brutal the Ascended food chain can be, especially when you're down with the other detritivores. In the words of Orwell, all animals were equal, but some were more equal than others. He knew that he was an embarrassment to his parents, and that he would never rise any higher in the hierarchy of the Ascended than the squabbling Rats and Spiders and other vermin. He was meant for better things, and he would prove it.

Maddox ran away from home and embroiled himself in every kind of underhanded dealing that he could find. He knew from his father's reports that there were certain areas the Lodge didn't or couldn't penetrate. Like a good cockroach, he found his way in, and ingratiated himself. Somewhere in all that, he stopped caring about what was best for the Ascended, and starting caring about what



Illustration by Toren Atkinson

was best for him.

Soon after that moment of realization, he stumbled headfirst into the Secret War. His father's reports had served him well—he knew the major players, and made himself invaluable. He was everything to every one, a purveyor of violence, sex, depravity, and, most important, secrets. Every day brings new opportunities to screw someone hard, and he never worries about the bridges he's burned. As long as people need badly enough to sell their souls, he's open for business. They'll build a bridge to him.

So whose side is he on? Is his anger so great toward the Ascended that he's willing to sacrifice them all? Or is this all a ruse to get close enough to one of the factions to deliver a *coup de grace*? When Maddox considers such choices, he merely flips a coin, and smiles.

## Lu Shen/Lucien

Lucien is a man of many worlds. His parents, among the first of the transformed animals, ordered him to serve as a guard in a shrine back in 69. The shrine was horribly over-protected, and Lu Shen (as he was known then) found himself bored to tears. One day, he stumbled upon a gateway to Netherworld, and his mind reeled at the possibilities it presented. He soon found his way to the contemporary era, and was immediately assaulted by wave after wave of sonic aggression. The locals called it 'rock and roll,' and Lu Shen loved it.

He immediately abandoned the Secret War and started a rock band, a rockabilly fusion that turned the industry on its ear. In less than two years, Lucien was a household name, as he hobnobbed with celebrities around the globe. Rather than being annoyed, the Ascended endorsed his burgeoning career. After all, Lucien is from the 69 juncture, and thus highly prized because of his resistance to reversion. Furthermore, his stardom was seen as another route to wealth, information and influence.

Inevitably, Lucien grew restless again, and wondered what music would be like in the future. He rediscovered the portal that had led him to the contemporary juncture, and took a walk to 2056. There he found a world as creative-



ly stifled as anything he could imagine. Music was now science, with controlled beats synthesized to produce a specific emotional response. There were a few souls in the underground who preferred to do things the old-fashioned way, but surveillance technology made it easy to be discovered, detained and deleted.

Then Lucien, in trying to seek, was discovered. Even sixty years in the future the icon still lingered. Loyal fans didn't know what to make of the appearances of Lucien, walking the Buro controlled streets. They figured that he was a clone, or maybe even a reincarnation of Lucien, sent to save music from itself. Lucien let them believe what they wanted to believe—he had a revolution to start.

He initially approached the Jammers, but grew distasteful of their anti-chi stance. Instead, he started a war based on the principles of sonic anarchy. He and his followers rerouted communication junctures, seized public address systems, and co-opted satellite feeds all over the globe. Everywhere they played music as raw and as fresh as the moment Buddy Holly pick up a guitar.

Of course, the Lodge is delighted with Lucien's new role. With the Time War heating up, the Architects underestimate the threat that Lucien represents. His brand of freedom is extremely seductive to a people long enslaved by the lowest common denominator. His fans are fanatics, every bit as dangerous as the Jammers, in their own noisy way, but because they don't run in shooting, the Architects willing to look the other way...for now.

Lucien still journeys back to the contemporary era, and enjoys the return voyage to 2056, where the fans suddenly recall a bit of the old Lucien's exploits—specifically, whatever he just finished doing. He doesn't understand the complexities of time travel, and he doesn't care. He acts as if the two eras were two separate worlds, where the actions in one are little more than novelty in the other. Eventually he'll do something big, and he'll regret it, but for now, he's there for the ride.

There has been one great failure in Lucien's life—Billy Cho. He had seen her

### Art Maddox

**Sample Dialogue:** "You should have trusted me. Now it gets unpleasant."

**Attributes:** Bod 5 (Con 8, Tgh 9), Chi 7 (For 3), Mnd 4 (Cha 3), Ref 7  
**Skills:** Deceit 10, Gambling 7, Guns 12, Info/History 7, Info/Hong Kong Underground 9, Info/Secret War 8, Martial Arts 8

**Gun Schticks:** Carnival of Carnage, Eagle Eye

**Transformed Animal Schticks:** Armor, Doolittling, Scurry 3, Survive 3

**Weapons:** Punch (6), kick (7), Colt 1911A (10/2/7)

### Lu Shen/Lucien

**Sample Dialogue:** "Hong Kong! Are you ready to rock!?! Too damn bad."

**Attributes:** Bod 5 (Mov 8), Chi 7 (For 2), Mnd 5 (Cha 8), Ref 5 (Spd 8)  
**Skills:** Guns 13, Info/History 8, Info/Celebrity 12, Info/Rock Music 12, Info/Buro 8, Leadership 14, Martial Arts 13, Sabotage 10

**Fu Schticks:** Crane Stance, Wing of the Crane, Beak of the Crane, Talon of the Crane

**Transformed Animal Schticks:** Crow 2, Display 2, Flight 1

**Weapons:** Punch (6), kick (7), H&K MP5 K (10/3/30)

once, from a distance, when she was a grubby little thief. Then she got caught in a critical shift, laterally incarnated into a rock superstar. He found himself sharing a past with her, comprised of equal parts vodka binges and scandalous sex acts. All this would be amusing to Lucien, if not for the fact that while he was supposedly having this affair, he met the love of his life, who was erased from existence by the critical shift. His memory of her is crystal clear, in a changed world where she never even existed.

Yet—he loves Billie. After all, the critical shift didn't change him, it changed events. Some part of him once fell madly in love with Billie. It took him several months of humiliating mind games, taking advantage of Billie's fragmented memory of her new life and their shared past, to realize why, and how deeply that love flowed. He is convinced that it's too late, that once she discovers what he is, who he serves, and that he's known all along that it's all been a lie, she'll have nothing to do with him.

Such thoughts ache more deeply than the void left by his forgotten love.



## Chapter 2

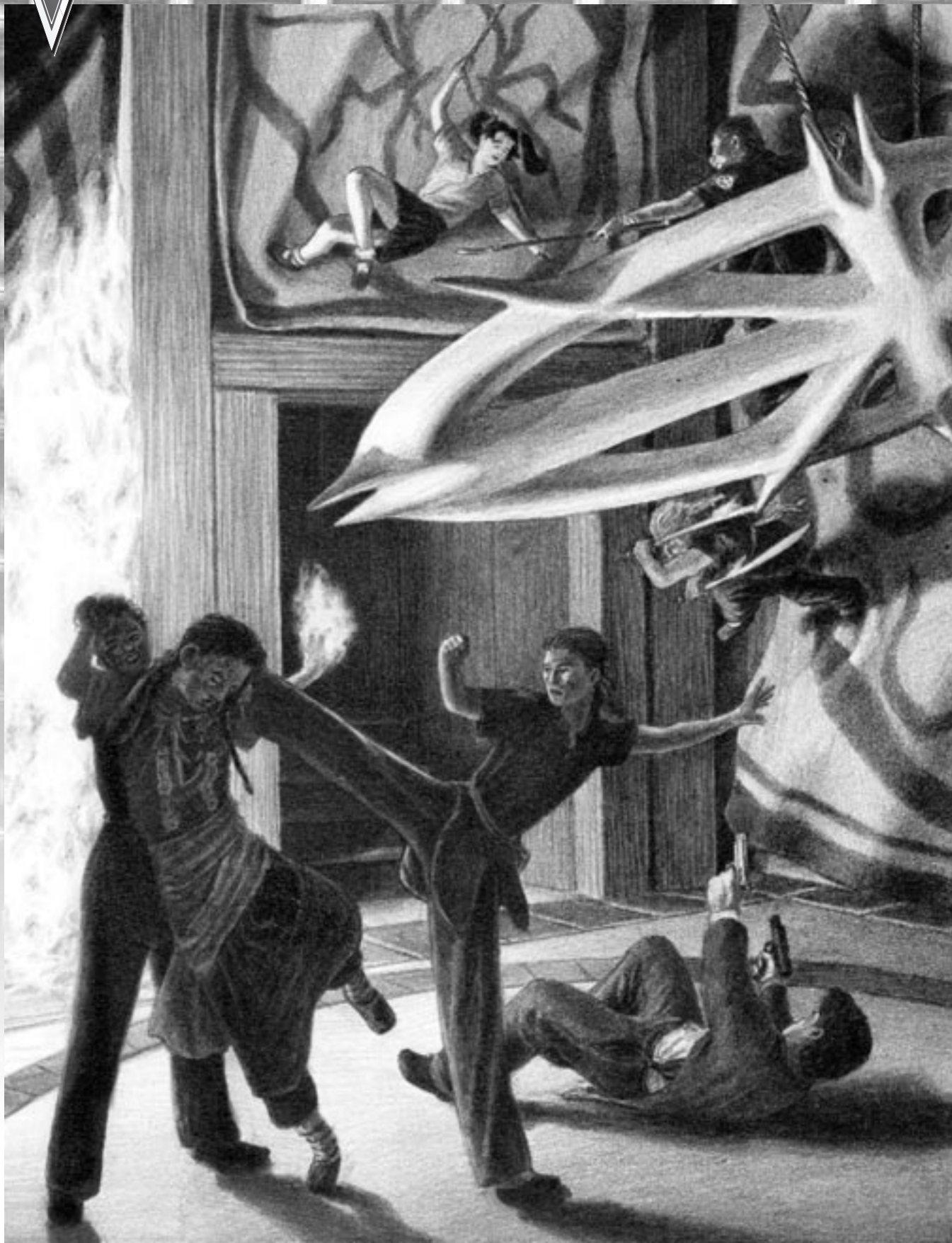


Illustration by Drew Baker

# Being a Better Player

ROLL THE DICE, PASS THE CHIPS

## GETTING IN CHARACTER

By Tim Dedopulous

### WHAT'S IT ALL ABOUT?

When you get down to it, good role-playing is all about character. The PCs', that is. The whole point of playing an RPG is to have fun. That's what we're here for. This little workshop is going to grab the whole notion of a good character, heave it up onto the slab, hack it open, and have a thorough mess around with the insides. Good, by the way, isn't some sort of game-designer's notion of perfection. This is the first thing to remember—good role-playing means as many of the group having as much fun as possible. You're not studying the dramatics of acting in commercials here, or learning to write manuals for train-drivers, or anything like that. We aren't going to have an exam at the end. *Feng Shui* is a game, and your only requirement is to have fun. It's OK, go ahead. Enjoy yourself.

#### Rule One

You're here so that you and your friends can have as much fun as possible. That's what good role-playing means.

## THE PURPOSE OF THE CHARACTERS

I'm going to assume, for the most part, that you are a player rather than a GM. Everything in here can be applied to creating excellent GMCs too, but to prepare every GMC thoroughly would take immense amounts of work, and isn't really necessary. PCs are the important ones, because they're the focus of the story your group is telling. They play two vital roles. The first is to drive the plot—events revolve around the PCs. The fuller they are, the more interesting events can become. Their second job, and it's even more important, is to draw you in to the game.

## INVOLVEMENT

I'll let you into a secret—fighting is fun, but we stay in the game because we care. Think about it for a moment; if you're not interested in your character, then there is no tension, and you're just rolling dice. Let's say, as an example, that there's someone who has gone missing. Does that fact interest you at all? Do you feel involved? Excited? At the very best, you might feel mildly curious, but it's hardly fun.

Now, let's try again.

Friday.

Dear Mom,

I'm so sorry.

*I don't expect you to understand—maybe no-one will, not ever—but it's better this way. Really. Don't blame yourself. I know you will, but it's nothing to do with you. It never was. Nothing you could have ever done would have made any difference, so please, please don't feel responsible. It's not a tragedy. Just the opposite. I'm happy now, this way. When you wake up in the night, try to remember that. If you can, please forgive me. I just didn't have the strength to stay.*

Chances are, you've already thought about the paragraph above, leaped to a few conclusions—it's a suicide note, the writer was young enough to live at home still, probably a teenager—and you might even have a question or two. It's not a suicide note, by the way. The writer has been into the Netherworld, and can't cope with the pain of watching her family change with each little shift, so she's decided to leave. However, that just serves to illustrate my point. By making the character interesting, his troubles become a lot more engrossing. When you believe in the PCs, then every problem, every combat, will be intense, and amazing fun. That's good role-playing.

### Rule Two

If you identify strongly with your character, you'll enjoy the game a lot more.

## WHAT MAKES A GOOD CHARACTER?

There are a number of different areas that combine to make an effective character. If you're going to get to know the person that you will be playing in *Feng Shui*, you need to be aware of all of these areas. The better you understand your character, the more real he'll seem, and the more fun you'll have. Go through the categories below, and think about how they affect your character. You don't have to plan everything about him out. Sketch in major events and essentials, and

you'll find that the rest develops through play. When you notice something new come up, jot down a note of it. That way your character stays consistent.

### Actions

The single most important aspect of your character is the way you act. You can claim all day long that you're a good listener, but if you never stop talking long enough for your friends to get a word in, they're not going to agree with you. The way your character acts defines him. Do you want him to be generous? Have him give money to beggars when he sees them, and insist on buying drinks for the rest of the characters in bars. Do you want him to be brave? Then get in the front when the bullets start flying, and buy time for everyone else to get ready or get out.

### Motives

The reasons why your character does the things he does will greatly influence the way you think about him. Let's say he's the generous one, always buying dinner and helping elderly relatives. Why is that? If he was originally very poor, but is now wealthy, and feels that he needs to pay something back to the needy, that tells you something. If he's trying to atone for past evils by buying his way into heaven, that tells you something very different.

### Past

The past also influences your character's personality. The same event looks very different with a change of historical context. Picture a muscular young guy in the street holding a slender woman by the throat and shaking her. Maybe she was an ex-girlfriend who managed to get away from his violence—until today—which reveals that the big guy is a nasty person. Would you feel differently about the situation if the woman was the assassin who killed his twin sister, though?

### Stereotype

For better or worse, we all identify with stereotypes quickly and easily, and you can



use this to help build strong identification. If your character is a long-haired student who wears flower-print dresses and a daisy chain, the other players will tend to presume she's against violence and eating meat, and that she'll often prove flaky. You can heighten this identification by breaking small parts of the stereotype—maybe she is a flake, but turns into a stone-cold killer when faced with Lotus goons.

## Reputation

Your character's reputation can play an important role in defining him. Not all characters have a reputation, but if yours does, it immediately adds layers of depth. Is it a good or a bad rep? Is it deserved, or is it a frame? What sort of people are going to know your character? Regardless of the answer to that last question, you can guarantee the GM will make sure it isn't always convenient.

## Talents & Abilities

Skills and talents can have a big impact on your character. Try to see the way that getting good at a skill would shape the way you think. If your character has Info/Science 15, then he's always going to be analytical, thinking logically about everything. If he has Martial Arts 16, whenever he enters a room he'll be scanning it for potential enemies and makeshift weapons, and sizing up opponents.

## Tastes & Preferences

Your character's tastes can greatly modify the way he comes across. Someone who always wears black leather, only eats burgers, and listens to Slayer is going to be a very different person from someone who wears tweed jackets, smokes a pipe and listens to Vivaldi—even if they both happen to be engineers, or assassins, or sorcerers.

## Habits

Little mannerisms can go a long way towards giving you a clear picture of who your character is. These you have to think up in advance and work into the game where relevant, but don't betray them by making a

big point of it; just work it into the flow of the game. If your character fiddles with her hair all the time, or tuts whenever dogs are mentioned, just do it yourself through the game session.

## Appearance

This is the least relevant category. Leave it unspecified, and you'll form your own image of your character. The other players will also have a far clearer image of her than if you tell them what she looks like. They won't necessarily agree with each other, but so what?

### Rule Three

Cover all the bases. Think about your character's actions, motives, past, talents, tastes, habits, stereotype, and reputation, if any.

### Rule Four

Give your character room to develop in play. Just remember to take notes as your character unfolds around you.

# CREATING A GREAT CHARACTER

If you've given a bit of thought to the different aspects of character as described above, creating a great character isn't difficult. The main trick lies in remembering who your character is. To get into your character's head, by far the most important thing to consider is the question of personal identity.

## Who am I?

Your character's self-identity is at the core of his personality. We all have assumptions about ourselves that give us our personal sense of meaning. This should be the basis for your character, the frame that everything else hangs off. This core will color every other part of him. To get a good idea about your character, you need to know who he is. The answer could be simple—"I am a mother"; "I am a writer"—or it could be complex—"I am a rock-and-roll anarchist with a taste for fast bikes and a fascination with fire, hunting for the man who shot my brother in a bar in Vegas back in '89". Either is





fine. It is worth coming up with an answer to the question “Who am I?” and jotting it on your character sheet for reference. To help you get started, there’s a list of emotional archetypes often encountered as action heroes a little later. It’s not a complete list by any means, but it helps to get you thinking.

### Personality

Once you know who your character is at heart, you can start considering his personality. This can vary wildly, and does not necessarily need to tie in with your character’s melodramatic hook, type, or anything else. It is the set of attitudes and filters that he interacts with the world through, not his primary motivation. This is the part of him that the other players see the most of. If you’re a bit unsure of how to play a personality foreign to your own, the best way to do it is to prepare a Personality Code. This is an emotional template—things your character always does or never does in the normal course of everyday life, no matter what; emotions that certain events or situations produce; and what his greatest hopes are. It’s easy. Just think about a number of situations, and figure out how your character would deal with them, then jot them down for reference.

As an example, let’s look at a character called Ali Bryant, who I want as a headstrong, courageous person, dedicated to her cause, but with an approach that can be a bit too direct at times. When she asks “Who am I?”, her answer is “I’m a fighter,” and she means it in the sense of not giving up on what she believes in. She is extremely loyal, kind when appropriate but ruthless when necessary. She absolutely hates the Hand too, even though deep down she admires their resolve. Her Personality Code might look a bit like this:

- She will always rise to the challenge of a confrontation, dare or fair duel.
- She will always try to get around puzzles.
- She will always tend to assume the best about people, knowing she can fight her way out if she’s wrong.
- She will always want to make simple

plans, and cut meetings short.

- She will always come up with a direct solution to a problem, given enough resources.
- She will always want to attack members of the Hand. When she cannot, she will be frustrated.
- She will never be bothered by coming face to face with monsters or sorcerers.
- She will never want to reveal ‘weak’ emotions like fear or uncertainty.
- She will always like to be kind and patient with people, but rarely seems to have the time for it.
- She will always like to have fun, relax and party when circumstances allow.
- She will never talk about her past (Why not? I’ll make a note to explore that later).
- She will never feel freaked out by the supernatural.
- She will feel uncertain when she can’t take action.
- She will feel comfortable in social situations with people.
- She will feel bored by conversations that unnecessarily complicate matters.
- She will feel scared by people—friendly or unfriendly—who completely and totally outclass her.
- She wants to find out why her father was murdered.
- She wants to kick some butt.
- She wants to have fun and live a normal life—she thinks.

Now that I have that information, I can reasonably predict how she is going to react in most situations. If a minion of the Ascended comes to interview her to covertly find out about an artifact she has in her apartment, she’ll be pleasant at first, but quickly throws the fool out when she feels he’s wasting her time. When the same minion, now irritated, sends a gang of mooks to steal the thing from her place later that night, she lays into them without a second thought. When a Dragon sorcerer suddenly appears to defend her and starts throwing fireballs around, she goes back to back with the guy—at least until the fight ends.



### Rule Five

Give your character a Personality Code, and you'll find it much easier to sink into the role of playing her.

## Rounding It Out

Fears, passions, opinions and habits are the small touches that go into rounding out your character's sense of identity. They're not necessarily the core of the personality, in that they don't come into play all the time, but they are still part of a believable character. Pick one or two of each of them, and make a note of them too. There may be sessions where none of them come into it at all, but when they do, your character has a reaction ready. The GM may even start to bring them into play—if so, that's great. Part of the character's job is to drive the plot along, remember.

Note that these shouldn't be huge, all-encompassing obsessions. Your character's melodramatic hook is going to be his main obsession, the driving force of his motivation. When you are rounding him out, by comparison, you're just providing some texture for him, giving him a few quirks. Try to select relatively trivial things, but ones that fit with his Personality Code.

Looking back to Ali, her fears are looking weak and cowardly, being put in a situation where her skills are of no use, and spiders (a weakness she's ashamed of and infuriated by). Her passions are her cause, provided by her Hook, but also going out clubbing, which she loves. She is of the opinion that politicians are overpaid and in the way, that it's important to eat healthy, and that too much reflective thinking makes you depressed. She occasionally mutters to herself when she's concentrating, and when she has time, she goes shopping in thrift stores, looking for fashionable retro bargains.

As much of the above is different from my personal interests and knowledge, I'll make a note to check up on relevant information, and make a few very brief notes. For the club scene, this could include the current hits and cool DJs, nightclubs in the area, and

the types of music they play. That way, Ali can make an occasional protest like "We can't go looking for your thugs tonight; MC Solar is over from France, and he's doing a set in the Cathouse. He *never* comes here!" I won't put much work into it, because I wouldn't want to mention it more than once every two or three games anyway. I can also deduce that her apartment will contain a really expensive stereo system and a stack of CDs, and that her wardrobe is crammed full of stuff. It's probably quite messy, with outfits thrown all over the place, and an array of weapons on the couch.

You can round things off nicely with a quick look at your character's past, and the things that make up his life. It's almost impossible to go through life without getting friendly with at least one or two people. What acquaintances and family does your character have around him? Are they important to him? You should also give some thought to his lifestyle. Is he rich, surrounded by luxury and gadgets, or is he so poor he has to sleep in a tiny apartment in a crumbling slum? Either answer tells you a bit about him and his reactions, interests, prejudices and feelings towards people.

You should also think about his past. What major defeats and set-backs have shaped his opinions and patterns of behavior? What memories does he cherish? If he's seen action before, he may know certain people in the game world, or remember specific events or campaigns. He could come with enemies already waiting for him—or friends. As a 'present' from the distant past, he might even have inherited certain enemies from his ancestors. Look at your character's history, and you'll get a clear idea of the ripples he has made in the world up to the current time.

### Rule Six

Round your character out with fears, passions, opinions, family, lifestyle and history. Don't overuse them, though.



# ATTITUDE ARCHETYPES

The following list of personality archetypes is meant to get your mind working. Have a read through; if one grabs your attention, think about what sort of person it describes, what they would and wouldn't do. Before you know it, you'll have a Personality Code and other little personal details fleshed out.

## The Analyst

It's important to think things through. Taking action without thought is irresponsible, worse than taking no action at all. Just blundering in always makes things worse—situations respond best to a little analysis.

## The Artist

The world is full of beauty. It can be found everywhere. Beauty is comforting. It brings beauty out in you, so you try to see it in everyone and everything. When you absolutely have to see evil, your righteous wrath knows no bounds.

## The Avenger

There is good, and there is evil. Evil is not to be tolerated. It has hurt you, hurt those you love, and now you are going to hurt it back. There is no middle ground.

## The Beast

You know that you look and sound terrifying. People always judge you by your appearance, which saddens you. All you can do is let your gentle kindness and exquisite manners show them how wrong they were.

## The Cynic

Things stay the same. Your actions never make a difference. You kill an evil sorcerer, and another leaps up to take his place. You keep fighting of course, because you know it's right—you just don't expect it to *help*.

## The Depressive

You've had a really hard time. Life

hurts, and pain seems to pick on you in particular. You console yourself with your quest—in fact, you find peace only in the struggle—but outside of it, thoughts of your misery keep flooding back.

## The Executive

There's important work to be done. It's important to show everyone you mean business, so you always dress sharply and carry expensive gadgets to demonstrate your success. Act as if you expect to be obeyed, and you will be.

## The Expert

Within your field, you know what you're doing. You've been there before, and lived to tell the tale. You're the best, and everyone else better follow your directions. Outside your field, the amateurs can do what they like.

## The Fighter

Never give in. Your friends and your cause are sacrosanct. You'll fight for what you believe in for every moment of every day you have, if necessary. There is no other way.

## The Gambler

You've got to take risks in order to get ahead. Luck is always good to you, and anyway, taking chances is fun. Think of the rewards if you get away with it... When you don't, you're good enough to get out of trouble anyway.

## The Geek

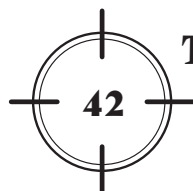
People are confusing. They shift around all the time, get mad or sulky for no reason, cause trouble. You're really hot with predictable things, like guns, spells or machines. People though? No thanks. Too much like hard work.

## The Martyr

We will all die, one day. Your death will have meaning, though. You will struggle for what you believe in, and when you die to help your friends achieve it, you will finally have won.

## The Mysterious Stranger

Everyone has a past and an identity.





Some are more turbulent than others. You never talk about anything in your past in front of anyone who wasn't there at the time. Ever. And remember, as soon as something happens, it's in the past too.

### **The Mystic**

Nothing happens by accident. The universe doesn't work that way. Even the smallest sign carries a meaning, if you know how to read it. We dance a merry dance, but the Gods play the tune.

### **The Reformed Villain**

You know what it's like on the other side, because you've been there. You've done a lot of things you're ashamed of now, but you can make amends, and sometimes old contacts come in handy. Now's the time to fight for the angels.

### **The Simpleton**

Maybe you're a little slow with complicated

ideas. So what? You're kind, and you won't let other people hurt your friends. You know that they need to be looked after, even if you don't know much else.

### **The Trickster**

People take life too seriously. You need to laugh sometimes, have a bit of fun to liven things up. You go out of your way to pull funny pranks. You have no idea why you get shouted at so much. People just take life too seriously.

## **HOW DO I PLAY A GREAT ACTION HERO?**

Once you have a nicely rounded, believable PC that you understand and whose fate you care about, the next step is to play him in a





game of *Feng Shui*. If you've never done it before, playing an action hero can seem like a daunting proposition. Fortunately, there are plenty of guidelines for us in the form of strong film characters. By observing them, we can get a pretty good idea of what goes in to playing a truly great action hero. By paying attention to your PC's character in your real-life actions and comments, you can heighten the group's sense of the game, and have much more fun.

### Being Believable

The first task is to make sure that your character is believable. Every time you break the illusion of your character's reality, you're distancing everyone from the game. Try to refer to your PC as 'I'. Rather than saying "Ali wouldn't like the way that guy is talking to her, so she's going to tell him to leave her apartment," try saying "Oh, he's just too offensive for words. I glare at him and say 'I'm busy, and you're clearly a moron. Get the hell out.'" Think of describing your character's actions as self-narration, not commentary.

Another way to shatter belief is for your PC to use knowledge he couldn't have. Say one of the PCs is being beaten up in an alley down the street. All the *players* know this, but the PCs do not. Having your character decide "I reckon John's in trouble. I'm going to look for him in that alley," or, even worse, "I'm going to dash over to the alley and start laying in" is going to wreck in-game reality.

If you're going to play a great action hero, you have to stay credible.

#### Rule Nine

Stay believable.

## THE ART OF WITTY REPARTEE

Being funny is harder than you think. Fortunately, your PC has the advantage of a potential joke writer—you. It's worth taking some time to decide on a style of

humor for your character, and maybe even to prepare some good one-liners and put-downs.

There are several elements that go into successful humor, and the more of them you can incorporate into a humorous comment, the funnier it will be. Timing is crucial. You have to pace your joke so that when you get to the punchline, people will be able to understand it. That's why so many bar-room jokes follow the formats they do—the timing is really simple. As an action hero, you want to concentrate on one-liners though, and the rules here are keep them snappy, and know what you want to say before you say it.

But timing isn't enough. For a comment to be funny, it has to be inappropriate to normal behavior, to surprise people a bit. If they expect it, it isn't funny. It can be outrageous (mockery), physical (slapstick), offensive (ridicule), deprecating (understatement), ingenuous (sarcasm), wry (irony) or even wildly irrelevant (surrealism). It does have to be a bit shocking though, and if it can deflate the ego of someone foolish, so much the better. Most people find they can do one or two of the above categories better than the others, so find the humor that suits you and your character, and stick to it.

To give you an example, suppose that a PC has just entered a jewelry store when she suddenly find herself surrounded by a ring of mooks two deep. The leader, a named GMC with a thick beard, steps forward and smugly says "Put your gun down." The appropriate reaction is to obey, but the different styles of humor could be applied as follows (note that these lines demonstrate the different styles, and I make no promises made about how funny they are!):

**Mockery:** The PC throws his weapon away with force, cowers on the ground, and cries "Please don't hurt me, great and bounteous master!"

**Slapstick:** He puts his gun down hard. It goes off and shoots a mook in the foot, who then blunders into three or four others, causing chaos.

**Ridicule:** "Call that a beard? I've seen better facial hair on slugs!"

**Understatement:** "You seem to have me



at a disadvantage.”

**Sarcasm:** “Is there a problem?”

**Irony:** “And I just finished cleaning the barrel, too.”

**Surrealism:** “But it’s Tuesday!”

Different action heroes tend to use different types of humor. Experiment, see which style suits you the best, and remember to have a few good lines up your sleeve.

### Rule Ten

Have some snappy lines prepared, waiting for the right moment.

hook a plot point onto. The GM really is your friend—in the game as well as in real life. If she doesn’t enjoy herself, you won’t get another session.

### Rule Eleven

Work with the GM, not against the GM.

## HEROICS

Being a hero means being heroic. There’s no way round it in *Feng Shui*. Heroes do not always win, and they do not always survive, but they always try, and they are always righteous. Eventually, you’re going to face the death of your PC. You will *not* want your PC to die, even if he himself has chosen the ultimate sacrifice to save the rest of his friends. It’s important not to sell him short—he’s a hero, after all. When death comes knocking for your PC, he should turn to face it bravely, smile, and come out with a great line. His glorious exit will be an extremely powerful experience, and give you some of your best gaming memories to console you as you begin the journey of learning about someone new.

## WORKING WITH THE GM

One of your character’s most important jobs is to keep the story rolling. That means the game has to be involving for all the players. Work with the GM, not against her. Whenever possible, try to keep the group together, don’t hog the action, and if you can see the way the GM wants the story to go, roll with it rather than be perverse. Everyone should have fun, the GM included. Don’t descend into out-of-character bickering or chit-chat, and if you can see the story faltering, try to bring it back on track by giving the GM something to

## SOME OF THE GREATS — WHO, WHY, HOW?

With a good knowledge of your PC’s character and the help of the tips above, you can create and play a great action hero. I’m going to finish with a quick look at some of the greatest action hero actors of all time and examine what it is that makes them *so* special, to help you play a great character too. I’m talking about the characters these actors play though, not the stars themselves. Perhaps their focus and purity will help provide inspiration for great characters of your own.

### The Mischievous Student, Jackie Chan

Jackie Chan is, for many people, the embodiment of the Hong Kong action hero. He’s very, very good, but it’s more than that. He’s funny, mischievous and vulnerable; he clowns around, often even in the middle of a life-and-death fight. He always has a ready put-down, and if you look closely, you’ll see that he’s rarely the aggressor—he finishes fights rather than starting them. He’s the funky guy next door, and we’re all secretly jealous, even while we admire him.

### The Cultured Avenger, Sean Connery

Sean Connery created the screen James Bond, and he has never really left him behind. He’s suave and sophisticated, with



a darkly ironic sense of humor. He is very competent indeed, and totally ruthless, but also extremely charming, with a strong moral code. He always takes his work seriously, and you never find him messing around or getting drunk. Most important of all though, he is always scrupulously polite, even as he's murdering someone. There is never any excuse for crassness.

### **The Gold-hearted Cynic, Chow Yun Fat**

Chow Yun Fat is gritty, tired and cynical. He knows the real world for the stinking mess that it is. He's perfectly at home with corruption, and has no time for his superiors, mired in politics or bribery. Despite this, he retains his sense of values. Deep down, underneath it all, he still believes in the good guy, and he'll do the right thing because it *is* right, regardless of whether he has hope. He'd destroy the system to save one innocent soul.

### **The Force of Nature, Arnold Schwarzenegger**

Arnold Schwarzenegger might have been born to fit the word 'implacable'. No matter what obstacles are put in his path, he crashes right through them and keeps on coming. He does not give up, he does not let irrelevancies divert him, and he does not give quarter. Evil-doers are mission objectives to be dealt with. He is considerably more terse than many heroes, and not given to flamboyant gestures. He is here to fight, and that takes all his concentration.

### **The Dragon Rampant, Bruce Lee**

Bruce Lee was the greatest fighter that the world has ever seen. He was pure, dedicated to his art, an angel of righteous death. Always somewhat uncomfortable in everyday social situations, his reason for existence was the moment of battle. It was only when fight-

ing that he managed to find peace. His skills were unparalleled, but he did not waste energy with the impossible. When overwhelmed, as he occasionally was, he would surrender—and live to fight again later.

### **The Honest Guy, Harrison Ford**

Harrison Ford is a good man in trouble. His talents are not particularly exceptional, but he's smart and lucky, and has good all-round skills. He is struggling for a virtuous cause, usually against overwhelming odds, but he never thinks about backing down. He has a good line in banter, and a kind heart that is often hidden behind a wall of bluff reserve. More than anything though, he's stubbornly determined. He is going to win, because the alternative is unthinkable.

#### **Rule Twelve**

Feel free to ignore any of these rules... as long as it increases the amount of fun you all have!

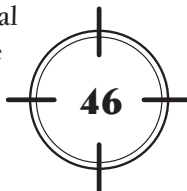
## **A KICK IN THE HEAD: SPARKING CREATIVE STUNTS**

**By Rob Heinsoo**

If you're never at a loss for a cool stunt that makes everyone else at the table say "Ooooooh!". . . well, I hope I get to play *Feng Shui* with you someday!

But if you find yourself admiring other players' stunts more often than you come up with something spectacular yourself, here are some tips for improving your choreography.

Since all the best *Feng Shui* stunts flow out of the play between the in-game situation and your character's abilities, we've followed the tips with examples of typical *Feng Shui* situations and stunts that can leap out of them.





## CREATIVE PRINCIPLES

Here's how I come up with stunts that match the flow of play. . . .

**First, I relax by taking a deep breath.**

The point isn't to slow down the pace of the fight, the point is to relax and have fun with your character's action. If you rush yourself, it's too easy to just blurt some variation on the standard RPG attack: "I hit the guy in front of me!"

**Second, I visualize as much of the fight as I can, all the things the GM and the other players have said about the environment.**

Many interesting things people say about the context of the fight scene and their characters' actions get lost in the rush of the game. Much as a film director can score points with the audience by re-using interesting ideas within a fight scene, you can riff on previously established elements of the 'set.' If your cool stunt happens to remind everyone of something they

had momentarily lost track of, the action will seem that much more believable to everyone involved.

**Third, I see if there's some cool piece of the environment that no one has mentioned yet.**

Unlike most roleplaying games, which give the GM the exclusive right to describe the world, *Feng Shui* improves tremendously when players use creative freedom to add new touches to the fight scenes. So long as you don't contradict the GM's previous words or her vision of the scene's main points, you should relish the chance to add to the game by using new details to make your character's stunts fun and surprising.

For example, let's imagine that the PCs have traveled to the Western United States, where they are ambushing a log truck driven by an Aryan Nations lieutenant who is also an agent for the Buro. The log truck is still rolling when your Martial Artist jumps on the back, onto the







logs stacked as high as a Greyhound bus. You say, "OK, now that I'm on top of the truck, I'm going to use my Dragon Foot stomp to break a few of the smaller logs in two, and as I break them I'm going to kick them at the Aryan Nations mooks who are shooting at me. The first log is gonna take out two of them, I kick it so that it spins like a helicopter blade and takes 'em out one-two, hitting them in the heads."

In other RPGs, the GM might say, "Uh, sorry, those logs are too big for you to break in two like that, it won't work." In fact the GM may have been thinking that the truck was loaded with huge old growth timber, big-ass logs you couldn't possibly kick around. But now that you're on top of the truck, and you've come up with a great stunt, the GM should probably say, "Hey, cool stunt. OK, there are some smaller logs up on top above the really big old growth timber at the bottom of the stack, you can break these smaller logs easy." And unless the GM needed those logs perfectly intact for some arcane reason connected to the backstory (uhh, Sacred Redwood Timber Grove?!), she shouldn't sweat the board-breaking feet.

As a player and co-creator, your first responsibility is to come up with cool stuff that flows into the group's picture of the scene without trespassing on the GM's right to determine truly important elements of the scene and the opposition's capabilities.

Your second responsibility is to avoid trying to have your cake and eat it too! *Feng Shui* isn't like most other roleplaying games, games that try to simulate a certain set of self-consistent physical laws. Like Hong Kong cinema, *Feng Shui* runs on dramatic laws, not on a perfectly consistent physics model. GMs should not necessarily be expected to allow some type of stunt just because they allowed it before in a similar situation. We're all familiar with action movie scenes in which the heroes pull off stunts they didn't seem capable of a few scenes earlier. Sometimes that's how *Feng Shui* plays. Enjoy the ride instead of spending time trying to argue that everything should make perfect sense.

**Fourth, I try to imagine what it would feel like to actually perform the stunt**

**that is starting to take shape in my mind.**

This body-language visualization can help by making the stunt sound more convincing to everyone else. Sometimes I even find myself standing up and half-pantomiming the movements to give a better picture of exactly what the stunt looks like.

To sharpen up your body language, consider taking even three or four classes of a martial art. If your body can remember performing movements that are somehow similar to the stunt you are describing, your words will pack much more conviction.

## LEAPING INTO ACTION: EXAMPLE ROCKIN' STUNTS

Each of the examples that follows sets the scene, then shows how two or more different characters might respond to the predicament with stunts worth remembering. Stunts that require more commentary are followed by comments in italics.

### **The Tram and the Yakuza**

**You are riding in a tram car in the mountains that is being shot up by a Yakuza Killer and his goons. Your tram car is headed down the mountain, the Yakuza are in the car that is going up the mountain on the cable adjacent to your cable. The gunfire is getting closer and more punishing every second and. . .**

**. . . you are an arcanowave device equipped Cyborg:**

"I leap through the shattered glass of the tram car towards the other cable, whipping the cord from my unplugged Spirit Shield Generator around the steel tram cable. Then I hold onto both sides of the arcanowave cord and use it to slide down the cable until I can smash my way into the Yakuza's tram car!"

*Depending on the distance to the Yakuza's car and the speed the GM thinks you're traveling, you might even get an attack off on the*



*Yaks when you arrive.*

**. . . you are a sai-armed Ninja assassin keeping company with a Killer and a Maverick Cop:**

"I snarl "Cover me" to the gun-boys and then I swing out of the tram onto the cable. I run down the cable towards the Yakuza's tram, bouncing over to the other car's cable line and then back again to throw off the aim of the Yak gunners."

**. . . you are a Martial Artist who has mastered the Path of the Leaping Storm:**

"I slip out the back of the tram, bounce to the top and then leap up into the fog that's just above our tram-cars. My aim is to use my Prodigious Leap pu power and plummet down on top of the Yakuza, and if I can leap from the fog into the smoke rising from their gun-barrels, that would be really really cool!"

*This stunt may seem a bit more ambitious than the preceding two examples, but really it's just making imaginative use of the your character's Fu Power. If the GM had stated that it was a beautiful sunny day, the jump-into-the-fog idea probably wouldn't work, but if not, hey, it's the mountains, fog makes sense.*

**. . . you are a 10 Strength Supernatural Creature with Flight who has come into temporary possession of a magic sword that inflicts ungodly amounts of damage:**

"I curse the stupid Yakuza gunmen and draw the Sword of Final Death. I throw myself high out of the car to get momentum, and then I dive at the cable holding up the Yakuza's car and cut it in two with the sword. Heck, I spend a Fortune Point to make sure I cut all the way through."

*Given your strength and your sword and your willingness to throw yourself out of the car, this stunt just might work. Unfortunately, as is sometimes the case with dramatically conceived stunts, your fellow PCs may find that the cable supporting the Yak's tram is also the cable holding up their car. (All part of the magic of "loops.") Did you bring enough Flight schticks for everyone?*

## Out of the Tram and Into the Fire

**A worst case scenario: After screwing up your attempt to run down the tram-cables mentioned in the example above, you are now *falling* into the ravine beneath the trams. You are twenty feet below the tram and falling fast, with two or three hundred feet to go before you hit the ground, and. . .**

**. . . you are a Scrappy Kid who loves to skateboard:**

"Uh, you know how the Yakuza bazooka did major damage to the side of the tram that Duke was shooting from? Well, part of that side of the tram got blown off and it's spinning alongside me as I fall, so I grab it. And you know how on the X-Games, on TV, they use snowboards as *skyboards* and they jump out of planes and twirl around and do stunts on the board? I'm going to do that with the board. I'm going to get on it with both feet and surf it down, then ride it down towards where the slope is more gradual, the part where there aren't any trees or boulders. I'm trying to land so that I'm sledding down the hill instead of taking all the impact direct. Yeah, that's what I'm going to do. And the whole way down I'm going to be yelling 'Cowabunga!'. . . uh, and at the very end, I'm going to say 'I love you, Mom,' that's right before I hit. Uhh, I *mean*, before my skyboard *slides* onto the ground like smooth mercury and I slide down to an easy stop. Yeah, that's it."

*Extra credit for trying really hard to make everyone's experience enjoyable at the same time that you're trying to avoid certain death.*

**. . . you are equipped with a 9mm sidearm, mirrorshades, and a finely-honed sense of what's cool:**

"Okay, well this is festival time in the mountains, right? So anyway, on the way down I look down and spot the gas tank that's being used by the resort up here, a big ol' gas tank, tanker-sized, and I shoot it, blam blam blam.

Then I use the shockwave of the explosion to cushion my fall, and to look really cool I ride the shockwave over to where some



people are having a picnic for the festival. I land in the lawnchair that the fat guy has just gotten up out of. And when I land in the chair I adjust my shades, because hey, of course I used one hand to hang onto my shades while I was falling, can't lose my shades. And then I blow the smoke off the barrel of my gun."

*If you spend a Fortune Die and roll a lot of positive sixes, you might just get away with this badass stunt after taking only twenty or thirty points of damage. You'll probably be sitting in that lawn chair in a suit that's been fried black by the explosion, but the smoke rising from your body will just make you feel that much cooler as you blow the smoke off your gun-barrel.*

### Raw Action

You are at an eating contest in a harbor-side restaurant in Tokyo, where the PC group's Big Bruiser is in the middle of a sushi-and-wasabi eating contest with a hulking adversary who has suddenly revealed himself to be the Lotus-connected demon you have been tracked through the Netherworld for weeks. Thorns of the Black Lotus drop out of the ferns of the restaurant's arbor, and. . .

. . . you are possessed of Martial Arts skill and the kind of *cojones* that only female Innerwalkers can attain:

"I turn my back to Black Thorn mooks, and then jump in the air and bring my foot down on the cutting board where the chief sushi chef has been cutting up a storm. My foot comes down with so much force that I send the three knives on the cutting board flipping back past me, one on either side of me and one between my legs, and each knife hits a Black Thorn guy in the throat!"

. . . you are the Big Bruiser who has just eaten far too much sushi to feel comfortable moving large distances:

"I don't feel so good right this second—it's going to take me another couple seconds to digest that last helping of *tekka maki*—so instead of doing anything big and flamboyant, I just sort of rock back in my chair and then rock forward and use my weight to smash

the table over on the kneecaps and toes of three of the Black Thorn mooks."

. . . you are a Thief who realizes that the rest of your pals are ignoring the real problem by picking on the Black Thorn mooks:

"I whisk the tablecloth off the empty table behind me and flap it like a big flag in between me and the demon. . . and then I dive underneath the tablecloth, and underneath the table where the demon is. When I skid through the other side I kick the demon right in the 'nads."

### Up in the Air

You have just thrown the Pledged pilot of the Channel 8 News helicopter out the side door. Now you are alone at the chopper's controls, hovering thirty feet above the melee where your friends, some of whom are just barely passing Death Checks, are fighting against thirty Pledged goons and two Big Bruisers controlled by the Lodge, and. . .

. . . you are an Ex-Special Forces gunner-woman who flies helicopters as naturally as other PCs twirl nunchakus. One of your friends, Johnny the Killer, is locked in hand-to-hand combat with a Big Bruiser who is beating him to death:

"I hop the chopper down a couple notches so that Johnny can grab the landing skid and go airborne, gotta get him out of range of that Bruiser. And oh yeah, I'll cover Johnny's escape with a Glock-shot out the window at the Bruiser once I've handled the drop."

*If the GM wasn't clear on the fact that this copter has landing skids, now it does! Flying the chopper and taking a shot might be tough, but if anybody has the skills to handle it, the Ex-Special Forces gal does.*

. . . you are a Transformed Monkey who has no idea how to pilot a helicopter:

"OK, as the copter sinks a little and drifts over the battlefield, I tumble after the pilot's body. As he's falling I jump with both feet and bounce off his body, knocking him to the ground faster, and then I swing back around the helicopter's landing skid and use the momentum of the swing to whip me feet-



first into the face of that Big Bruiser with the shotgun.”

**... you are a Transformed Dragon and former race-car driver who used to pilot your own your private chopper:**

“I drop low, dipping the rear end to chop the Big Bruiser with the ax in half with the rear rotor blade. Y’know, the one that goes up and down. Just a quick cut down the middle and then I’ll pop up again.”

**... you are a gunfire-addled Maverick Cop who is a few rice noodles short of a full entree:**

“I flip the copter upside down and drop the rotor down on the guys fighting underneath me. But I only want to hit the bad guys!”

*Oh dear. Oh dear oh dear oh dear. I appreciate the cinematic impact, but I’ve got a hunch that some part of this stunt is not going to work.*

## Playing Games with Fate

**You are pinned in a cross-fire in the game room of a cozy ranch-style suburban home. A Pledged S.W.A.T. team is firing on you from the cover of sofas and chairs in the living room. A gang of renegade drug-running Fire Assassins armed with Uzis is firing blind at you through the walls of the game room from the laundry room next door. It’s your turn to act, and. . .**

**... you are a power-arm equipped, Buro-trained Cyborg:**

“I see where the fire through the wall is coming from. I crouch low and do a mighty Horse-stance hop over to the wall, and then I come up and smash my hand straight through the wall so that I’ll grab one of the Fire Assassin drug-runners by the neck. And then I’m going to pull him back through the hole I made in the wall with my arm and throw him at the S.W.A.T. team.”

*Looks like an imaginative, though perhaps somewhat flawed, attempt to take out one mook. Since it’s dramatic and cool and fits the PC’s schtick, and he could just run around to the laundry room and face the Fire Assassins face-to-face if he wanted, this probably wouldn’t get penalized too badly. If you also wanted to take out*

*a S.W.A.T. guy with what’s left of the thrown Fire Assassin, then it starts looking tougher.*

**... you are a Spy:**

“This is Uncle Jimmy’s game room. He and his kids are total Star Wars fans, right? So I grab hold of the life-size Han Solo stand-up cardboard figure that Uncle Jimmy imported from Blockbuster video, it’s sitting against the wall right next to the pool table. I spring back to the door, sending the Han Solo figure through the door as if it’s going to shoot the S.W.A.T. team. Except I’m just using that distraction to roll through the door and come up right behind the couch where the named guy on this S.W.A.T. team is hiding. I’m gonna say, ‘You should have had a bad feeling about this,’ and pull the trigger when my gun is against his temple.”

**... you trust your ability to dodge mook-fire:**

“Well, I’m gonna try something fun. I’m going to show myself for just a second where the S.W.A.T. boys behind the sofas can see me, and I’m gonna point my gun at ‘em. Instead of just shooting at them I’m going to pound on the wall with my other hand, and say ‘This is the police!’ Then, before either the S.W.A.T. team or the Fire Assassins behind the wall can hit me, I’m going to drop flat and do a fast fingertip pushup away from where I was against the wall, so that the cops and the assassins end up shooting *each other* instead of me!”

*I don’t know if this really works or not. It’s the kind of thing I think of. It’s the kind of thing that shows up in some Hong Kong movies, often times as the bumbling attempt of the comic-relief character. It’s not the kind of stunt to make a habit of, so it’s kinda going to be the GM’s call whether or not it works.*

**... you are a Ghost of a modern human:**

“On my way through the wall of the laundry room, I float past the game room’s juke box, which has miraculously been untouched by the gunfire. I had already inspected the play list while Johnny was playing pool, so now I hit the code for “Don’t Fear the Reaper,” and then I go through the wall and take out the first mook I see with a blast to knock them back into the laundry machines. I’d go after



the S.W.A.T. guys but I don't think they could hear the music through those helmets."

**. . . you are a Killer:**

"I let the other guys deal with the S.W.A.T. team. I turn to the wall. As soon as I see bullets start to come through, I plug the guy through the wall, so that he doesn't get off another shot or so that his shots go up into the ceiling as he falls. What I want is: instead of seeing their bullets come through in long automatic fire machine gun trails through the plaster, I want to punctuate each shot with one bullet of my own. Bam Bam Bam. I'm going to use Carnival of Carnage and try to take out the first two guys who shoot through the wall."

*Not all stunts have to involve actual motion and maneuvering. This gun-stunt works because it presents a clear image of exactly how the stunt is going to look (if it works!). Everyone can see it in their mind's eye as a follow-up image to something that has already been going on, the submachine gun bullets coming through the wall from the laundry room.*

### **Perpetual Motion**

**You are fighting a squad of Flying Monkeys and their beautiful Jammer commandant, Kelly the Wrench, atop the Perpetual Motion Machine, a Netherworld feng shui site, and. . .**

**. . . you are a Gambler who trusts your luck more than your gun:**

"Well, to me, this big ol' Perpetual Motion Machine is just an oversize Pachinko machine! I may not understand what makes it work, but I've got this lucky feeling about the third red button on the control panel and the fourth blue and white-striped lever above my head. It's hard to explain, but if I get my hand on the lever while dodging that Flying Monkey's pop-gun, and then press the red button at the same time as I crank the lever, I just know that something bad is going to happen to those two Flying Monkey mooks. I'll give it a whirl."

*A cool way of taking out two mooks, huzzah. Not the kind of thing you should be able to get away with every time. I mean, there's a limit to lucky feelings, and sometimes you've just gotta roll up your sleeves, let the aces fall onto the*

*table, and let fly with a regular attack. But as a one-time whack-a-monkey stunt, this suits the cinematic splendor, even if the GM wasn't aware that control panels and steam valves were located in that portion of the Machine.*

**. . . you are a Supernatural Creature who has figured out that the Machine's positive-chi flow is giving your enemies preternatural speed:**

"I look for the part of the Machine that's nearest to one or more of the Monkeys and that has the most moving parts. Then I yell, 'Taste the wrath of the Hell of Writhing Lightnings, puny monkeys!' but instead of blasting them with Lightning I blow chunks of Gelatinous Goo. Instead of hitting them with the goo I make it look like I'm aiming for them but I actually hit the part of the Machine that has all the moving parts. What I'm trying to do is gum up the machine, to make it slow down or stop, and also to make the monkeys not figure out what I'm trying to do, let 'em think I just missed."

*Monkeys being monkeys, you might be able to get away with this trick a few times while they're laughing at you, maybe even going up the works enough to immobilize the Machine.*

**. . . you have been wounded badly by Kelly the Wrench earlier in the combat and your play group is used to you trying imaginative multi-sentence stunts:**

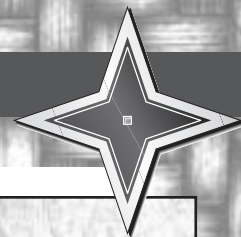
"I hit her. Hard."

*Your group knows that you can flip with Jackie Chan and high-kick with Jet Li. By contrast, used by surprise, your simple attack communicates your action-hero style determination to take this bad guy out, once and for all. Sometimes you just gotta get back to basics.*

## **WIDE WORLD OF HURTS**

**By Bruce Baugh**

Righteous masters of Asian martial arts hold no monopoly on the ability to smite evil with a powerful fist or foot. Diligent students of human potential exist in every culture, as



do desperate men and women in conflict, seeking every advantage their bodies can provide. Some martial arts emerge from the systematic studies of practical scholars, investigating possibilities and synthesizing techniques. Others begin as the efforts at self-defense mounted by slaves and members of society's lower classes, denied the weapons their "betters" favor. The martial arts of the elite often start in philosophy; the martial arts of the oppressed usually incorporate some element of showmanship intended to disguise combat training as something more innocuous.

*Feng Shui* isn't about detailed simulation of the nuances of anything in the real world. If you want to learn what the martial arts covered here are *really* like, study them, or at least ask questions of people who study them. This section provides some discussion of what the various martial arts are like, how they came into being, and who practices them, along with suggestions on how to use *Feng Shui* fu schticks to simulate them. Any serious student of an art described here would find the *Feng Shui* version ridiculously cinematic and unrealistic. Yes, that's the point.

### The Master's Cry

Martial artists are famous in the movies and genre literature for striking dramatic poses and making weird, unearthly cries. They're concentrating their Chi for a special effort. In *Feng Shui*, a martial artist can spend one or more shots moaning in a high-pitched voice, culminating in a dramatic shout as he attacks. For every two shots he spends in this preparation, he can add one to the Damage result of his next attack, up to a maximum of +3. He cannot make any active defenses while gathering his Chi this way, and if he does abort the preparation to defend against an immediate threat, he has to start all over once he finishes protecting life and limb. There is no Chi cost for this effect.

At the GM's discretion, this schtick may be available to anyone with Martial Arts, or may be restricted to those who've received advanced training, or even restricted only to those attuned to one or more feng shui sites.

### Supernatural Martial Arts

None of the arts described below includes some of the more impressively supernatural paths described in *Feng Shui*. Characters simply don't find masters of the Path of the Shadow's Companion, or the Path of the Brilliant Flame, or the Path of the Immutable Clay listed in the phone book. The only ads in martial arts magazines for secrets of magic command lead to scams.

In the world of *Feng Shui*, secret masters of these paths and the others that accomplish genuinely magical feats quietly practice their craft within a great many martial arts. Characters who prove themselves worthy students may learn the best stuff once they earn a master's respect, regardless of whether they began by studying Aikido or Savate.

The GM gets the last word in when characters can learn the supernatural paths. Players and GMs who work together in developing the situation get more fun: It creates more melodramatic hooks, more twists and turns of fate for the characters to strike back against in righteous fury.

## THE AMERICAS

### Capoeira

Capoeira (pronounced "cap-oh-eh-rah") began as a means of self-defense among Brazilian slaves. The Portuguese brought over slaves from many African nations; as the slaves managed to escape or at least to share information, their various traditions fused to form something new. Capoeira draws on legacies from half a dozen nations, but fits them together in a unique framework. It's an art for use by unarmed fighters, who might often be manacled. So it emphasizes leaps and kicks, training its practitioner to move toward, away from, and around opponents quickly and unpredictably. The heart of Capoeira training is the roda, a performance circle in which opponents face off surrounded by accompanying musicians. In the field, as well, Capoeira provides combined techniques. A solo capoeirista makes a formidable combatant, but a well-practiced team can be downright deadly.

One part of Capoeira history cries out for *Feng Shui* connections. In the 1890s, Brazil's chief of police set out to exterminate Capoeira because of its association with slave insurrections. Sampaio Ferraz pur-



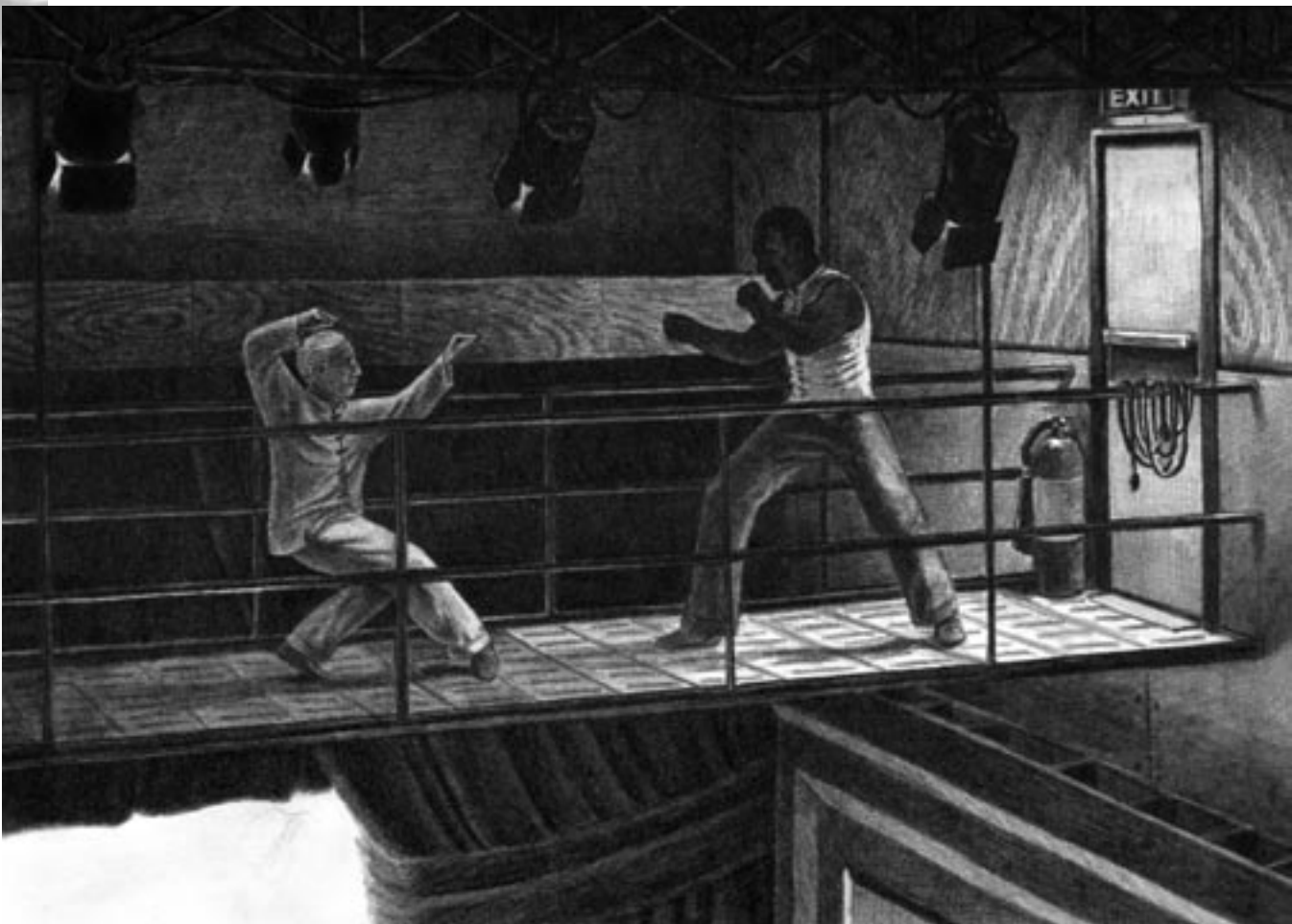
sued his goal in an unusual way: he was himself a master of the art, and assembled elite teams of capoeiristas to infiltrate rebellious communities. In the end, Ferraz went a little too far in arresting young men connected to Brazil's ruling class, and his unit fell into disfavor. The laws banning Capoeira remained in effect until the 1920s, though. It's an easy guess that Ferraz took orders, wittingly or otherwise, from the Lodge, as the mystical elements of Capoeira make it a likely target for the Ascended crusade against magic.

**System:** The ginja, the basic stance of Capoeira, is one of constant motion. The capoeirista's movements look nothing like the staggering of Drunken Stance, but the effects are the same in game mechanics. Capoeira begins with a unique fu path, the Ginja Path. Its combat effects duplicate those of the Path of the Empty Bottle, but it requires dance rather than drunkenness. At the start of a fight, the capoeirista must first succeed in a Dance or

Performance check to set the pace for upcoming attacks. No AV on a Ginja Path attack can be higher than the AV of the opening dance. (A capoeirista with bad luck *can* make another check in his next action or at any time during the fight, and keep the new AV.) The Dancing Stance matches Drunken Stance, the Whirling Fist matches Drunken Fist, the Spinning Deflection matches Wily Stupor, the Cascade of Misdirection matches Aberrant Spasm, and the Full Flip Leap matches Spasmodic Leap. Capoeira also makes heavy use of the Path of the Tightening Coils and the Path of the Leaping Storm. Keep in mind that Capoeira includes no hand strikes or other offensive moves with the hands or arms; the arms provide only blocking and balance.

### Jeet Kun Do

Jeet Kun Do is the martial art Bruce Lee synthesized in the 1960s and early 1970s. Like many of the modern martial arts, it is very





## EUROPE

much a statement about his personal worldview; unlike many of the others, it makes identifying and developing the student's own statement an integral part of the process. Lee drew on everything that crossed his path in Hong Kong and America: Judo, Kung Fu, Savate, wrestling, even fencing and more remote approaches to fighting. Lee emphasized empty-handed combat, with techniques for both strikes and kicks, along with wrestling and grappling maneuvers. Jeet Kun Do masters fight in ways that may not look much like each other, since they're applying the basic principles and the global pool of ideas to combinations that suit their own distinctive strengths and weaknesses. The fighter whose style doesn't obviously resemble anything else may well be a student of Jeet Kun Do. The art reflects Lee's experiences as an underdog in that it offers particularly effective training for being the single defender against multiple attackers.

The personal-system aspect of Jeet Kun Do makes it a good form for Secret Warriors who may wish to incorporate the lore of other junctures. They can introduce innovations from past and future and attract less attention than they would if trying it in a more conventional martial art. GMs can decide for themselves whether Bruce Lee himself knew anything about the Secret War. In his movie persona, he makes a fine guardian of Dragon lore, possibly beginning with the Guiding Hand but rejecting their fear of modernity and the outside world. In his persona as real martial artist, actor, and family man, he might also have served in the Secret War, or might have never known about it. The same applies to his son Brandon, who could equally appropriately be a promising young actor and martial artist who died in a tragic accident or a rising young star of the Secret War done in by foul enemies.

**System:** Secret warriors with Jeet Kun Do favor the Path of the Passive Wings, the Path of the Hands of Light, the Path of the Clever Eye, and the Path of the Healthy Tiger. Jeet Kun Do students may learn a unique schtick that reduces the penalty for fighting multiple opponents by 1, as long as they fight alone.

### Savate

Savate evolved in the 1700s out of a Marseilles style of street fighting, combining open-handed strikes with low kicks. Charles Lecour made a system out of it in the mid-1800s, folding in a generous dose of Industrial Revolution philosophy. Above all, Savate attacks (and defenses) must be *efficient*; the standard moves call for a strike followed immediately by a kick. Savate strikes build on English boxing techniques, though they're modified to work without boxing gloves as well as with. Some Savate techniques call for the use of sticks, including "la Canne," a 36"-long flexible rod half an inch in diameter, and "la Baton," a six-foot staff two inches in diameter. Sticks in Savate serve primarily to block and create opportunities for fresh attacks; few offensive maneuvers rely on them.

Practitioners of Savate favor special garb. The uniform of the Savate master includes a close-fitting one piece garment—spandex unitard in the modern day—and custom shoes. Savate shoes have thick soles and treads midway between basketball shoe studs and golf cleats. They deliver a nasty kick, and help the Savate master maintain a firm footing while engaging in very unbalancing kicks, or at least that's the way Savate masters see it.

**System:** The Path of the Hands of Light and the Path of the Healthy Tiger cover most Savate moves. Serious students of Savate often go on to learn Path of the Clever Eye. Savate stick fighters simply use their personal tools as Signature Weapons.

### Wrestling

The Western martial arts begin with wrestling. It's not a single style, but a whole set of more or less related approaches to unarmed combat, all of which aim to get the opponent down on the ground and unable to rise to continue the attack. Wrestling traditionally places little emphasis on either kicks or punches: wrestlers close with each other, and use





their whole bodies in the pursuit of leverage. A good throw or fall depends on correctly appraising rapidly changing centers of mass and finding good fulcrum points. (An early Greek writer described wrestling as the engineering of the human form.)

Throughout most of Western history, two very different sorts of people practiced wrestling. On the one hand, it was the vulgar technique of the unimproved masses. On the other hand, it was the scientific combat art of the elites, informed by classical education and sober discipline. Kings and Presidents wrestled, setting aside their formal garb to grapple other gentlemen (and sometimes to teach a lesson to the unimproved masses). In the 20th century, the elite aspect of wrestling faded early on, leaving behind the popular form. At the same time, wrestling's traditional emphasis on extended bouts—often lasting hours—shifted to accommodate a much quicker style, with more throws and pins and less prolonged grappling.

In the real world, professional wrestling owes much more to the theatre than to actual combat. In the Secret War, this need not be so. It's also possible that the genuine masters of combat wrestling practice their arts away from the public glare, leaving the showmen to misdirect the public. In addition, professional wrestlers may put on the show for the masses while using the real thing on the side. Certainly heroic luchadors (masked Mexican wrestlers) and other masters of the art make worthy additions to Dragon ranks.

**System:** Path of the Tightening Coils is essential for the *Feng Shui* wrestler. Other paths may or may not matter; keep in mind that wrestlers engage in very little fancy hand or leg work.

## ASIA

The precise details of one martial arts style over another matter in *Feng Shui* just as much as the details of one model of gun over another: not at all.

## Aikido

Aikido set the 20th century pattern for martial arts development. Morihei Ueshiba began studying martial arts at the turn of the century as a young man seeking revenge against the thugs hassling his father for unconventional politics. With practice, he decided that revenge alone wasn't a worthy motive and turned to wider-winged philosophical investigations. (Really. Yes, real life includes people who sound like player-characters.) Morihei found inspiration in one of the new religions that constantly spring up in Japan, either disappearing or merging into a vast syncretistic sea of beliefs in short order. Omotokyo combines Shinto with the desire to unite all humanity into a "heavenly kingdom on earth." He set about creating a new art, combing jujitsu throws and locks with body movements inspired by spear and sword budo.

Morihei made continual adjustments to his synthesis. Even the name didn't settle down until the 1940s, after decades of experiments with various labels. Today Aikido is not so much a single system as a way of thinking applied to a mass of possibly relevant concepts. Every school ends up with its own particular flavor of the art. Their disagreements are the stuff duels of honor and vendettas are made of.

**System:** Aikido draws on the Path of the Passive Wings, the Path of the Hands of Light, the Path of the Clever Eye, and the Path of the Tightening Coils. Most Aikido masters focus on a few paths and develop them very thoroughly.

## Escrima

Escrima (and its closely related arts, Kali and Arnis) is a Filipino system of knife fighting. It originated with the Spanish invasions of the Renaissance. Kali, the oldest of the arts, includes a great many techniques; Escrima and Arnis each emphasize a subset of them and present the chosen techniques in an easy-to-learn manner. All three focus strongly on the geometry of attacks: their systems teach the student about the lines and angles different attacks create.

Escrima and Arnis make peasants dangerous, and historically contributed to



Spanish paranoia about their new conquests. Rather than focusing on targets, Escrima focuses on the manner of attack—for instance, a high angled strike might be a head shot, or might be part of a lunge down at a lower part of the target's body, but the strike itself is the same in either case.

**System:** Escrima focuses on the Path of the Healthy Tiger; Escrima martial artists take a -2 penalty to Martial Arts rating when fighting bare-handed rather than with a knife. The Path of the Hands of Light also fits into the Escrima framework, but characters must use it with knives.

## Judo and Jujitsu

Jujitsu predates nearly every other martial art discussed here. Fairly reliable historical accounts describe competitions in the third century BC between masters of Jujitsu. Jujitsu brought together and organized techniques for grappling, to give men in full armor combat options even when disarmed, or when circumstances interfered with the use of their weapons. It became one of the classical arts of the Japanese warrior, along with horsemanship, archery, and swordplay. In the 12th through 16th centuries, rival schools specialized in various techniques: throwing, striking, foot maneuvers, and so on.

When the Tokugawa shoguns brought an end to centuries of civil wars, the purely military arts (collectively, *bujutsu* or arts of war) gave way to the martial disciplines and philosophies (the *budo*). Thus jujitsu evolved into judo. During the 18th and 19th centuries, masters shed the emphasis on fighting in armor to develop broader systems of unarmed grappling and throwing. 20th century schools of judo originated after the Meiji Restoration of 1868 made the emperor an important figure again. Earlier schools generally had ties to factions favoring a weak emperor, and earned punishment. Post-Meiji judo schools are all noticeably less political, emphasizing self-development.

**System:** Judo and Jujitsu rely primarily on the Path of the Passive Wings and the Path of the Tightening Coils.

## Martial Arts and Religion

Particularly in Asia, the inventors of martial arts often seek to make a religious point. They generally want to combine favored traditions with modern insights. The factions of the Secret War find this all very frustrating. The Eaters of the Lotus and the Guiding Hand both like the return to tradition, but neither wishes to accept the taint of the modern world. The Buro finds some experiments in modernism and "scientific" spirituality intriguing precursors to its own views, while loathing the superstitious elements. Characters who invent martial arts themselves or study under inventive masters may well find secret warriors peering out of the cupboard, so to speak. GMs looking for a gradual lead into the Secret War may use constant surveillance by competing teams (which sometimes fight against each other) as the point of introduction.

While out-of-time manipulators try to preach their particular doctrines, the Lodge simply prefers to make all study that might lead to magic go away. Its agents in society at large rail against "cults" and "megalomaniac lunatics leading innocent, misguided youth astray." A student who, like the young inventor of Aikido, wishes to protect his respected elder from harassment could stumble into a very nasty surprise if he succeeds in following a prominent reporter to the wrong clandestine meeting.

## Karate

Karate developed on the island of Okinawa around 1500 AD, in the interaction of two influences. Buddhist monks first reached China about eleven hundred years earlier, crossing the Himalayas to bring news of a new religion. As part of their teachings about self-discipline, they developed exercises intended to sharpen the body, and to offer alternatives to waging war in the normal, bloody way. Chinese converts carried the teachings across China and beyond. They reached Okinawa at about the time the kings of the island decided to simplify life for their soldiers by banning private ownership of any weapons.

The people's desire for self-defense bred several martial arts. Sticks developed into *bo*, mill handles into *tonfa*, chains into *nunchaku*, and iron bars and prongs into *sai*. All the legal tools of the farmer became weapons, each with its own techniques. For those times when no weapons might be at hand, methods of bare-handed fighting became the foundation of Karate. Monastic discipline wasn't far removed from the routine harshness of



peasant life, and the people took to the idea of gaining the ability to protect themselves from official depredations through the mastery of their own bodies. Karate as a martial arts philosophy is neutral about political matters, but it often played a part in revolutionary thinking.

Japanese visitors of the 19th century noticed Karate, studied it, and made it the subject of systematic study. The various forms of modern Karate all derive from these scholarly efforts (apart from the continued Okinawan practice of Karate for self-defense by peasants).

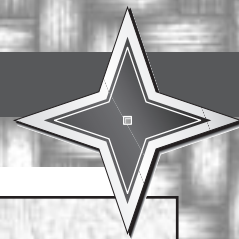
**System:** Karate is a very flexible martial art, and nearly all the paths fit it. The Path of the Clever Eye and the Path of the Healthy Tiger occur in more schools than any other paths.

## Muay Thai

Mongolian invasions of China in the 12th and 13th century sent many Chinese people fleeing in any direction away from the invaders. Refugee communities sprang up across south-east Asia, and cultural hybrids of many sorts emerged. In Thailand, Chinese military traditions fused with native self-defense methods to form Muay Thai. Westerners often call the result “kick-boxing,” but students of the art describe it as a system of eight weapons: elbows, fists, knees, and legs. Muay Thai combines elite and peasant practices in a military system; more than almost any other martial art discussed here, it’s a system for group as well as individual combat.

Traditional Muay Thai practice included wrapping the hands and shins in hemp soaked in a mixture of sap and crushed shells. In addition to the force of the blow, striking with that sort of preparation inflicts painful cuts. In the 1930s, the Thai government imposed restrictions of rounds, rules, and gloves, and today the older style exists only in outlying regions.

**System:** Muay Thai uses the Path of the Sharpened Scales, the Path of the Hands of Light, and the Path of the Healthy Tiger. Muay Thai practitioners may learn a unique schtick that lets them combine their attacks. They act jointly on the shot of the slowest member of the team. The member with the highest Action



Value makes the roll, and +1 AV for each additional participant, to a maximum of +3. An experienced team of Muay Thai masters can cut a swath through nearly any opposition.

## Pencak Silat

Like wrestling, Pencak Silat isn't a single art, but a term referring to literally hundreds of more or less related practices. Around 400 AD, three general styles of martial arts emerged in Indonesia: Penjang Gulat, a wrestling form; Ujungan, systems for knife and stick fighting; and Pencak Silat, systems of unarmed defense. Just like other peasants' martial arts, Pencak Silat hides some of its combat secrets in dance-like and gymnastic moves, appearing less threatening than it actually is. The Pencak Silat fighter tries to keep opponents confused and off-guard, moving constantly into positions that suggest multiple attacks, or that offer few clues at all.

Forms of Pencak Silat vary based on the particular environments their masters lived in. Some, developed in areas with broad open spaces, include many leaps and extended maneuvers, while others, developed in dense jungle, favor close-in strikes and falls. They all focus on open-handed strikes and takedowns, and they all teach specific patterns of footwork to accompany the arm actions. In practice sessions, rhythmic music provides pacing and accompaniment.

**System:** Pencak Silat practitioners often learn a modified form of the Path of the Empty Bottle, which replaces the requirement of drunkenness with a requirement of music. They also incline toward the Path of the Healthy Tiger and the Path of the Leaping Storm.

## Tae Kwon Do

Tae Kwon Do is another of the very old Asian martial arts. Sculptures from the first century BC show fighters in poses recognizably related to modern Tae Kwon Do positions. It originated in Koguryo, one of the three kingdoms occupying the Korean peninsula, only to find most favor in the rival kingdom of Silla. Silla lacked population, resources and cultural advantages. Silla's nobles added it to their standard regimen of training exercises. In

## The Long Way Around

Students of martial arts history often succumb to the impulse to build elaborate genealogies based on perceived similarities. Historical records seldom say anything like "In 1622, Master Wu fused these following traditions, which he learned at these locales, to produce his own martial art." The peasant arts in particular suffer from nonexistent documentation; even the elite arts often lack anything like a reliable paper trail. Masters and students alike boast to themselves, to each other, and to rivals. Bragging can and does flip-flop from brilliant modern insight to recovered ancient wisdom and back, sometimes in the space of a few sentences.

One popular theory links Karate, and sometimes other Asian martial arts, to Pankration, the ancient Greek form of wrestling. It might even be true, as there were contacts between Greece and Rome in the West and India and China in the East. Most observers think that no more than the idea, if even that, traveled along the ancient trade routes. After all, people of all cultures do get attacked and do think about ways of handling it. The fact of the Secret War opens up more possibilities in this regard, along with the general atmosphere of heroic individual achievement. The spread of open-handed martial arts in the East could be part of a ploy in the Secret War. Characters who discover it would then have to figure out who did it and why. Is it supposed to undermine the Eaters of the Lotus and the Guiding Hand, or to reinforce them? Does it provide a non-magical way of challenging the Ascended?

Go wild. Extreme ideas make most sense in *Feng Shui*.

the last part of the first millennium AD, sages noticed the potential of Tae Kwon Do to anchor a system of Confucian teaching comparable to the Buddhist elements of Karate. In the first century of the new millennium, training manuals began presenting Tae Kwon Do as a means of fighting and of philosophical enlightenment.

The Japanese occupations of Korea during several wars this century renewed interest in Tae Kwon Do. The Japanese banned all Korean martial arts. Before then, Tae Kwon Do's reputation had been in long, slow decline; persecution made it look interesting once again. Masters of the art emigrated around the world after World War II, taking their lore with them just in time to catch rising Western interest in all forms of the martial arts.

Fast, high, spinning kicks characterize Tae Kwon Do. The system also includes punches and body maneuvers, but kicks get most attention. The arms come into play pri-



marily in blocking others' attacks.

**System:** Tae Kwon Do inclines toward the Path of the Sharpened Scales, the Path of the Clever Eye, and the Path of the Healthy Tiger.

## THE ARTS OF THE POINTED THING

Several European and Asian martial arts train students in the use of swords. While styles differ, all of these arts share some schticks in common. Sword schticks are like gun schticks, but not quite identical.

**Both Guns Blazing** works precisely the same for swords as it does for guns. The GM retains veto privileges for characters trying to use two sabers or other particularly heavy weapons.

**Carnival of Carnage** requires no modification at all. Sword fighters often use it in combination with fu schticks; use the combined schtick rules.

**Eagle Eye** doesn't apply to range modifiers unless you're throwing your sword. (That's not hypothetical. Sword-throwing appears in many Western films suitable as inspiration, including *Excalibur* and *Ladyhawke*.) Its reduction of cover bonuses, on the other hand, regularly comes in handy during pursuit fights through complicated environments.

**Fast Draw** works without modification. It's particularly handy in formal competitions of martial prowess: masters of their arts face off to demonstrate pieces of their techniques, including fast draw along with particular thrusts or cuts.

**Hair-Trigger Neck Hairs** works as well for sword fighters as for gunmen.

**Lightning Reload** doesn't apply except perhaps to very unusual discharging swords.

**Signature Weapon** suits swords, too.

### Rapier

The rapier is the traditional center of attention among elite Western sword fighters. It's a highly specialized weapon: thin and flexible with a sharp point, intended only for thrusting. Outside the tournament arena,

it often has a slightly sharp edge, but that's only to discourage competitors from grabbing the blade. The rapier makes an awful cutting weapon.

The classic Renaissance stereotype of an upper-class swordsman uses a rapier. He bobs and weaves around his target, stabbing to pierce through weak spots in armor until the hapless target, leaking blood from dozens of small wounds, collapses with a final pierce right through the heart. Some theorists try to provide military rationales for the rapier, but in practice it's always been a weapon for self-defense and dueling.

The rapier and its refined tournament cousins, the foil and *épée*, owe their existence to the decline of armor among European warriors. Early firearms finished off the heavily armored knight's days as the man in charge, completing the work begun by longbows and crossbows. Once armor became largely irrelevant, much lighter swords became practical. Early, relatively heavy rapiers gave way to the modern stabbing form. Spanish military theorists produced the first manuals for rapier fencing in the 1470s; imitators and competitors sprung up all over Europe in the next few decades. The early instructors created systems that only professional dilettantes could follow, full of mathematical formulas and precise geometry of movements. Their successors refined the principles down into forms would-be fencers could learn in months or years rather than decades.

National "schools" emphasize different strategies. The Spanish school puts most attention on circular movements and upright posture; the Italian school favors linear movements and lower posture; the French school generally uses a shorter sword in conjunction with linear movements and upright posture.

**System:** The Path of the Leaping Storm provides a good framework for cinematic rapier combat.

### Sabre

The sabre went through fewer changes after the end of chivalry than the rapier



did. It was (and remains, where mounted troops still fight) a cavalry soldier's weapon, suitable for both thrusting and cutting. It also served as a weapon for sailors, fighting in alternately cramped and spacious conditions that favored weapons the sailors could use in several different ways.

As with the thrusting-only swords, the sabre exists in competition forms largely unrelated to its uses in actual combat. Formal tournament rules modify the weapon and limit tactics enough that someone trained for tournament must relearn most of what he knows, if he hopes to survive real sword fights. (If you want rules for this, apply a -2 Action Value penalty for the first month or so of real fighting after tournaments, and -1 Action Value for another few months.)

Sabre fighting calls for more big movements than the lighter swords do. It takes strength and leverage to swing a sabre effectively, and it's not a lot of use in very confined spaces. Cinematic sabre fighting should include a great deal of extended lunging, vaulting, jumping and swinging, and other efforts to get superior positioning in the overall field of battle.

**System:** The Path of the Leaping Storm covers the main maneuvers of cinematic sabre fighting. The Path of the Sharpened Scales applies to extended maneuvers for advantage in positioning.

## Kendo and Kenjutsu

Kenjutsu is the ancient Japanese art of sword-fighting. It's the "real thing," beginning with how to draw the sword and focusing on things to actually do with one's weapon in combat. Kendo is the philosophical extrapolation, often working with wood or bamboo practice weapons. Kendo places less emphasis on being able to cleave an opponent in two, more on understanding one's own body and on how to maintain purity of focus.

In general, a warrior who goes into battle on a regular basis practices kenjutsu, while the martial arts master who engages in astonishing "mock" sword-play when thugs beset him in his studio practices kendo. Keep in

### Optional Rule: Word and Blade

European sword-fighting includes, in inspirational film and literature, a great deal of word play. This calls for a schtick!

**Verbal Fencing.** This schtick allows the fencer to get +1 Action Value on his next attack per shot he spends engaging in cutting mockery of his opponent, distracting banter, praise of his own prowess, and so forth. The fencer can accumulate a maximum of +3 AV this way before he must go ahead and actually make an attack.

*Example: Sir Simon Dejeratavi is the offspring of four generations' intermarriage between British and Indian nobility. He knows the gentlemanly arts of combat inside and out. Recently he encountered the Secret War, and quickly committed himself to the Dragons' cause. Now he stands face-to-face against a Lotus-summoned demon. The thing drips saliva and venom in a most unbecoming way. From the far end of the hall, it races at him, claws raced. "Dear God," Sir Simon says, "are you the sort of thing they're letting out of Hell these days? What a disgrace!" The demon approaches, slowing slightly as it tries to figure out Sir Simon's point. He continues, "In my day, we faced real Hell-spawn. Aren't you ashamed to go about like that?" He points at its necklace of skulls, and follows the comment up with a devastating thrust straight at the demon's heart. He gets +2 to his Action Value, having softened it up.*

The GM may wish to allow a comparable effect in other styles of martial art. Arts that train their students to silent contemplation don't qualify; arts that encourage dramatic showmanship may. The GM gets the final say.

*Example: Sir Simon's American comrade Roger Cleaver was a professional wrestler before joining the fight against spiritual tyranny. He too confronts a demon, down some hallway near Sir Simon. He rears up as it begins to move, and shouts at it, "The Mighty Cleaver is gonna take your bacon-headed hell chimp ass and check it into the Whupass Motel!" He gets +1 to his Action Value when he attempts a flying leap and interception.*

mind that even a wooden weapon does hurt. Roleplay it out, or put it into the mechanics. At the GM's discretion, a blow from a training weapon can still do some harm even though it doesn't inflict permanent injury. Roll damage as if it the weapon were its lethal counterpart. If any of the damage gets past the victim's Toughness, the victim takes a point of impairment on his next action...unless he manages to incorporate shouts of "Ow!" and clutching at the bruised part into a stunt.



### Chapter 3



Illustration by David White

# Being a Better Character

HOT SCHTICKS A-POPPIN'

## STAT SCHTICKS

By Greg Stolze

So you thought having a Strength score of 11 was pretty impressive, huh? A great way to ratchet up that Martial Arts damage score?

(Right now, in my head, I can hear the voice of some protesting gamer. I hear that a lot, actually. He's saying "No, my *character concept* required that much hypertrophic beef. It had nothing to do with the possibility of doing immense damage with a single pimp slap. Really!")

Hey, relax. Everyone loves big fat stats. What's not to like? They're the underpinning of the mechanics, so naturally people tend to poke them up as high as they can. That's perfectly in keeping with the extra-buff, maxed-out, over the top philosophy of *Feng Shui*, wuxia movies and action flicks in general. It's *good* to want to be absurdly powerful. So good, in fact, that we're giving you extra rewards for it. Introducing the **Stat Schtick**.

Just as having a monstrous Guns score lets you learn cool gun schticks and an implausibly high Fu score gives you access to fu schticks, so (now) can a towering stat make it possible to learn schticks based on that stat.

It's not easy, of course. Is anything in

*Feng Shui* ever easy? (Well, okay, mowing down two mooks with a Hellharrower is pretty easy.) First off, you can only learn a stat schtick if the relevant stat is really high—11 or better. (This excludes most starting characters off the bat, of course.) Secondly, you can't start out knowing these. (Okay, there's a couple exceptions, but for the most part you can't.) Third—I'll come out and say it—they cost a *lot* of experience points. The formula for buying these is (current stat score + number of schticks you already have in that stat). If you've got Magic 12 and already have one Aura of Sorcery schtick, your next Magic schtick is going to cost you 13 points (Mag 12 + 1). Ironically, if your stat was lower, you'd have an easier time learning the schtick. But then again, high attributes are their own reward, aren't they?


One last thing: Unless it specifically states otherwise, you can only take any particular stat schtick one time. This means you can't buy up extra levels of "Quick Study" and multiply the benefit.

## MOVE

### Monumental Leap

This schtick lets you jump twice your Movement rating. It takes two shots to use Monumental Leap – one to crouch, one to





jump. This can be a horizontal leap or a vertical one. Monumental Leap cannot be used in conjunction with Prodigious Leap or Abundant Leap.

## STRENGTH

### Shattering Blow

If you parry an attack where your attacker's Action Result is less than your Strength, the attacker's weapon breaks. (If you try this against a bullet or arrow, you destroy the missile, of course, not the gun or bow.) You can only use this schtick if you have a weapon that can effectively destroy theirs—you can't break a chainsaw with a bo staff, but you could break it parrying with a sledgehammer or a really big club. If you're parrying an unarmed attack, this schtick does 5 points of Damage to named characters. It has no effect on unnamed characters (whose short lives are hard enough already).

## TOUGHNESS

### Tougher Than Leather

Damage from all unarmed martial arts attacks do base damage equal to opponent's Strength + Outcome (instead of Strength + 1 + Outcome for a punch and Strength + 2 + Outcome for a kick). This damage can still be improved with fu schticks and such, and this schtick has no effect on bullets or hand weapons. However, the Old Master's unique schtick only does Strength +3 (instead of Strength +6), and the extra damage from Abysmal Spines is halved.

## CONSTITUTION

### Ich Bin Ein Bruiser

By the time you get your Constitution up to 11 or higher, you're a contender for the honored title of "Big Bruiser." Now you can finally buy the schtick that was for-

merly limited to bruisers: the ability to put off your Death Checks until you hit 50 Wound Points. You take -1 Impairment at 40 Wounds and -2 at 45.

### Immutable Self

Any time you fail a check that would physically transform you into something other than yourself, you can make a second check against the same difficulty, rolling your Constitution this time. This doesn't let you ignore stuff like gunshots, punches or blast schticks. (With two exceptions: the Transformation and Disease blasts. If those succeed, the sorcerer has to roll the attack again and beat your Constitution instead of your Dodge AV.) Instead, it gives you a second chance when it comes to Mutation Checks, Reversion Checks, the Corruption schtick and anything else that might transform your body into something else. Your mind is still vulnerable to the Influence schtick or whatever, but your body stays the same.

## FORTUNE

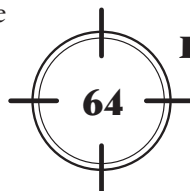
### Double or Nothing

Once per fight (or once per scene, if you somehow have a scene without a fight in it) you can do one roll Double or Nothing. Instead of rolling one positive and one negative die, you roll two of each, keeping both. You can't do this on just any roll, however: It has to be something important and dramatic. For instance, you can't just do this when you're trying to sucker punch a couple unnamed punks. But when you're doing your Flying Windmill Kick at the head bad guy—then it's appropriate. As a rule of thumb, your fellow players should look at you like you're crazy every time you use this schtick. There is no shot cost for using Double or Nothing.

## KUNG FU

### Inner Might

When you really need it, you can dig





deep into your mines of personal energy. There's a price, of course, but when you really need that extra bit of juice, you can get it. Specifically, in the middle of a fight you can instantly gain five extra Fu Points to spend as you wish. However, the cost of doing this is that your Fu score is reduced by 1—permanently. If your Fu drops below 11, you lose this schtick too. Inner Might has no shot cost.

### **Dueling Fu**

You can challenge an opponent with your personal energy. You do this by locking eyes with him. At that point, both of you start pushing each other with your chi. Neither of you can do anything but passively dodge (and say macho things like "Your Kung Fu is weak, young pup!" to each other) until the Fu duel ends. Every shot until the duel ends, each of you can spend one Fu Point, or you can look away. (On a shot where your opponent looks away, you don't spend Fu.) The duelist who looks away first, or who runs out of Fu, loses the duel. This is bad: Losing costs 3 shots, and the loser can't spend Fu Points on schticks targeting the winner for the next three sequences.

## **MAGIC**

### **Aura of Sorcery**

Your personal magic aura is so powerful that it overwhelms the ambient chi flow, rendering you immune to temporally local modifiers to your Sorcery skill. If you take one schtick in Aura of Sorcery, the juncture modifier for you is always 0—doesn't matter if you're in 1996 or 69 AD. This does mean that you don't get the benefit from magic rich environments, but that's the price of being a staunch individualist. If you take two schticks in Aura of Sorcery, your personal juncture modifier is always +1. If you take three schticks, it's always +2. You can't have more than three schticks in Aura of Sorcery.

### **Arcanowave Vibe**

This is just like Aura of Sorcery, only it applies to the modifiers for Arcanowave

checks instead of Sorcery checks.

### **Toxic Karma**

Your magic is so strong it leaks out and can affect those around you. Most people just ignore it, but your particular mystic seepage is particularly dangerous to transformed animals. Every scene you spend in the presence of a transformed animal adds one to that character's next reversion check. (The Lodge really hates people with Toxic Karma, and heartily encourages the Pledged to put 'em down without warning.)

## **CHARISMA**

### **Unforgettable**

Anyone who's met you, even once, even years and years ago, remembers you. (This works even if he or she met you before you cranked your Charisma rating up through the centerfold barrier.) Not only are you recalled, you're remembered fondly, unless you did something to piss this person off. The person you met wants to help you out (within reason), which somewhat offsets the hassles of being instantly recognizable in police lineups. This schtick does not have any effect on someone when you're making your first impression. You have to role-play for that.

## **INTELLIGENCE**

### **Quick Study**

You learn things a little bit quicker than the standard slack-jawed, moon-pie munching troglodyte. In game terms, you get an extra experience point every session.

## **PERCEPTION**

### **The Holmes Touch**

You can add up seemingly insignificant details in order to assemble surprisingly accurate surmises about people, places and things. By spending a Fortune Die, you



can ask the GM one question. You can use this to suss out skills, stats and schticks, or to push the plot along with brilliant detective work. The GM has veto power, of course, but should give you some kind of clue.

## WILLPOWER

### Unbreakable Spirit

Each schtick you take in Unbreakable Spirit reduces your Impairment from Wounds by one point. So, if you have one schtick in Unbreakable Spirit, you don't take -1 Impairment from injuries until you're at 30 Wound Points or more. If you take two schticks, you never suffer injury impairment until you die. (At that point, you've pretty much got 100% impairment.) This schtick does not reduce Impairment from any other source—just Wounds.

## AGILITY

### Catlike Balance

You never take any AV or shot cost penalty due to difficult footing or the need to keep your balance. You can also walk a tightrope without needing to roll—for you, that's a trivial action.

## DEXTERITY

### Deflection

Normally you can't parry bullets until you've got a really exceptional skill or stat. With this schtick, not only can you parry bullets, you can deflect them back so they hit your opponents. If you successfully parry a bullet, you can roll your Dexterity against your chosen target's Dodge AV. If you succeed, you hit them with the bullet. (Just to keep it simple, all deflected bullets do 8 damage + Outcome, regardless of caliber, being fired from a Signature Weapon or anything else.) You can only deflect a bullet into one opponent, unless you take two schticks. Then you can attack two, but only if more than one bullet is heading your way.

Using Deflection takes two shots, instead of the standard one for a parry. It only takes one shot if you have two schticks in Deflection. You can't reduce the shot cost to zero or below, and you can't have more than two schticks in Deflection.

### The Perfect Cut

When you attack with a cutting weapon, you know how to apply the edge at the perfect angle and speed. Any edged weapon you attack with does one additional Wound Point that ignores Toughness. In fact, your skill is so great that you can use the edge of a piece of paper to deadly effect. (In your hands, a piece of paper does Strength +2 damage as long as you're slashing with the edge.) If you purchase additional schticks, the weapons do additional damage. You can't have more than three schticks in The Perfect Cut.

## SPEED

### Me First

When you roll for initiative, roll two dice and only use the highest one. You're that fast.

### Me Too

Instead of rolling for initiative, you can simply choose to go at the same time as whichever other character rolls highest. (This is great if you're facing someone even faster than you are, or if you have a pal with the Me First schtick, or if you're just perpetually unlucky with initiative rolls. On the other hand, if everyone else is slower, you're probably better off just rolling.)

## NEW FU

By Andy Lucas

Kung Fu is not a static art. Students and masters are always practicing, always learning and always innovating. Consequently, even a venerable old path can be amended and expanded by a sufficiently experienced and dedicated fighter.

Giving you rules for making up your



own schticks is beyond the purview of this book, but we are going to give you a slew of capstones for some of the paths in *Feng Shui*. Keep in mind that these are advanced techniques, and rare: Only a few masters know them, and they're not necessarily keen on telling.

## Storm's Ebb

**Chi Cost: All / Shot Cost: 5**

Everyone within 20m suffers one point of Damage for each unspent Fu Point. Neither armor nor Toughness can reduce this Damage. All these Fu Points are then spent, and may not be used for fu powers until the next sequence.

Every time Storm's Ebb is used, the user loses one point of Kung Fu permanently.

*Prerequisite:* Integration of the Clouds, Fortress of Righteousness

It is said that only a master of the Storm Turtle discipline *and* a master of the Leaping Storm can teach this form, and that only a warrior who has lost everything can learn it. You may be skeptical that any one warrior could embrace two disciplines so totally different. In truth, only two have done so in the past, and they only because their love was stronger than any one art. Only a combination of the two disciplines can reveal the mysteries of the Storm's Ebb—and then only at great cost to the seeker.

## Flight of the Crane

**Chi Cost: 3 / Shot Cost: 0**

This ability can only be used once you have successfully grappled an opponent with the Talon of the Crane fu power. While he is gripped, he is immobile unless you move: In that case, he moves with you. You may make active dodges and normal attacks while using Flight of the Crane, but you cannot use fu powers (except from Path of the Passive Wings) without releasing your grip. Your opponent may attempt to break free as with the Talon power. Flight of the Crane is considered a continuous action. You may use Flight of the Crane against as many opponents as you have hands, gripping feet, tentacles, prehensile tails or whatever. Each person held with Flight of the Crane effectively halves your Movement score.

*Prerequisite:* Talon of the Crane

The Flight of the Crane technique is the masterpiece of the ancient master Jun Ken Pau, a martial artist of the first order, a Jammer and a convicted criminal. Old Jun Ken was captured, tried, convicted, and currently languishes in the Buro's nigh-impregnable Secure Facility #112. The Buro's in no hurry to execute him, as their techniques for extracting memories from dead brains are imprecise at best, and they would hate to see him take his secrets to the grave. After all, Jun Ken was notoriously grouchy and never took on any students.

## Luck of the Dragon

**Chi Cost: 5 / Shot cost: 3**

Immediately negate all Damage from all attacks that strike you until the end of this sequence—but only if you suffer enough Damage to force a Death Check. At the beginning of the next sequence you are either at 40 Wounds or at the Wound Point total you had before you activated Luck of the Dragon (whichever is better). Each use of Luck of the Dragon permanently decreases your Constitution by one point.

*Prerequisite:* Claw of the Dragon

Students of the path of sharpened scales are renowned for placing themselves in dire situations to better enhance their martial prowess. This is particularly true of sensei Akira Leung. Many years ago he took two students, who, while they became renowned martial artists, were also bitter rivals. As their rivalry intensified, their sensei was forced to chose one student over the other, and expelled the lesser warrior from his dojo. As is often the case in such situations, the rivalry only intensified, until the spurned student sought out the help of an assassin to address his wrongs. So began a decade long feud between the students of Leung's dojo and the assassins of the Serpent's Venom clan. During this time Leung taught and expanded upon his own experience and training in the path of the dragon, taking himself and his students' skill far beyond the abilities of other students of the path, until even his poorest student was the match of a master of the



dragon path. Ultimately Leung's training was for naught, as his dojo was burnt to the ground and his students slaughtered. It is suspected that one of Leung's students escaped the purge, and struggles to retain his anonymity lest the assassins renew their interest in the Leung dojo.

### Chained Lightning

**Chi cost: X / Shot cost: All**

Strike an opponent barehanded. This opponent's Toughness is reduced by X points for the purposes of your attack. You may then strike a different opponent whose Toughness is reduced by X - 1. You may continue to strike different opponents, further reducing the Toughness modifier by 1, until you miss an attack or you complete X attacks. You may not strike the same opponent twice in a row, but you may alternate opponents.

*Prerequisite:* Lightning Fist, Rain of Fury

There are riddles and proverbs of a spiritual power that can harness the strength of the storm. It is also said that the only way to learn this power is by being accepted as a student by a reclusive hermit who wanders the slopes of the Himalayas. The only way to be accepted as his student is to defeat him in single combat. This is no small task. Nor is locating him in the Chinese-occupied Tibet of the contemporary juncture.

### Drunkard's Dance

**Chi cost: 5 / Shot cost: 1**

Designate any two opponents attacking you. They must be able to hit each other. If either of these opponents fails a Perception check he must resolve his attack as if he was attacking the other. Thus, if one opponent fails he attacks his ally. If both fail they attack each other. If neither opponent fails then they may attack as normal. The difficulty of the check is equal to the number of servings of liquor, wine, or half the number of beers your character has consumed in the past 6 hours.

*Prerequisite:* Spasmodic Leap

Only one man knows this technique, the infamous Teddy 'Two Kegger' Russell, last seen travelling the midwestern USA with a

pack of renegade bikers. Russell has plenty of experience with Drunkard's Dance since his gang has many enemies. A particularly bitter rival is the Devil's Lotus, a gang reputed to be led by a demon in human form. Looking for Russell is not advisable: He has not been seen for the last two years, and you would be more likely to find the Devil's Lotus. Russell is known to only teach students that can out-drink him—and he's a master of the Empty Bottle path.

### Venom of the Snake

**Chi Cost: 5 / Shot cost: 2**

If you successfully strike an opponent using this fu power and cause Damage, your target suffers the following effects until the end of the sequence. Each action suffers a 1 shot penalty, and he takes 1 Wound Point every 3 shots. The effects of this power are cumulative.

*Prerequisite:* Lunge of the Snake

Chang Ng is the only man who knows this technique, but unfortunately he was killed in 1850 by the Chinese army for treason. They later executed him in 1855, 1860 and as late as 1995 on the same charges. Of course these executions and the trials surrounding them are state secrets, as is the fact that Ng has been executed every 5 years for centuries.

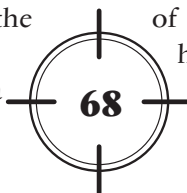
### Eye of the Typhoon

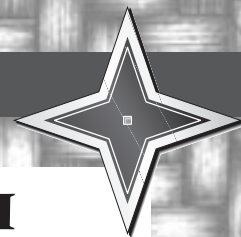
**Chi Cost: all / Shot cost: special**

By concentrating you may stop the flow of chi in a 30m radius around you. You may do nothing except concentrate on inhibiting the use of fu powers (magic and Fortune Dice may be used as usual). The effect lasts until the end of the sequence or until your concentration is broken (taking Damage or actively dodging breaks your concentration). It is important to note that this power affects *all* Fu use, inhibiting your allies as well as your opponents.

*Prerequisite:* Integration of the Clouds

The first step to learning the Eye of the Typhoon is to answer the riddle: How can a wandering priest have a residence? The answer, of course, is that the residence wanders with him. This is not as impossible as it sounds when the residence is a wondrous palace





in the Netherworld. The Buddhist monk who lives in the wandering castle gladly teaches his technique to anyone who wishes to study with him. The only catch is that he does not allow his students to sleep in his palace, and its constant movement means each morning is a new quest to find the master.

## WAYS OF THE TRANSFORMED ANIMAL

By Tim Toner

### MANTIS

*Attribute Modifiers: Body +1, Perception +2, Will +2, Reflexes +3*

**Pincer Strike** **Chi: 3 / Shots: 3**

Hit an opponent bare-handed or with a hand-held weapon. If successful, use your current shot value instead of Strength for damage.

**360 Vision** **Chi: X / Shots: 1**

Add X (the amount of Chi you spend) to Perception for the remainder of the sequence. This added Perception may be used to notice things like ambushes, invisible opponents or surprise attacks you would normally overlook.

**Jump** **Chi: 2 / Shots: 3**

Jump up to twice your normal Move rating, either horizontally or vertically. The multiplier increases by two for each schtick you spend in this ability: For two schticks you get to leap four times your normal Move, for three schticks six times your Move, and so on.

**Blinding Spit** **Chi: 6 / Shots: 3**

Hit an opponent with an unarmed strike. If successful, the opponent is blind until the end of the sequence, and takes a -4 penalty to all actions. If you spend an extra schtick on this ability, your opponent's effective armor is halved. An third schtick negates armor completely.

## COCKROACH

*Attribute Modifiers: Constitution +3, Toughness +4, Fortune +1, Mind -1, Charisma -2, Reflexes +2*

**Survive** **Chi: 7 (3 permanently) / Shots: 4**

Ignore any Damage received in a given sequence. Instead, you seem to crumple in a fetal position. In reality, you've discarded your husk (and clothes) and are getting away in the confusion. Spectacular escapes are possible with this schtick. Each additional schtick spent reduces the permanent Chi loss by one, to a minimum of 1.

**Chemical Irritant** **Chi: 3 + X / Shots: 3**

You emit a cloud of noxious fumes that make it difficult for others to do much of anything. Any opponent within X meters must make a Constitution check (Difficulty is your Chi rating) or suffer 1 point of Impairment until the end of the sequence. Unnamed characters who fail are considered out of the fight. Each additional opponent targeted reduces the Difficulty of all Constitution checks by 1, but spending an additional schtick negates this dilution.

**Armor** **Chi: X / Shots: 1**

You gain X points of Armor. Each attack that strikes you decreases the Armor value by one for all subsequent attacks, and it crumples at the end of the sequence. The maximum Armor that any transformed animal can gain through any combination of transformed animal schticks is 8. For every two additional schticks spent, the Armor lingers for an extra sequence.

**Scurry** **Chi: 2 + X / Shots: 1**

You have the ability to disappear as long as there's something to duck behind or hide under. Make a Will + X (the amount of Chi you elect to spend) roll against the Perception of the target. This is the last action you may take this sequence. Each additional schtick spent increases the amount of targets affected by one, to a maximum of 4. Use the highest Perception in the affected group to measure success.



# DOLPHIN

*Attribute Modifiers: Move +2, Constitution +2, Fortune +2, Mind +2, Reflexes +2*

### **Stunning Strike** Chi: 3 / Shots: 3

Hit an opponent bare-handed with a Martial Arts check; if successful, one opponent suffers 1 point of Impairment for the rest of the sequence, in addition to normal damage. The opponent may recover from this strike by doing nothing but passively dodging for the next 3 shots. This can be used once per sequence against a given opponent. Each additional schtick spent increases the penalty by 1, to a maximum of 4.

### **Sonar** Chi: X / Shots: 1

You may see in total darkness for X (the amount of Chi you elect to spend) meters for the rest of the sequence. This distance is doubled underwater. This schtick also negates any attack that impairs sight.

### **Swimming** Chi: 3 / Shots: 3

You may swim up to five times your Move in meters. Each additional schtick spent doubles this distance, to a maximum of forty times your Move.

### **Ultrasonic Shriek** Chi: 6 / Shots: 1

You can emit a devastating burst of sound energy. Make a Martial Arts check; if successful, one opponent suffers Damage equal to twice your Constitution. All sophisticated hardware (most arcanowave gear applies) carried by the target also suffers 2 Impairment until fixed. Range is your Chi rating in meters. Each additional schtick increases the damage by +2, to a maximum of +8.

# MALLARD

*Attribute Modifiers: Constitution +3, Charisma +3, Reflexes +2*

### **Virus** Chi: 3 / Shots: 3

The Chinese Mallard is the natural reservoir of the annual influenza epidemics which do everything from causing the sniffles to

incapacitating one half of the world's population (as the Spanish Lady did in 1918, ultimately killing 40 to 50 million). Make an unarmed attack against an opponent with a Martial Arts check. If successful, the opponent suffers (in addition to normal Damage) -1 to all Action Values derived from Body, Reflexes and their secondary attributes. This loss cannot be regained without 24 hours of bedrest, and can only be used once on a given opponent. Each additional schtick spent increases the penalty by -1, to a maximum of -3.

### **Perching** Chi: 1 / Shots: 3

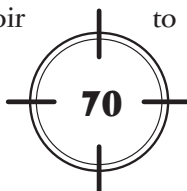
After weathering a monsoon while squatting atop a sapling, you've learned a thing or two about staying put. Once you set your stance and move no more than 1m from your starting position, you take no Continuous Action or Difficulty penalties derived from maintaining a tenuous foothold. This perch can be anything from treading water, a flagpole top, a speeding bus or a frayed rope above a chasm—it's all level ground to you.

### **Foot Spike** Chi: 2 / Shots: 3

Make an unarmed attack against an opponent with a Martial Arts check. If successful, the opponent is snagged—he takes normal Damage, and you gain a +2 bonus to subsequent Martial Arts attacks until the end of the sequence. A target may spend 2 shots to free himself. Each additional schtick spent increases the amount of time necessary to disentangle by one shot. This schtick is not cumulative: If you use it twice, you still only get a +2 bonus for your attack.

### **Mandarin Shout** Chi: X / Shots: 2

With a bellowing quack, you urge your allies to fight more fiercely. Your allies can then borrow from a "pool" of X (the amount of Chi you elect to spend) amongst themselves and apply their share to their next Damage value. The pool persists until the end of the sequence. An additional schtick spent increases the pool by 2, to a maximum of +6.





## BOAR

*Attribute Modifiers: Body +3, Fortune +1, Will +3*

### Obscured Strike

**Chi: 3 / Shots: 3**

You must preface this attack with a full-out charge toward your opponent, spending 3 shots prior to the attack and running your full Move. At the last second, you throw something distracting like sand, cards, or papers at your opponent and make a Martial Arts check. If successful, add 2 to the Damage of that attack *and* add 2 to your Dodge AV against all attacks from that target for the remainder of the sequence.

### Gore

**Chi: 5 / Shots: 3**

Make an unarmed attack against an opponent with a Martial Arts check. If successful, in addition to normal Damage, the opponent's Armor is degraded by 5 points. This persists until the item is repaired or the schtick that generated it is renewed. Each additional schtick increases the degradation by 2 to a maximum of 9.

### Snuffle

**Chi: 3 / Shots: 1**

You can attune your sense of smell to a single object—from a person to the smell of gun oil—that you've encountered before. Unless the object is sealed in a vacuum, it cannot be hidden from your senses. The range of this ability is your Chi rating in meters. Each additional schtick spent of this ability doubles the range.

### Enraged

**Chi: X / Shots: 3**

After being successfully hit, you may channel X (the Chi you elect to spend) Wounds directly into Strength for the remainder of the sequence. At the same time, your Intelligence decreases by X. You may have to make an Intelligence Check to distinguish friend and foe. Spending an additional schtick halves the Intelligence decrease; a third schtick negates it altogether.

Chi you elect to spend) meters for the rest of the sequence. Add +2 to any Martial Arts AV against opponents unaware of your presence. Each additional schtick spent on this power increases the AV by +2, to a maximum of +6. This schtick also negates any attack that impairs sight.

### Tracking Scent

**Chi: 1 + X / Shots: 1**

You can emit a potent spoor that can be used to "mark" a target, making it easier to find at a later time. Marking a target takes a single Chi point, and a successful Martial Arts check if the target is unwilling. The spoor lingers for 24 hours (the Chi point is not regained until then), and the range of the ability is X (the Chi you elect to spend) kilometers. Each use (Difficulty 7) gives a rough estimate of distance and direction. Each additional schtick spent doubles the duration of the spoor, to a maximum of 4 days.

### Gliding

**Chi: 6 / Shots: 4**

By extending your arms you can take to the air and glide for the duration of the sequence. You can travel horizontally up to twice your Move, rise up to half your Move, and fall up to four times your Move safely. Each extra schtick adds Move x 2 to horizontal gliding, Move/2 to rising, and Move x 4 ratings to falling.

### Eviscerating Bite

**Chi: X / Shots: 3**

Make an unarmed attack against an opponent with a Martial Arts check. If successful, you not only do normal Damage to your opponent, you also deliver a crippling blow. For the remainder of the sequence, every action the opponent takes does X (the amount of Chi you elect to spend) Damage (reduced by Toughness) unless he makes a Constitution check against your Chi rating. If your opponent does nothing but bind the wound for 3 shots, the continual damage stops.

## BAT

*Attribute Modifiers: Will +3, Intelligence +3, Perception +3*

### Echolocation

**Chi: X / Shots: 1**

You may see in total darkness for X (the

## SALAMANDER

*Attribute Modifiers: Move +1, Constitution +2, Toughness +2, Will +2, Reflexes +2*

### Regenerate

**Chi: X / Shots: 1**

You may regenerate wounds at an aston-

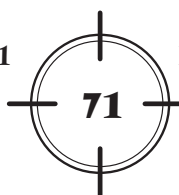






Illustration by David White

ishing rate. Regain X (the amount of Chi you elect to spend, but no greater than your Body) Wound Points. However, you must pay a single Chi Point at the beginning of the next X shots, or the regeneration does not take (and you regain those Wound Points). You can also recover from loss of limbs; while the Damage heals right away, it takes an hour for a small body part (hand) to regenerate, and a day for a major limb to regenerate. Breaking the spinal cord negates this schtick.

**Samandarin** **Chi: 2 + X / Shots: 3**

A powerful toxin exudes from your skin at will. Anyone exposed to this poison, whether as the result of a hand to hand strike, contact with your skin or ingesting an item tainted with the substance must make a Constitution check against your Chi Rating, or suffer X (the amount of Chi you elect to spend) Damage (in addition to any other Damage). The toxin loses potency quickly (within a minute) away from your body. In addition, alcohol renders it ineffective, and it turns light pink when added to water. Each additional schtick spent decreases the Constitution check by -1, to a maximum of -5.

**Heat Resistance** **Chi: 7 / Shots: 4**

You have mastered the legendary power of the Salamander, and your Toughness is increased by 5 when resisting fire damage. In addition, your Toughness against all attacks that "burn" (including energy weapons, radiation and acid) is +3. When this power is used, all reactions that generate heat within your Chi rating in meters are dampened. Cigarettes go out, incandescent lights dim, and car engines begin to knock. Each additional schtick you spend increases both 'burn' Toughness bonuses by +2. You may not take more than three schticks in Heat Resistance.

**Footpads** **Chi: 3 / Shots: 1**

Your hands and feet exude a mild adhesive that allows you to scale up walls and ceilings for the remainder of the sequence as if you were walking on a level surface. Speed is limited to your



Move rating, lest you lose contact with the surface altogether: Then gravity takes over. You adhere to objects (and visa versa) with a Strength equal to your Chi rating.

## GENERAL SHTICKS

There are some attributes common to all animals, and some that are possessed by too many species to waste the space reprinting it over and over. For this reason, several schticks have been included that may be selected if they pertain to your transformed animal.

### **Predator** **Chi: 3 / Shots: 1**

You know what it is to be high enough on the food chain to lord it over the lesser creatures. For the rest of this sequence, all who can see you suffer -2 to all Charisma based skills when dealing with you if their Willpower is less than your Chi rating. You cannot possess both the Predator *and* Prey schticks.

### **Prey** **Chi: 3 / Shots: 1**

You have become hyper-aware of the world around you and all its hidden menaces. Your subconscious works overtime, processing millions of sensory impulses into a feeling of dread when danger lurks. When you are threatened, your GM will make a Perception check against your opponent's Intelligence to see if you detect the ambush. The effective range is your Chi rating in meters. Note that it is just a feeling, and not a specific direction and distance. Also note that intentionally walking into a dangerous situation negates this schtick entirely. Each additional schtick grants +2 to your Perception check. You cannot possess both the Predator *and* Prey schtick.

### **Fu Advantage** **Chi: 4 / Shots: 1**

The masters learned their Kung Fu from watching nature in its raw essence. You are more than familiar with what it is to be an animal, and thus those schools that are based on your animal type are more readily learned. New fu schticks that are based on your animal

type (such as Path of the Healthy Tiger for a transformed Tiger) are learned at 2 + X experience points. In addition, anyone who uses a Path based on your animal type against you does so at a -1 disadvantage unless that person is also a transformed animal of your type.

### **Doolittling** **Chi: 2 / Shots: 1**

You can reach deep within your psyche and recall what each wink, wiggle, twitter and hiss means to an animal of your type. Make an Intelligence check to initiate dialogue between yourself and your kin. Bear in mind that you left that particular species behind for a reason—most communicate little more than immediate instincts, and few can be convinced to perform actions that are harmful to themselves. Each additional schtick spent increases the range of animals with which you can speak: Monkeys to Primates to Mammals, as an example.

### **Hibernate** **Chi: Special / Shots: Special**

You have the ability to put yourself into a state of suspended animation for a period of time. During this state you seem, for all appearances, to be dead. You do not require food, water or air, though violence will kill you just as if you were merely sleeping (explaining why those who possess this schtick often fashion a hidden stronghold before slumber). While asleep, your wounds heal, your mind is restful, and, most important of all, you become immune to the effects of Reversion, no matter how magical the environment. When you enter hibernation, you establish a specific trigger that will awaken you. It can be as mundane as the passage of a certain amount of time, or when the Magical Difficulty of a given area becomes too high, or even if someone enters the place where your body is stored. When you awaken, your body feels like it's coursing with chi, but this is an illusion. It takes time to reawaken yourself to the flow of chi in the world. While you may have a full complement of Chi Points, it regenerates at a rate equal to the amount of hours since you have awakened. Thus, four hours after waking up, you may only regenerate four Chi Points each sequence. Awakening at a feng shui



site shortens the time from hours to minutes. After awakening, you may not re-use this schtick for an amount of days equal to your Chi rating. The maximum amount of time you may hibernate varies according to how many schticks you have spent on this ability. The base is one week, and increases as month, year, decade, century, and millennium.

**Pheromones** **Chi: 3 / Shots: 1**  
Your animal biochemistry still runs strong, and you have learned to adapt it to reawaken those parts of the human brain vulnerable to lust. You gain a +2 advantage on all social checks against those who find your gender appealing. Bear in mind that the pheromones may also incite others to rage if they see (and smell) you encroaching on their "territory." Each additional schtick increases the advantage +1, to a maximum of +5.

**Latency** **Chi: 3 / Shots: 1**  
Animal genes are somewhat weak in you. If you were born in any juncture other than AD 69, you now make Reversion checks as if you were from AD 69. Spending an additional schtick grants a +1 to the Action Value to resist Reversion. Spending an additional schtick also allows you to temporarily "jiggle" your DNA, making identification through DNA sampling problematic at best.

# GUNS, GUNS, GUNS

By Andy Lucas

## AUTOLOADER HANDGUNS

**Calico Model 950** **9/4/50**  
The strangest, largest and most ungainly looking pistol ever built before the Architects. The Calico looks like the bastard child of a super soaker and an M16, but with a helical magazine holding 50 rounds, who is really going to insult the mook packing one? It's just

the thing for those occasions when you really, really don't want to replace an empty clip. The Calico's special helical shaped magazines take twice as long to reload, but only 1 extra shot to insert into the weapon.

**IMI Baby Eagle** **9/2/10**  
A cut down version of the infamous Desert Eagle, this little baby is as accurate and deadly as any other 9mm automatic. Smooth and elegant, it's just the thing for those formal parties when its big brother the Desert Eagle would be too conspicuous.

**Colt .45 Silenced** **10/4/7**  
Just like your typical Colt, except that the barrel is three times as long and three times as wide. All that extra bulk is the integral silencer, and the advantages of a .45 round silently delivered more than make up for the mass of this weapon.

**Lei Mark 2** **8/4/10**  
The long slender barrel of the Lei makes it very difficult to conceal, but then again the weapon is fully silenced and its long barrel gives it the range and accuracy required to put its .22 caliber rifle rounds just where you need them.

**Luger** **8/3/8 +1**  
When you're out to rule the world, what says you mean business more than a Nazi issue Luger? Just pulling out one of these in a room full of lackeys increases your standing in the world-beaters' clique.

**Broomstick Mauser** **9/4/12 +1**  
If the Nazis were famous for the Luger then the Mauser should be readily associated with Mussolini. The Mauser comes with a removable wooden stock that increases its accuracy, as well as its coolness.

**Ruger P-85** **9/2/15**  
Rugged and compact, this little baby's built to take any punishment you can dish out, and look good taking it. A sturdy little 9mm military issue automatic, it usually comes



in black so as not to clash with your infiltration or SWAT team attire.

**Makarov P6** 10/3/8  
This Russian weapon's distinctive cylindrical barrel is actually an efficient silencer, which converts the standard Russian Makarov into a powerful covert weapon.

**SITES M380 Resolver** 8/2/8  
Built to be idiot-proof and comfortable to use and carry. Its smooth design has nothing that might snag on an anxious executive's jacket when drawn. Just the thing to slip someone who doesn't know anything about guns, when they need a gun.

**Steyr SPP** 9/3/15  
Reminiscent of an Uzi in its basic styling, this sleek item is formed from space age polymers and is capable of full automatic fire.

## SUBMACHINE GUNS

**Ares Folding SMG** 10/5/32  
Yikes! A submachinegun that folds away after use into a compact shape no larger than the clip that feeds it! The ultimate spacesaver, the Ares is designed for rapid deployment (1 shot to unfold after drawing) and is easily concealed (3 Concealment) in its folded form. Weighing in at less than 3 kg, you can conceal these babies anywhere that doesn't have a metal detector.

**Beretta Model 12** 10/4/32  
A simple design that screams "I'm ready—bring it, baby!" The forward mounted second pistol grip makes the gun easy to handle and oh-so-easy to strike a pose with.

**Calico Model 960a** 10/5/50  
The model 950a with a rifle stock and extended barrel for improved accuracy. While not as intimidating as the pistol version, its high rate of fire quickly makes up for its unusual appearance. Definitely the type of gun Flash Gordon could fall in love with. The Calico's special helical shaped magazines

take twice as long to reload, but only 1 extra shot to insert into the weapon.

**Skorpion Model 61** 9/3/10  
Small and vicious like its namesake, this petite SMG is a favored weapon of eastern bloc Ascended.

**FN Herstal P90** 11/4/50  
This is a bullpup style submachine gun, built in Belgium, which looks like a power tool from your high school's shop class. I swear I saw a guy build a birdhouse with one of these once. Just the kind of weapon you want to field if you want your opponents to stop for a moment to scratch their heads before you mow them down. Just 'cause it looks like a router doesn't mean it works like one.

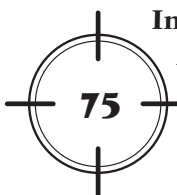
**Heckler & Koch MP5SD6** 10/4/30  
Longer and heavier than the run of the mill MP5, this version features a collapsible stock and an integral flash suppressor. When you want the reliability of a name brand for your stealth weaponry, it doesn't get any more reliable or quiet this side of a sharpened stick.

**Heckler and Koch MP2000** 10/3/30  
An updated and vastly improved version of the MP5SDG and much easier to say as well. The gun can be fired in "silenced" or "noisy as hell" mode.

**Micro UZI** 9/3/20  
Tiny but deadly, these little babies are no bigger than your average automatic. Just the right size for a popular girl to stick in her purse for a night on the town.

**Ingram M10** 10/3/32  
Stylistically similar to the UZI, but much more angular, this gun's distinctive appearance makes a statement. And the statement is "Get out of my face, sucker."

**Ingram M11** 9/3/16  
Aww it's so cute. Just like the M10, but cut down so that any teen or adolescent could





pack it. Amazingly compact, it can pump out lead at a rate comparable to guns twice its size.

**Sterling** 10/5/34

A classic. You'll recognize the distinctive cylindrical shape of the gun that all those stormtroopers in *Star Wars* couldn't really use.

**Steyr AUG** 10/4/32

The AUG is a truly revolutionary weapon, from its single-molded body to its sleek form and one handed firing ability. This is the weapon of choice for any truly pissed hit man. The slick pistol grip allows you to easily use the Two Guns Blazing schtick and look groovy doing it.

## SHOTGUNS

**Beretta M3P** 13/5/5

This little item looks more like a blocky submachinegun, complete with a magazine jutting out below it, but can be used as either a pump-action or semiautomatic shotgun.

**Bernardelli B4** 13/6/5

Capable of pump-action or semi-automatic fire, this elegant weapon is both intimidating and reliable.

**Daewoo USAS-12** 13/6/12

Damn but the Koreans have a sweet little item here. If you want to dance, this little puppy's all set to call the tune, being one of the few shotguns capable of full-autofire.

**Spas-15** 13/6/6

Similar to a large assault rifle in its basic design, this French weapon can be pumped or fired in semiautomatic modes. The military version is built to fire overpowered rounds that are designed specifically for the Spas-15 MIL. The Spas-15 MIL can fire normal rounds or the overpowered (14 Damage) versions with equal ease.

**Pancor Jackhammer** 13/6/10

A semi- or fully automatic shotgun called the Jackhammer. What's not to like?

## RIFLES

**FN Herstal FAL** 13\*\*/5/20

A very popular weapon, the FAL has more stopping power than an M16 and is much bigger and heavier as well. The FAL is popular with military forces in the British Commonwealth and will most likely be fielded against you if you if you cause too much trouble in Hong Kong. Fair warning!

**Heckler & Koch G11** 13\*\*/5/20

Thick and weird looking to say the least, the G11 has a distinctive firing pattern, which increases its accuracy by firing three rounds near simultaneously. Other than its distinctive sound, shape, lightweight polymer body and the fact that it fires caseless ammunition, this rifle is just like any other assault weapon.

**RASF L85A1** 13\*/5/30

A British design that looks intimidating as all getout, but has a bad reputation for being unreliable.

**Steyr AUG** 13\*/4/30

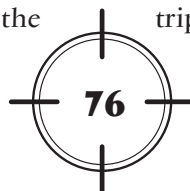
By simply changing the breech and barrel of the AUG you can change a submachine gun into an honest-to-gawd assault weapon, while still retaining a pistol grip to abuse your GM's patience with the Both Guns Blazing rule.

## SNIPER RIFLES

Sniper rifles cannot be effectively used at any range under 10 meters, as they are just too big to use against moving targets that close. If you try to shoot one at a close, moving target, it's a -3 penalty. On the plus side, all the other range modifiers are halved.

**AI PM Counter Terrorist** 13\*\*/6/10

This is a designated sniper rifle that breaks down into an easily carried or concealed suitcase. Just the thing for those pesky out of town trips.





**AI Covert**

11/6/10

Strange that one weapon would be called the “Counter Terrorist” and the silenced version would be named the “Covert.” I wonder what market they’re aiming for here?

**Barrett M82A1 Light Fifty**

14\*\*/9/1

This monster fires machine gun rounds—nothing gets the job done better and faster than a high velocity .50 caliber bullet. The weapon is only available in a bolt action version, so you have to take 3 shots to reload it every time you fire. But then, a real pro only needs one shot, right?

**Barrett M90**

13\*\*/7/1

Smaller and lighter than the light fifty (above), this weapon is just as accurate and hence just as deadly.

**Steyr AMR**

14\*\*/10/5

A sniper rifle that fires fin stabilized tungsten flechette rounds, this beast is 2 meters in length and weighs 20 kilograms. Definitely not the kind of item you pack with you every day, but when that special occasion arises it can be just what the doctor ordered. Unless you have a strength of 15 or higher you will need to use a stabilizing pole, requiring that the weapon be fired from a standing position and reducing your Move and Dodge to 0. You should only pull this baby out as the ultimate surprise party present, as it’s definitely not a weapon for a running battle. Reloading the flechette round takes 5 shots unless you have a loader in which case it takes 3 shots. This speed can not be reduced by schticks.

## NEW GUN SCHTICKS

By Andy Lucas and Greg Stolze

### COVER FIRE

How many times have you seen this in a movie? The hero’s getting ready to run

across an open patch between two spots of cover. With a steely glint in his eyes, he glances at his sidekick and grunts “Cover me.” Lucky for him, his sidekick has this schtick.

When you use Cover Fire, you shoot wildly at up to five characters. If you roll higher than the highest AV the five have among them, you do no Damage, but all of them act one shot later. (Effectively, you force them all to actively dodge.) If you have two schticks, they act *two* shots later. You can’t have more than two schticks in Cover Fire.)

Using Cover Fire requires you to shoot five times. Using this is still a three shot action—it just takes five bullets out of your gun. If your gun is capable of autofire, you can target up to eight characters in a three shot action. This takes six bullets (two three round bursts). If you use a Buro Godhammer, you can do this by emptying the whole five shot clip. Once again, a cool name comes to the rescue.

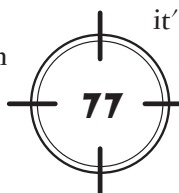
## 10,000 BULLETS

Normally, when you attack two people, you take a -2 penalty to your Attack Value. That’s the default stunt, right? Well, with this handy new schtick, you can simultaneously ventilate two people without taking that penalty. That’s right: Attacking two people is now an ordinary, default attack for you. (With guns it is, at least.)

This doesn’t give you any kind of bonus when gunning for just one. As William Goldman taught us all, fighting one skilled opponent is entirely different from fighting a gang, mob or crowd.

If you take two schticks in 10,000 Bullets, you can attack three enemies without penalty. Sadly, you can’t have more than two schticks in this. But on the plus side, if you have two schticks in this and two in Carnival of Carnage, you can generally attack about thirty unnamed characters without penalty every sequence. Your only problem is running out of ammo.

In case you’re wondering about the name, it’s just one of those things. “10,000 Bullets” sounded cooler than “Multi-Tasking Ballistic Damage Infliction.”





### CONCEALED WEAPONS

There's a song by Negativland called "Guns: Now." In it, they've got a bunch of samples from God knows where—some woman interviewing a guy who was marketing concealable handguns specifically to women. It's a fun song rife with quotes like about how guns are "no more difficult to operate than a household appliance" and such. But the really germane quote is when the interviewer says "Okay, hold it: Where do you hide the gun in a bikini?"

The answer isn't given in "Guns: Now," but you could get a good response from any female shooter with a schtick or two in Concealed Weapons. (Incidentally, "Concealed Weapons" is also a song. J. Giles Band, I think.) As you might guess from the name, this schtick lets you hide guns real good. For each Concealed Weapons schtick you take, you reduce the Concealment of each gun you're carrying by one. Of course, you can't reduce a Concealment below one and carry an infinite number of guns (nice idea though), and you can't take more than 3 schticks (so you're never going to get that Hellharrower under your raincoat).

I wanted to call this schtick "Where the Hell Did That Gun Come From?" but it was too long to fit on the character sheet.

### DISMANTLE GUN

Any halfway competent rent-a-cop or national guardsman can field strip a pistol, but it takes a real professional to field strip a weapon during combat—when it's being used against you.

If you have this schtick, you can use Guns instead of Martial Arts when fighting hand to hand—but only when you're trying mess with an opponent's piece. If you succeed at a Guns check against your opponent, you can grab, twist and pull your opponent's weapon in such a way that it jams, pops its clip or is otherwise rendered non-deadly. Field stripped weapons are treated as jammed, requiring

8 shots to reassemble. Each additional schtick gives a +1 to this ability, at three schticks a second check is performed to see if the successfully dismantled weapon is damaged.

This ability has no effect on hand to hand weapons.

### SHOOT WEAPON

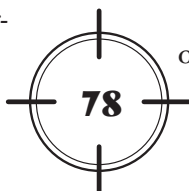
Similar to Eagle Eye, except you specialize in shooting the weapon from your opponent's hands. Each schtick in Shoot Weapon gives you a +1 to hit on any shooting attack aimed at an opponent's weapon. Any successful hit immediately disarms your target, possibly destroying his weapon. Additionally, a character that successfully disarms his opponent this way receives a +1 to any Intimidation roll made immediately after the successful hit. Each additional Shoot Weapon schtick adds 1 to the Intimidation bonus.

### BULLET STORM

Similar to Cover Fire, Bullet Storm is a little more intense. This schtick requires a fully automatic weapon and costs all your remaining shots. While using Bullet Storm you cannot actively dodge or target any specific foe. Your rounds fly unerringly, not to strike your opponents but to distract them. Sparks, cement shards and wood splinters jump and dance in front of your enemies' faces, throwing off their aim and forcing them to jump for cover. At the end of the sequence, your clip is empty, but you won't run out of bullets before completing Bullet Storm.

Each schtick in this ability gives all your opponents a -1 penalty when attacking, regardless of whom they're attacking. (Bullet Storm does not lower their skills for the purposes of dodging.) Additionally, all unnamed attackers must make a Willpower check against your Charisma or be forced to actively dodge the first shot you open up with Bullet Storm.

Ironically, Bullet Storm never hurts anyone.





# ARCANOWEIRD DEVICES

By Andy Lucas

The Architects of the New Flesh certainly have controlling interest when it comes to arcanowave technology, but they aren't the only ones fooling around with the stuff. What follows is a list of non-Architect arcanowave machines, which may be available to non-Buro heroes who still (for whatever reason) possess the Arcanowave Device skill.

## GUN EYE

The gun eye is a small tube housing an eye plucked from a living demon and bound into an ARB casing. A multitude of small, sticky legs allows the device to be fastened onto any standard gun barrel, while a coaxial cable attaches

to any AI/O port. It takes 3 shots to activate a Gun Eye. Anyone shooting a gun equipped with one can use his Arcanowave Device skill instead of his Guns skill. Additionally, a Gun Eye weapon may be extended around corners to fire without the shooter exposing himself from behind cover. Using the gun in this manner gives the user +1 to his cover bonus.

Finally, the device may be detached from a firearm and used as probe of sorts, to look around corners or down wells. While plugged in to an AI/O port, the Gun Eye can move slowly (but silently) along on its icky little legs to peek around corners and such. It's great fun at parties. The cable reaches ten meters at its fullest extension.

## RESIN CORD

Your body has been modified with two arcanowave gland that are connected to a dedi-







cated, subdermal AI/O port. These are usually, but not always, implanted within the forearm muscles. Wherever they are, each small mouth-like apertures oozes a spectral resin upon demand—the two combine to form a viscous substance. Depending on the balance of chemicals, this stuff may harden instantly or remain slack and sticky until it dissolves. The user can determine how fast the resin extrudes, and its consistency. Thick bars can be produced, or strands that serve as ropes or whips.

There are a number of other uses for this resin, which are limited only by the ingenuity of the user. Resin webs and cages are common uses, but you could make a replacement wagon wheel or patch a ship hull if you needed to. Each gland is capable of producing both hard and soft resin. It is also possible to imbed these glands in any major body muscle, including the tongue.

Different applications take different amounts of time, but the chart below should serve as a rough guideline.

<b>Tool</b>	<b>Time Req'd</b>
3m of "rope"	3 shots
1m pole	1 shot
Sticky, gluey, immobilizing mass	3 shots/target

The ectoplasmic resin lasts a number of hours equal to the producer's Magic stat. For the purposes of escaping from it, it has Strength equal to the Strength of whomever (or whatever) extruded it.

## RESIN PROJECTOR

A huge weapon, consisting of a backpack tank inscribed with arcane sigils, containing ectoplasm from the Underworld. A hose mounted on a rifle stock finishes off this ungainly apparatus; the Resin Projector is powerful, but delicate. A large lever opens or closes an iris connecting the rifle to the backpack. Pulling the lever open a little causes a thin stream of ectoplasmic goo to shoot out up to 40 meters. This thin stream hardens into cords of resin with a consistency comparable to

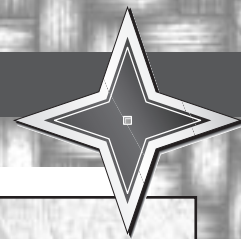
steel within 6 shots. If the resin is washed off or otherwise cleared away it will have no effect, otherwise the target is immobilized by the resin. (It's a Strength test Difficulty 12 to break free. Otherwise, the resin shatters when it has taken 13 Wound Points.)

Opening the valve all the way slops the ectoplasm a mere 10 meters away, but in great volume. A target hit by this large stream of goop must make an active dodge or be entirely encased in the goo. Again, if the goo is removed within 6 shots the hardened resin has no effect. Otherwise the target is not only immobilized, but also suffocating. (It's a Strength test Difficulty 20 to break free or Difficulty 12 to clear a breathing hole. If the resin takes 25 Wounds, the prisoner can break free entirely). Discarding one's clothes is a great way to remove the hardening ectoplasm, which makes this weapon especially popular with the Jammers. They love watching arrogant Buro agents hurriedly stripping to their skivvies.

## HELIX MINE

The Helix Mine is a discarded offshoot of the arcanotech research that created the Helix Ripper. The original intent of the Helix Mine was to create a weapon that would disrupt the inner chi of an enemy. It soon became obvious that the device was more effective against Buro troops than the Jammer and Guiding Hand opponents it was fielded against. Initially it was supposed to detonate when it detected the particular "chi deadness" of certain Jammers, but those Mines tended to simply blow up as soon as no one was around. Those designed to fire when Kung Fu powers were used also had little practical use: They could detect the expenditure of Chi, but since fu powers are usually up close and personal, the Mines wound up injuring as many Architect troops as Hand warriors.

The Jammer Helix Mines, on the other hand, go off when they detect either arcanowaves or demonic emanations. They're the size of a thick manhole cover and constructed of especially dense ARB. Titanium carrying handles fold out of the top to



allow troops to carry the device (combined Strength must equal 15 to carry).

Once positioned the Helix Mine is only activated if it detects an active AI/O port or a creature power used within three meters of its location. The Mine then levitates into the air, spinning quickly as it does, and fires bolts of sorcerous power all around it. These pulses go off every three shots, and target everyone within 10 meters. These attacks are resolved using the Arcanowave Device power of the Mine's owner, with no penalty for multiple targets. The damage rating is 10.

The Helix Mine can be deactivated one of two ways: By removing all arcanowave tech within 1 meter of its location or by simply turning the device over and flipping off a conveniently located switch.

Before being planted, the Helix mine has to be "charged up" by its owner. Every sequence it spends charging is one sequence it can spend firing. Incidentally, the Mine's owner's active AI/O ports can set the mine off just like any other active port.

## BLINK SUIT

Professor Powerhouse, a Jammer researcher, conceived of this artifact attempting to create a working teleporter. Unfortunately, Powerhouse didn't understand arcanowave technology and its connection to the Netherworld very well. On the plus side, he did pioneer a new branch of temporary gate research before he disappeared.

His ultimate arcanowave creation consists of a man-sized, sarcophagus-looking booth and a form-fitting spandex bodysuit holding thin plates of ARB receivers against the wearer's body. The sarcophagus serves as a receiving, transporting and charging station for the blink suit. Theoretically the blink suit allows the wearer to phase in and out of reality, giving him an advantage in combat as well as allowing instantaneous transportation back to a central location. In practice, not so much.

The suit suffers from unpredictable interactions with the Netherworld, which

### Blink Suit Outcome Chart

- 1-2 Insubstantial—As the Creature ability with no restrictions (lasts d6 shots)
- 3-4 Teleport back to the charging station in d6 shots
- 5 Teleport to a random location in the Netherworld in d6 shots
- 6 Random body part becomes intangible for d6 shots. (Roll: 1 = head, 2 = right arm, 3 = left arm, 4 = torso, 5 = right leg, 6 = left leg)

is supposed to provide a conduit for the suit's teleportation ability. The wearer must make a successful Arcanowave Device roll of Difficulty 10 each time the suit activates to anticipate what effect it will have. The effects and duration of the blink suit's abilities are not easily predictable: The GM rolls to determine both. It takes 5 shots to activate the suit, and one shot to deactivate it. Using blink suit successfully takes great skill, timing and a bit of luck.

## BINDER GRINDER

The origin of this vile weapon is reputed to be a small sect of Lotus sorcerers whose Netherworld outpost was plagued by malevolent spirits. These creatures, nicknamed "Fugglies," are collections of viciously curved teeth, writhing tentacles and coils of dripping intestine. One of the adepts discovered that the vile demons could be trapped into small hollowed tubes of steel, if the tube was prepared with the proper incantations. Once released the creatures spring from the cylinder at a prodigious rate, attacking the first object they touch in mindless rage. Enthralled with the idea of throwing teeth and muscled intestines at his enemies, Gao Zhang commissioned a rifle using the creature in the place of a cartridge. Eventually the Lotus discarded the idea as not only impractical but foolishly dangerous. Somehow the plans for this weapon made their way into the hands of the Jammers, who have never been deterred by foolishness and danger in a weapon.



The rifle looks a little like a large-bored musket, but is covered with arcanowave sigils carved into its ARB casing. There is a top-feeding magazine, which can hold three rounds. The rifle is fired with the Arcanowave Device skill, but when the round hits, it continues to do damage until the Fuggly is pried off its target. The creature has a Strength of 4 and does 8 points of damage per shot until dislodged.

## FINDER

Unlike most arcanotech, this device does not require an AI/O port to operate. It comes in many shapes, but is always constructed of ARB and about size and volume of a small valise. To use the Finder you simply open the case and connect the siphon tube to somebody's handy vein. The Finder uses the operator's blood to feed a small bound spirit contained within. Depending upon the amount of blood used and the ability of the user the spirit will be able to locate and perhaps even identify any arcanowave technology present in the area surrounding it. The device is simple to operate though it has no safeguards installed to stop it from siphoning more blood than the operator can give. The operator must make a Constitution check versus the Magic attribute of any creature using arcanowave technology within 10 kilometers. If the check succeeds, the user only takes one Wound Point. A failed Outcome does 5 + Outcome Damage. Either way, the user can sense the closest arcanowave source. With a successful Arcanowave Device check against the detected source's skill, more information can be gleaned.

### Information Gleaning Outcome Table

- 1 Vague direction
- 2-3 A general impression of what one of the target's arcanowave devices does (defense, attack, information, etc.)
- 4-5 A sense of how many arcanowave devices the target has, and what each one does.
- 6+ A vision of the target and total knowledge of all their arcanowave devices.

# TECHIES AND GADGETS

By Hal Mangold

While Techies are good at fixing stuff, that's hardly their be-all and end-all. The thought of crawling inside a malfunctioning Buro hover-tank to see if he can get the thing humming again is sure to set any grease monkey's heart all aflutter, but there is one act even more exciting than the repair of a such a machine or device: The actual creation of one.

Give a competent Techie a pile of parts and a heap of tools, and he's sure to be able to cobble together "just the thing" for any occasion. The fact that such a device may work erratically, fail completely or even detonate spectacularly hardly seems to dissuade any of them from going at the act of creation hammer and tong.

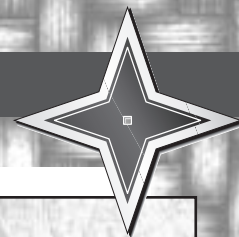
Here are some rules to get your Techie out of the role of just "the fix-it guy" and into the realm of junk *artiste!* Be warned, the rules are definitely of the "fast and dirty" variety. *Feng Shui* is a game of furious action after all. The Secret War is fought more with bullets than with blueprints.

## "It's Ugly, But it Works"

While a Techie's skills allow him to create just about anything, such gadgets would never be mistaken for the true manufactured article in a million years. Instead of sleek matte-black surfaces and ergonomically designed controls, Techie-built devices are horrid looking combinations of wires, plastic and duct tape. They work, but they don't look cool doing it (which is always a minus in the world of *Feng Shui*).

## We Have The Technology

The first thing a Techie needs to do to make a gadget is to figure out what he wants the thing to do. This can be something nice and simple like "I want to build a gun out of this pile of car parts," or more esoteric like "I need an exploding ping-pong ball launcher, and I need it fast!"



After the Techie has decided what he wants the gadget to do, his player explains this to the GM, who checks out the tables at right to decide how difficult the device is to create. This is the base target number for an enterprising Techie to make one of the things from scratch, and the Difficulty number for the Techie's Fix-It check. Obviously devices that replicate standard technology are easier to make, while more outrageous or sophisticated stuff is a bit harder to construct.

One important note: What Techies do is not magic—at least not the kind that sorcerers use. The gadgets they create are products of science, and have to adhere to the principles of science as they are known. Leave the Mechanical Gate Detectors and Plutonium-Powered Sorcery Shields to either the wonders of arcanowave technology or the shaping of the Netherworld.

### Down in the Lab

The Difficulty determined above represents ideal construction circumstances for the Techie. But how often are conditions ideal in the Secret War? Not very. Check out the table for AV modifiers of various working conditions, and apply those modifier to the Difficulty number for the Techie's Fix-It check.

### Different Junctures, Different Junk

In addition to the gadgets' inherent sophistication and the conditions and tools a Techie has to work with, the juncture that a hero is in can radically affect how a gadget turns out (or if it turns out at all). Just as it's easier to toss around magic in some junctures than in others, some of them are more hospitable to kit-bashing.

69 AD is the toughest to work in for a modern Techie. Gao Zhang's China is a place for magic, not science, and anyone trying to whip up a Geiger counter back then is in for an uphill climb. The comparatively primitive 1850s are also a pain for a dedicated gadgeteer, though not nearly as much as 69 AD.

The Modern juncture is the "zero

#### Gadget Complexity

Gadget Type	Complexity
Simple mechanical devices	5
Ordinary mechanical devices	7
Sophisticated mechanical devices, simple electronic devices	10-15
Complex electronic devices	20
Incredibly sophisticated technology. Devices of this sophistication level can only be constructed in the 2056 juncture.	25

#### Working Conditions

Building Situation	Modifier
Relaxed work environment with proper tools and parts	+0
Distracting conditions with proper tools and parts	+5
Relaxed work environment with limited tools and parts	+10
Distracting conditions with limited tools and parts. Good luck, MacGyver.	+20

#### Gadget Juncture Modifiers

Juncture	Complexity Modifier
69	+6
1850	+4
Modern	0
2056	-2
Netherworld	-2

point" for kit bashing. It's the norm, no easier to work in than others, but no harder either.

The high technology of 2056 makes more advanced devices easier to make. The same bonuses to construction apply in the Netherworld, but for completely different reasons; In the Netherworld, reality has a tendency to bend the way a determined person wants it to, and there are few things more determined than a Techie slaving away on a new gadget.



## It's All In The Design

As you can see, once you get a Techie out of his workshop, the Difficulty numbers can stack up pretty fast. But every kit-basher worth his salt knows some quick and easy ways to make creating a gadget easier.

The first is by jury-rigging the device. This means that during the construction, the Techie cuts corners to speed up the process. The resulting device is a fickle thing that may or may not work on any given occasion. Whenever the gadget is turned on or used, the user has to make a Fix-It check (or a Mind check if they don't have the skill) with a Difficulty equal to half the gadget's Complexity. A failed roll means that the gadget doesn't work for that sequence. Jury-rigged gadgets have their Complexity reduced by two. Building a gadget this way also reduces construction time by half.

A Techie can also choose to make a gadget he's creating fragile—or even volatile! Every time a fragile gadget is used, the operator has to make a Fix-It roll as with a jury-rigged one. A failed roll means that not only does the gadget not work, but it breaks. A Fix-It roll equal to the device's original Complexity is necessary to get the thing operating again, and this roll has to be made out of combat. The Complexity of a fragile gadget is reduced by four, and the construction time is halved just like a jury-rigged one.

Volatile gadgets are even less stable than fragile ones. They are treated as fragile gadgets, but if they break while being used, the operator has to make an immediate Fortune check. Failure means that the device fails spectacularly (and cinematically). The exact effects of this are left up to the GM's fertile and feral imagination, with the guideline that this shouldn't really be used to kill heroes—just inconvenience and embarrass them (as well as depriving them of a valuable and expensive piece of equipment). The difficulty of the Fortune check is equal to the builder's Mind score—after all, the most sophisticated science is the most dangerous. Ask Marie Curie.

Making the gadget larger than normal also makes construction easier. Bigger, bulkier parts

are easier to manhandle into place than little precision ones. Doubling the size of a gadget lowers its Complexity by two, but also doubles its building time. The size of a gadget can be doubled up to three times.

Finally, a Techie can simplify a gadget by intentionally building it not to last. Making the gadget a one use item drops the Difficulty number by ten if it is normally a device that would work more than once (grenades and other explosives are one-use already, bunkie). This also halves a gadget's construction time.

Combining multiple modifiers is no problem. You can make a gadget a one-use, jury-rigged volatile item if you really want to. In that case you have to make the Fix-It check to get it to work, if it works once that's all she wrote, and it just might blow up in your face!

When a Techie has the time—and more rarely, the patience—to put some care and planning into the construction of a gadget, there are a few tweaks he can make beyond the basics of getting the thing to work at all.

Instead of increasing the gadget's size, the Techie can elect to miniaturize it, making it more easily concealed without sacrificing functionality. There are limits to this, of course. If you want a gadgeteered gun to do damage like a normal gun, you can't expect it to be the size of a cockroach. Each halving of a gadget's physical size adds two to its Complexity.

Techies can also make combination gadgets—devices that combine the functions of more than one device. The construction time is equal to the construction time of all the gadgets summed, and each gadget in a combination device adds four to the Complexity of the item.

### Design Modifiers

Limitation/Advantage	Complexity Modifier
Gadget is jury-rigged/ fragile/volatile	-2/-4/-6
Doubling the gadget's size	-2 per doubling
Halving the gadget's size	+2 per halving
One-use gadget	-10
Combining the gadget with another gadget	+4 per gadget combined



## Building Time

Whipping up a gadget is almost always a non-combat activity. Cobbling together a collection of wires, tubes and duct tape is not something to be attempted with lead flying around your ears. There may be times when bending this rule is appropriate and dramatically cool. The GM can decide when those times come.

With this in mind, knowing the exact construction time of a gadget usually isn't very important. Either a Techie has time to do it when he needs to or he doesn't. How long it takes to build a gadget is completely up to the GM. If she declares that there isn't enough time between events in the scenario, then your Techie is up a creek.

## The Building Montage

While you can just figure out the target numbers for the gadget and roll some dice, that seems a bit sterile for *Feng Shui*. Much as a fighter learning a new skill goes through a training montage, a Techie building a new device goes through a **building montage**. The player has to describe to the GM and other players a few snippets of the building process. If you describe a particularly vivid or impressive building montage, the GM might even reduce the Difficulty number to build the device.

# SPIES LIKE US

By Hal Mangold

Techies aren't the only ones with access to amazing technology. Spies are often issued special equipment for specialized missions. Often they have little say in what they are issued, but most note that headquarters is pretty savvy about issuing gear useful for the assignment at hand.

## That's No Ordinary Toothbrush, 009...

In complete contrast to Techie-built gadgets, gadgets issued to spies are almost always the epitome of discretion and

ergonomic design. Gadgets issued to spies have an automatic Concealability of 1 unless that Concealability would interfere with the actual operation of the device (some gadgets are actually designed to look big and intimidating). This Concealability rating doesn't necessarily reflect the gadget's actual size, but rather its construction. A grappling gun issued to a spy might be built to look just like an umbrella, for instance, or a set of mini-grenades might look like the buttons on his overcoat.

## Go See The Boys In R & D

At the beginning of each particular scenario, a spy is given a number of gadgets equal to his highest AV divided by 5, rounded down.

The equipment is usually assigned to the spy by the technical branch of whatever espionage organization he works for. This means the GM takes care of issuing the actual goodies. Sometimes your spy might really want a particular gadget. If this is the case, the spy may choose one of his gadgets, as long as its Complexity is lower than his highest AV. If he wants a more esoteric piece of gear, he can try to talk his superiors into issuing the desired gadget to him at the beginning of a scenario.

To do this, he has to spend a Fortune Die and roll his highest AV, with a Difficulty equal to the Complexity of the item. If he succeeds, he's issued the gadget—usually with a stern warning to “please try and return it intact this time.” This can also be used to get the spy additional gadgets, and can be tried as many times at the hero is willing to spend Fortune Dice.

## You Break It, You Bought It

Most espionage organizations' technical divisions are notoriously protective of their inventions. Assuming the item survives to the end of the scenario, the spy has to return it to his superiors. Failure to do so results in a reduction in the number of gadgets issued for future missions by the number that the spy holds onto (and the ill will of the boys in the white lab coats).



## Gadgets

Now let's get to the gadgets. The devices listed below and their effects have been kept pretty simple. You won't find too much in terms of "broadcast ranges" or "power consumption rates." This is *Feng Shui*, for Chrissakes! We don't want to bog down a perfectly good story with a whole lot more rules now, do we?

The devices listed here can be either issued to spies or constructed by Techies. These are only a selection and guideline to the whole world of gadgets that are out there, of course.

### Pen Gun

This may look like an ordinary, if bulky, fountain pen, but it's far more deadly than that. The pen gun is nearly undetectable unless it's taken apart, and allows a hero to pack a little bit of heat in even the most heavily secured areas. Even an x-ray scan is unlikely to detect it for what it is.

Some versions of this weapon are loaded with darts instead of bullets. The damage of the dart pen depends on what sort of substance the dart is tipped with. The damage from the dart itself is negligible, but the special effects could include knockout venoms, deadly poisons, hallucinogens, emetics... whatever. Treat it as a gun with the stats (8/\*/1) or (\*/\*/4) for the dart version. This can't be fired at anyone who isn't in close range. *Complexity: 10-12*

### Garrote Watch

Takes a licking until the victim stops ticking. The winding stem of this normal looking watch is actually connected to a retractable reel of piano wire inside the body of the watch. When it's pulled out and wrapped around some unsuspecting mook's neck, it takes them out, no questions asked. Against named characters, it does Strength +4 Damage for the first attack. Both of these effects only work if you can sneak up on the target. *Complexity: 8*

### Bola Tie

No, not one of those pieces of tacky American men's jewelry. This normal

looking tie is heavily weighted at each end for throwing. In the hands of an experienced user, it can be used to entangle or disarm an opponent. A successful hit with the tie gives the target a one shot penalty on his actions until he takes two shots to extricate himself from it. The tie can also be used to disarm opponents.

*Complexity: 4*

### Bladed Boots

Clicking the heels together just so causes a four-inch spring-steel blade to pop out of the toe of the boot. A kick delivered with one of these vicious weapons can be devastating. Instead of the normal STrength +2 damage for a kick, a properly applied blade boot kick does Strength +3 damage.

The Complexity listed below is for making a blade boot that retracts. Simply attaching a knife blade to a pair of cowboy boots just takes a little duct tape. *Complexity: 6*

### Stungloves

These potent disabling weapons, disguised to look like an ordinary pair of driving gloves, are sort of a hand-to-hand version of a taser. They allow you to get up close and personal with someone while you deliver 50,000 volts upside their head.

Being hit by stungloves isn't quite as nasty as a full-on taser. However, it's not pleasant. When your character is tagged by a stunglove in combat, have him make an immediate Toughness check with a Difficulty of 10. (This is in addition to any Damage from the blow, of course.) Unnamed characters who fail the check are taken out of the action, while named characters pick up a point of Impairment for the rest of the sequence. Further points of Impairment from future shocks are cumulative, up to a -3 penalty. All Impairment from stungloves fades at the end of each sequence. The battery in a set of stungloves is good for 10 shocks. *Complexity: 14*

### Mini Grenades

Big bang in a little package, the hand grenade can be a hero's best friend or



worst enemy. Here's the straight skinny on a few different types of eminently portable boom-boom.

First of all we have the basic, garden variety exploding thing everyone is familiar with—but much, much smaller. Use the Explosion rules on page 140 of the *Feng Shui* rulebook if someone starts tossing these puppies around.

Flash-bang grenades are designed to knock folks down instead of filling them full of shrapnel. They can still hurt you pretty badly, but it's a lot less likely. Flash-bang grenades do only one-half the Damage of regular ones, but anyone in the blast radius needs to make a Toughness check with a Difficulty of 15. If they make the check, no problem. If they miss it, named characters suffer a point of Impairment for a number of shots equal to the amount they missed it by. Multiple grenades don't increase this effect, but they can extend it. Mooks get hit even harder if they miss the check. The flash-bang pushes all mook actions back by one shot per point they missed the check by, to a

maximum of three shots.

If you don't want to blow somebody up or knock 'em down, you may want to smoke them out. A handy dandy gas grenade might just do the trick. Pull the pin, throw hard and hold your breath, pal. These are a favorite with riot control types. A single gas grenade has enough juice to fill an area roughly 10' x 10' x 10'. Tear gas is the most common type of gas used in grenades. Anyone in the area when the tear gas goes off needs to make a Constitution check, Difficulty 10. Anyone failing picks up one point of Impairment for the rest of the fight as their mucous membranes burn and their eyes tear. Remaining in the area of the gas forces this check every shot, with each failure adding another point of Impairment, to a maximum of 4. (So get moving, moron!)

It's possible to load gas grenades with other substance like knockout gas, or lethal substances, like mustard gas or sarin nerve gas. But only someone really diabolical would do something like that.







Incidentally, if a Techie decides to homebrew some standard sized grenades, use the Complexity for the miniature version, reduced by 6 ('cause you doubled the size three times, see?). *Complexity: Fragmentation 15, Flash-Bang 15, Gas 18, Smoke 16*

### **Electronic Lock-pick**

Bypassing electronic locks is a lot more difficult than standard intrusion tasks, requiring a much more complex gadget. Electronic lock picks cycle through every possible combination for an electronic lock until it comes up with the proper one. It takes an electronic lock-pick 2d6 shots to open almost any electronic lock. *Complexity: 15*

### **Grappling Gun**

The variable Complexity of the grapple gun reflects the type of "hook" that tips the cable. Lower Complexity grapples actually need to have something to grapple on or around, while higher Complexity ones feature tips that can bite into smooth surfaces. Some may also have built in motors that can pull the user up whatever it is he's trying to climb. *Complexity: 10-15*

### **Video Cameras**

Need to get some up close and personal pictures of someone? A good hidden camera may be exactly what you need. Hidden cameras range in size from as big as a briefcase to small enough to fit in the palm of your hand. These cameras can be set to take either still pictures or video (usually black-and-white), and are usually hooked up to a re-transmitter that broadcasts the picture to a safe location where the recording device is. *Complexity: 14*

### **Bugs**

Don't call the exterminator just yet. We're not talking about insects, but rather small annoying things of the electronic variety: listening devices. When you want to know what your enemies are up to, sneak one of these suckers into their headquarters and see what you find out. Basically, the higher the sound quality and the greater the device's range, the

higher the Complexity. Bugs at the low end of the scale can be heard from a room or two away, while the highest Complexity ones can transmit sound for several miles.

Finding bugs is actually easier than planting them, as long as you have a bug scanner with a Complexity higher than the bug you are looking for. *Complexity: 8-16, depending on size and sophistication.*

### **Tracking Devices**

Everybody hates being followed, but your target won't be able to get away from you if you plant on one these babies on him. As long as you can successfully plant the transmitter in his car, his luggage, his clothes, or under the skin on the back of his neck, you can follow him wherever he goes just by tuning in on the signal. As long as your little electronic hitchhiker stays undetected, you can track his movements with no problem at all. Once again, the device's range determines its Complexity. A transmitter that broadcasts for a few hundred feet rates an 8, while a tracking beacon that can be detected for several hundred miles definitely hits the upper reaches of Complexity, at 16. *Complexity: 8-16*

## **UNHOLY UNIONS: SORCERY COMBINATIONS**

**By Bruce Baugh**

Magicians throw around the forces of nature (and some nature never imagined) in impressive ways. That's what *Feng Shui* sorcery is about. While the rulebook provides lots of schticks for the would-be master of eldritch energies, it doesn't cover in any detail what happens when a sorcerer attempts to apply two or more schticks at the same time. This section fills that gap, with rules and examples.





## EXPANDED RULES FOR COMBINED SCHTICKS

### Crude Improvisation

A sorcerer can always attempt to use two (or more) sorcery schticks at the same time. The sorcerer suffers a -1 AV penalty for each schtick he stacks this way after the first. The player spends the necessary Chi and time, casting each spell in turn but suspending the final moments so that the effects can all go off simultaneously when the last one's done. The player rolls each one separately. Having one schtick work but others fail generally produces messy results; the GM should make the ensuing partial success a dramatically interesting challenge.

*Example: Uncle Lee, proprietor of Chan's Chinese Restaurant and Oriental Cookery School, knows that demons are prowling the neighborhood and using the local gangs to take over important feng shui sites. Uncle Lee knows more about real magic, not just culinary wizardry, than his students realize, so he prepares to take action when the gangsters burst in to make trouble one evening. First he prepares a Blast of steam, using his usual Sorcery AV of 12. It works just fine, but he suspends the invisible force roiling over his huge pots of boiling water and sets to work on a Revelation schtick. This time his AV is 11, since it's the second spell getting stacked together. In the six shots he's spent doing his magic, the thugs have started harassing the customers, but they're still packed close together. He tips over the nearest pot of water and forces the cloud of steam into a tight blast directed at the center of the mob of hoodlums. They all scream satisfyingly. As the steam clears, the Revelation effect shows that the leader of the gang isn't human at all. Inside his vinyl overalls is an eight-foot-tall four-armed monster! The other gangsters promptly reconsider their allegiance.*

### Better Improvisation

With a little preparation, a sorcerer can do better than that. He works out what

schticks he wants to combine and makes a Sorcery roll. Going through the mental permutations involved takes 3 shots. The difficulty is whatever the highest difficulty for any of the separate components would be, plus 1 for each extra schtick he wants to add. If he fails the roll, he can still use the crude improvisation approach.

If the Sorcery roll succeeds, then the sorcerer manages to synthesize his schticks in a way tuned to these particular circumstances.

- The casting time is 3 shots, plus 1 for each schtick beyond the first involved.
- The Difficulty is (just like the preparation roll) the highest Difficulty of any individual schtick involved, plus 1 for each extra schtick involved.
- If the improvised synthesis includes two or more schticks that deal Damage, figure the total like Both Guns Blazing: The damage rating of each schtick - (the opponent's Toughness x 2) + the Outcome roll = Wound Points inflicted.

*Example: The insidious Wizard of the Northern Tower, who fled from AD 69 to the modern day through a convenient set of portals, decides that he needs a sanctuary. Modern technology impresses him, and he chooses to make the Pak-It-In Temple o' Boomin' Gear his new home. Once he destroys the pathetic weaklings who live there he can study modern stereo equipment at his leisure. He's been practicing a combined effect and puts it to work.*

*First, he uses Flight to lift himself up into the air, in the middle of the store. Then he invokes the power of the elements to suck all the heat out of the room and into his own body; this is the Cold effect of Weather Control. Finally, he channels the heat back out of his mouth, twisted into an evil grin, as a Blast of Fire.*

*It takes the Wizard three shots to prepare himself. The highest Difficulty is 10 (for the dramatic weather change), +2 for two extra effects rolled together, for a total of 12. (If he were up against named characters, the Blast would probably have the highest Difficulty, but the people in the store are all pedestrians destined to provide*

tragic examples of the Wizard's power.) The Wizard's player makes the roll with ease. Now it's time to actually cast the spells.

It takes three shots for the first effect, plus one more for each of the extras, for a total of five shots. As with the preparation roll, the Difficulty is 12. Only the Blast does Damage, so the Damage is figured just as if he were using it all by itself. In short order, the Pak-It-In Temple o' Boomin' Gear holds only charred corpses, ice-crusts, and one altogether pleased magician.

## Making It Permanent

Figuring out the combined schtick the first time takes most effort. Once a sorcerer uses a particular combination successfully—in play, homework doesn't count—he can begin developing it as a permanent schtick. It takes  $16 + X$  experience points to make the combination permanent, where X is the number of schticks beyond the first involved. A learned combination schtick requires no extra casting time or Difficulty penalty; it continues to do Damage as given above.

Other sorcerers can't simply flock to the sanctuary of the sorcerer with his new combined schtick and learn it as if it were a regular schtick. Combined schticks are always personal creations, tuned to the psyche of the sorcerer. Other sorcerers who like the result have to go through the process of improvising and then formalizing it on their own.

*Example: Exalted Mistress Madelynn tends the Gardens of Righteous Sacrifice, in an out-of-the-way corner of the Netherworld. She produces wholesome growth by exploiting the misery of targeted enemies, with a spell that combines the Blast of Disease with Germinate and Growth. Her player spent a total of 18 experience points to research it: 16 for the basic Blast, plus one each for the second and third effects. Madelynn can cast it in three shots. The Disease effect has its usual difficulty of the target's Dodge, Magic or Sorcery score, whatever's highest. Each point of Impairment the target suffers creates a 5% boost to the growth of all plants within 5 meters of where she stands while cursing the wretch, and turns a five-meter zone of barren rock beyond the current*

*boundary of her garden into fertile soil. Note that the growth remains even after her victims cure their various diseases.*

## EXAMPLES OF SORCERY COMBINATIONS

### The Terrible

#### Cauldron Tunnel

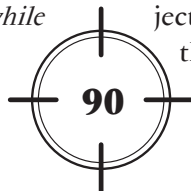
**Blast (Acid) + Movement (Flight).** The sorcerer uses Acid on himself to dissolve his body. The next shot, he can reconstitute himself in the bottom of any large container containing acid, blood, poison or any other unpleasant fluid. (The container must hold at least seven gallons of liquid.) It takes six shots for the sorcerer's body to reform, during which time the liquid bubbles vigorously. Anyone peering in sees the sorcerer's eyes peering out, as they form immediately. After six shots, the sorcerer can leap out and fly as usual with Flight, his body coated with whatever liquid he moved into. The target liquid must be within the sorcerer's line of sight when he destroys his body via Acid. The sorcerer's body continues rebuilding even if someone dumps the container, but it takes an extra three shots to finish the process.

#### Devouring Hell Weapons

**Blast (Conjured Weapons) + Blast (Fire).** The sorcerer doesn't just create weapons to throw at opponents; this combination creates *burning* weapons! All the Damage consequences of both special effects apply. A well-thrown flaming spear, for instance, can pierce armor and then ignite the fragile flesh inside.

#### The Eyes of Fire

**Blast + Divination (Revelation).** The sorcerer's point of view travels with any sort of projected Blast. Anyone who gets a good look at the leading edge of the Blast (which may be hard to do) sees a pair of stylized eyes rid-





### More of the Same

Combining multiple Blast effects is easier than combining less related schticks. Take a -2 AV penalty and cast a single spell. If you succeed, it does normal damage with both special effects.

ing in front of the Blast. The eyes may be pitch black, or glow with an unholy flame in any color the sorcerer chooses. The sorcerer sees the scene just as if present physically, with the limitations of darkness, smoke and the like. The result gets overlaid on the sorcerer's normal perceptions; anything that requires close attention (like combat) is at +2 Difficulty. The Eyes of Fire automatically last one sequence. They can last as long as the Blast's special effect does, or close and dissolve at the sorcerer's discretion anytime after the first sequence.

### Words in Fire

**Blast (Fire) + Divination (Prediction).** The sorcerer peers into the future, discerning some set of circumstances surrounding a reading of a manuscript the sorcerer owns. The Prediction might deal with a place, time of day or some quality of a reader. Whatever it is, that aspect becomes a trigger for a Blast implanted in the manuscript. The first reader to fulfill it (generally unwittingly) becomes ground zero for a Blast. The delay can extend up to one day at Difficulty 6, up to a month at 9, up to a year at 12, for the rest of the magician's lifetime at 15, and indefinitely at 18. If the time elapses without the Blast being triggered, the Blast goes off then.

### Sky Full of Knives

**Blast (Conjured Weapons) + Movement (Flight).** The sorcerer creates a steady stream of knives, arrows or spears all hurtling in the same direction. The sorcerer can then jump up (a Difficulty 3 task, if the GM really feels the need to require a roll) and run along the tops of the conjured weapons. He must move at least half his Move rating each sequence, or risk falling off (a Difficulty 6 task if he's moved one-quarter to one-half his Move rating, Difficulty 12 if he's moved less than that). The sorcerer can snatch up one or more of the con-

jured weapons for hand-to-hand use; any actually in his hands when the Blast ends remain, rather than dissolving like the rest. They dissolve only when he lets them go. Some sorcerers add Movement (Speed) to this combination, for particularly hasty traverses across bridges of arrows.

### The Wasting Death of Body and Soul

**Blast (Disease) + Fertility (De-Attunement).** De-Attunement sets in as soon as the Disease Damage first manifests. Each point of Impairment from the Diseases reduces by one the number of feng shui sites the victim can re-attune to. Magical healing does not undo the effects of De-Attunement; the victim must still go through the process all over again.

### Traitor's Hell Strike

**Blast (Ice) + Weather (Snow).** Sorcerers who practice this combination often learn it from demons of icy hells, or from the Yeti and other denizens of frozen wastelands. The sorcerer makes a typical Ice Blast attack. As it rockets in its crystalline way toward the target, every damp spot in the vicinity instantly chills to freezing and unleashes fountains of snow. If it's already snowing, the weather turns immediately to whiteout blizzard conditions. Wet environments produce more snow than dry ones, but the power of hellish chill can draw moisture out of the crevasses of rocks and even the tear ducts of bystanders.

### The Fist of Heaven

**Blast (Lightning) + Weather (Thunder).** This combination requires storm clouds in the vicinity. When the sorcerer invokes the Fist of Heaven, a hole opens in the clouds (with accompanying thunder) and lightning in a distinctly fist-shaped form. Experienced sorcerers often combine this with more blast effects, as Heaven's anger can conceivably encompass everything from instant annihilation to rotting blights for the rest of the unfortunate target's lifetime.



## The Blessing of Correct Insight

**Divination (Warning) + Fertility (Restore Chi).** The sorcerer makes a concerted attack on spiritual evil in the area, past and present. The Restore Chi effect lasts as long as the Warning marks remain intact; the boundaries of the Warning-protected area pulse brightly whenever unhealthy Chi intrudes. Warning marks that remain intact for long periods of time (weeks or more) may cancel out negative feng shui in the vicinity, at the GM's discretion. A sorcerer wishing to make an emphatic point about the dangers of trespass may add Fertility (De-Attunement) to this effect.

## The Flight of the Celestial Turtle

**Blast (Fire) + Movement (Flight).** The sorcerer draws his arms and legs into the folds of his robe (or whatever relatively roomy clothing he favors; this doesn't work with spandex). Jets of flame, whose cumulative Damage is that of Blast, shoot out. He spins very rapidly and can fly off in any direction. He can remain in motion for up to an hour per point of his Magic rating, but as soon as he extends a hand or foot, the flames all cease and he falls to the ground. Obviously he can't do any fine manipulation, or even heavy lifting, while relying on the Flight of the Celestial Turtle.

## The Righteous Deception of Devils

**Influence (Illusions) + Summoning (Exorcism).** The Exorcism part of this combination works as usual. The Illusions take on a specific form: They convince the targeted monster that it remains in control of its victim. The targeted monster sees the real situation overlaid with pleasing illusions: It takes an AV penalty equal to the Outcome of the Righteous Deception of Devils roll for the rest of the sequence.

## The Flowers of Evil

**Fertility (Growth) + Summoning (Corruption).** The sorcerer unleashes the powers of darkness on the vegetable kingdom. The target plants grow with the same difficulties for size increase as for Growth by itself, but they also take on an unwholesome nature. Fresh fruit rots. Sap turns tainted and poisonous. Colors either turn bleached and gray or become horribly, unnaturally vivid. The affected plants often sway as if in a breeze nobody else can feel, and grope slowly, blindly around if anyone moves nearby. Supernatural creatures who take advantage of the Corruption-granted bonus usually find vines (or giant grasses, or whatever's at hand) growing around their legs, though the plants don't hinder the creatures' movement. The affected plants wither and die in a matter of minutes, when the Corruption wears off.

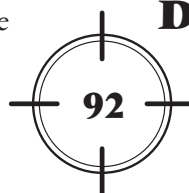
## NEW SPECIAL EFFECTS

### Blast

**Tentacles.** Writhing, flexible tendrils, either extruded from the sorcerer's own body or condensed out of the surrounding air. The tentacles have large suckers, which allow them to pick up just about anything that's not nailed down and cling to their targets. If the sorcerer chooses to keep attacking a target (or targets), add +1 to the Sorcery rating for each sequence of sustained grappling, to a maximum of +2. Extended grappling makes it hard to change targets: It takes an extra shot and a -2 penalty to Sorcery for the first attack at any other target. Some sorcerers withdraw their tentacles into themselves when ceasing to attack; others let the tentacles fall off, or cut them off, and grow new ones for the next fight. The "tentacles" may include inhuman extension of the sorcerer's hair, tongue, fingernails, and other body parts.

### Divination

**Scrying.** The sorcerer prepares a clear surface, like a mirror or still pond, and





gazes in to see a vision of events happening elsewhere in the present moment. The Difficulty depends on the distance of the target space:

Distance	Difficulty
Up to a mile	7
1-5 miles	10
5-25 miles	13
25-125 miles	16
x5 miles	+3

Add 3 to the Difficulty if the sorcerer has only a limited acquaintance with the target, or 6 if the sorcerer must rely entirely on pictures, others' accounts and other sources of information.

The Outcome is the number of turns the Scrying lasts. The sorcerer can see the target clearly, and hear sounds faintly, as if at a distance or muffled. Targets may make a Chi roll with a Difficulty of the sorcerer's Magic stat to feel a sense of being watched.

## Movement

**Stillness.** The sorcerer can balance in any position without apparent effort, for a number of shots equal to the Outcome. Particularly tricky positions (up on one toe, for instance) may add 3, or even more, to the Difficulty. Efforts to detect breath and other signs of life use the sorcerer's Sorcery rating as the Difficulty. The sorcerer may also creep along at one meter per sequence, for a number of sequences equal to the Outcome, dodging nearly all motion sensors and most people's peripheral vision sense of something moving nearby.

## COMBINING SORCERY WITH GUN AND FU SHTICKS

Yes, in both practice and theory a sorcerer can combine eldritch wizardry with either mastery of firepower or advanced techniques in the martial arts. It's just harder than combining different applications of sorcery.

This system requires a little bit of bookkeeping.

## Crude Improvisation

The sorcerer performs a sorcery schtick as usual, with a -1 AV penalty for the effort of holding the effect at bay while he gets his gun or fu schtick ready. He takes a -2 AV penalty to the gun or fu schtick, since he has to divert attention to maintaining the magic while doing something mundane. The spell goes off at the same time he completes the other schtick.

*Example: Bryan Shield is one of San Francisco's elite (and very secret, even from the chief of police) magic cops. He has a Sorcery skill of 9 and a Martial Arts skill of 12. He's fighting mooks in the service of the Ascended in a corporate boardroom where he's not supposed to be; he wants to take them down but not leave behind nasty evidence. A glass wall separates the office's computer gear from the meeting area. In a flash, he decides to combine Material Restoration with Awesome Downpour. First the spell, with his AV reduced by 1 to 9, and a Difficulty of 8 for the glass wall he plans to fix in a moment. Fortunately, he squeaks by with that and goes on to make an Awesome Downpour attack, with an effective AV of 10 rather than 12 because of the penalty for the combined action.*

*All goes well. He flings himself out of hiding and across the conference table to deliver a barrage of kicks at the mooks. They stagger back and through the glass wall. As soon as they do so, Material Restoration kicks in. It muffles the sounds of breaking glass, and by the time the mooks hit the floor, the wall's intact again. Shield steps through the sliding panel to interrogate the mooks at his leisure, having taken them out without alerting anyone in the rooms nearby.*

## Better Improvisation

It takes hard work to do better. The sorcerer must perform the combination the crude way at least once before starting to smooth out the rough edges. With practice, the sorcerer begins merging the chosen schticks together. At first, the total time to invoke them all is the sum of their Shot Costs, minus 1 shot, and the total Difficulty is the highest Difficulty involved plus 3 per schtick involved.



Each use of the combination reduces the Shot cost and Difficulty by one, down to a Shot cost of the longest schtick involved, plus 1 per extra schtick and a Difficulty of the most difficult schtick involved, plus 1 per extra schtick.

Each attack does its Damage separately. Reduce the Outcome of each attack by 1 point for each attack involved after the first.

### Making It Permanent

Once the sorcerer has mastered the schtick through practice, experience points make it permanent. The cost is 16 + X experience points, where X is the number of schticks beyond the first involved. A learned combination schtick requires no extra casting time or Difficulty penalty; it continues to do Damage as given above.

As with combined sorcery schticks, sorcery/gun and sorcery/fu schticks are all individual arts, not systematic lore that students can learn from teachers.

## EXAMPLES OF SORCERY/FU AND SORCERY/GUN SCHTICKS

### The Wheel of Soul Strikes

**Carnival of Carnage + Fertility (Steal Chi).** The sorcerer spends a Magic Point to inflict a negative die's penalty on each victim injured by Carnival of Carnage. The penalty lasts as long as the sorcerer concentrates on his victims, and for one shot after he turns his attention elsewhere.

### The Frank Persuader

**Both Guns Blazing + Summoning (Domination).** The Both Guns Blazing Outcome applies as a bonus to the sorcerer's Magic rating for purposes of Domination. The sorcerer generally does this with enchanted bullets, often engraved with edifying excerpts from famous sutras, though force

of will and plain lead work as well.

### Celestial Lightning Reload

**Lightning Reload + Weather.** During each of the shots normally required for reloading which the sorcerer's Lightning Reload cancels out, Weather produces some dramatic manifestation. Many sorcerers favor Lightning (some call it the "heavenly tracer"), while others incline toward thunder or wind; any Weather special effect can work here, though it's a separate schtick combination for each.

### Night Storm

**Path of the Shadow's Companion (Blade of Darkness) + Blast (Conjured Weapons).** The sorcerer begins by conjuring a Blade of Darkness normally, and in the next shot can unleash a Blast of darkness weapons.

### The Prodigious Fang

**Path of the Sharpened Scales (Bite of the Dragon) + Blast.** The sorcerer must actually bite a target while using Bite of the Dragon. A Blast then erupts from the sorcerer's mouth, doing its own regular Damage to the target, and as appropriate to anyone else in the vicinity.

### The Endless Claw

**Path of the Healthy Tiger (Claw of the Tiger) + Movement (Remote Manipulation).** The sorcerer makes a regular strike with Claw of the Tiger, and sinks in spiritual hooks. Remote Manipulation against the target works for one shot per point of the sorcerer's Magic rating, no matter how far away the sorcerer (or the target) moves. As with normal Remote Manipulation, the sorcerer must make separate skill checks for efforts to manipulate the target.

## CREATURE COMBOS

By John Snead

Sometimes it seems that there are as many bizarre, unique creature attacks as there are demons in the Underworld.



Most of these, however, are variations on the basic schticks described in *Feng Shui*. Rather than stretch for more freakish basic effects, here are some suggested ways to get more mileage from creature schticks by combining them in new and imaginative ways.

## BASIC COMBINATIONS

Any character that possesses the listed prerequisites can use the following powers. None of the powers listed here are separate powers. Instead, they are merely advanced techniques that involve combining the affects of various powers. Learning to use each of these advanced techniques requires that you know all of the listed prerequisites and pay 8 experience points.

### Absorb Life

You can drain chi energy from unwilling targets and transfer it into your own unnatural form. To use this power you make a Soul Twist attack that takes 6 shots instead of the usual 3. In addition to being added to your Soul Twist base Damage, the Outcome of the attack is also subtracted from your Wound Point total. Once your Wound Point total has been reduced to zero, all further points are lost. If you are uninjured this ability functions exactly like an ordinary Soul Twist. The Wound Points healed by this ability are applied at the end of each sequence. If you fail a Death Check after using this ability but before the sequence ends, you still die. Furthermore, you cannot use this ability any time you can't use Regeneration or Soul Twist. *Prerequisite: Regeneration and Soul Twist.*

### Abysmal Armor

Your entire body is covered with razor sharp spines, jagged hooks or perhaps sharp questing tendrils. In addition to the bonuses from the Abysmal Spines and Armor, you are difficult and dangerous to hit. If someone strikes you with his foot or fist, your spines will pierce his flesh and the blow also injures him. Whenever anyone makes a hand to hand strike against you, the Outcome of

his attack is added to the Damage from your spines (2 per schtick) and applied to him. Armor and Toughness protect your attacker against this damage normally. Also, merely shaking your hand pains the person doing so. If you are ever tied up, struggling against your bonds will likely shred the ropes in short order. Only hand to hand damage is affected in this fashion, attacks against you using either guns or melee weapons are unaffected by this power.

*Prerequisite: Abysmal Spines and Armor.*

### Abysmal Tentacles

Instead of simply having grotesque tentacles growing from your monstrous body you possess one or more pincers, stingers or other extremely deadly body-parts. In addition to the normal advantages of tentacles, the base Damage of these appendages is Strength +2. Also, the exact structure of these limbs can have numerous other advantages. A long, razor-sharp stinger can also be used to puncture gas tanks or tires, while huge crab-like pincers can function as enormous scissors, cutting though everything from hydraulic cables to electrical lines. Each additional schtick in Abysmal Spines adds +2 to the Damage done by these appendages.

*Prerequisites: Abysmal Spines and Tentacles.*

### Poison Spew

Like the legendary spitting cobra you can spit deadly venom a number of meters equal to your Creature Power Action Value. As with the Poison schtick, the base Damage rating of this toxin is 10. Fortunately for the target, this poison cannot easily seep through the target's skin. This poison requires several minutes to affect the target and has no affect if the victim washes it off within 10 minutes.

However, careful targeting can greatly increase the poison's affect. If you aim for the target's eyes, open mouth or at any open wounds on the target, the poison takes affect much more rapidly. Both types of attack impose an Action Value Penalty of -2 to your attacks. A successful attack on the target's eyes blinds the target, decreasing his Action Value by four until the Damage done by the poi-





son is healed. Hitting someone's open mouth or gaping wound with the poison instantly releases the venom into the target's bloodstream. *Prerequisite: Foul Spew and Poison*

### **Torrent of Blood**

This devastating and horrific attack actually draws the lifeblood out of a target and sends it in a rushing torrent towards you. In addition to the ability to do normal Blast Damage to the victim, it can also be used to perform any of the effects of the Blood Drain schtick without actually touching the target. The range of this attack is equal to the range of a normal Blast attack. If desired you can either draw a fine stream of blood, or a horrific torrent that literally covers the surroundings in gore. Creative uses of this power also include psychological warfare and obscuring car windshields.

*Prerequisite: Blast and Blood Drain*

### **Torrent of Spines**

Not only are you covered with spines, you can project them in a vast and deadly cloud. This attack affects everyone within a number of meters equal to your Magic rating. Performing this attack costs one Magic Point, takes six shots and is rolled with a -3 penalty to your Creature Powers AV. The damage from this attack is equal to your normal Blast Damage for named characters and cannot be increased by spending additional schticks. Of course, if you use this power near your companions they are likely to be rather annoyed, after they finish picking the spines out of their flesh. *Prerequisite: Abysmal Spines and Blast*

## **ADVANCED CREATURE SHTICKS**

The various Creature Powers listed here are similar to those described in the Basic Combinations section, but they are both more powerful and more versatile. As a result, the powers listed here must be learned as separate schticks, at the normal cost of (8 + X) experience points, with X being your new total number of creature schticks. However, as

with fu schticks, none of these powers may be learned unless you already know all of the listed prerequisites. For example, to use the Army of Monsters Power, not only must you know the Corruption and Domination powers, you must also learn this specific power.

### **Tentacles of Terror**

Instead of tentacles you can produce additional fully functional arms. Each arm can work tools, fire guns, or use swords just as effectively as a normal human's. Possessing multiple arms gives you several advantages. First, continuous actions that require the use of hands, such as driving, don't give you the continuous action penalty. Secondly, your penalty for attacking multiple opponents is decreased by 1. Finally, every three shots you can parry without taking the shot penalty (because you've got a spare pair of arms to parry with).

Each schtick spent in this power allows you to create one additional arm, but these extra limbs don't add to the advantages listed above: They're just backups for when some maniac with a hacksaw chops one of your arms off. As long as you have three or more arms, you gain the advantages of this schtick. *Prerequisite: Tentacles and Transformation.*

### **Army of Monsters**

At your discretion, when you hit an unnamed character, and the Outcome of the attack is 5 or more, you may try to take over the character's mind. The unnamed character must make a check with his highest Action Value; the Difficulty of this check is the Outcome of your just-made attack. If your opponent fails, he temporarily transforms into a mindless creature under your complete control. If he succeeds, he is unaffected and still active. Before you roll, you must choose whether your attack is designed to injure or attempt to control an unnamed character. This control lasts until the end of the session.

If you spend an additional schtick on this power, you can have a chance of controlling unnamed characters on an attack Outcome of 4 or more. If you spend two schticks in



Army of Monsters, you have a chance of controlling unnamed characters if the Outcome of your attack is 3 or more. If you have three schticks in Army of Monsters, you may also maintain control of these unnamed characters indefinitely. In any event, the number of mooks you control can never exceed your Creature Powers AV. *Prerequisite: Corruption and Domination.*

### Ophidian Form

In addition to any other forms possessed through Transformation, you can assume the form of a monstrously huge snake. While in serpent form you lack all limbs and manipulators, but may communicate and use all of your creature powers normally. In this form you can also both slither and swim at your normal Move score. Unless you possess creature powers which give you additional attacks, constriction and biting are your only possible attacks. Both of these attacks are based on your Creature Power AV.

Biting does Strength +2 Damage. Constriction involves actually wrapping around and squeezing the life out of your target. Constriction does Strength +1. This same attack also completely immobilizes the target. When constricting a target that has already been immobilized you automatically do Strength +1 Damage every shot, without needing to roll an attack. Every 2 shots the immobilized target may make a Strength task check with your Strength as the Difficulty. If he succeeds, he instantly breaks free from the constriction. If you do anything other than constrict the target, he automatically breaks free. If you buy this schtick a second time you become truly in tune with your ophidian nature and gain the Coil, Strike and Warning Schticks from the Snake transformed animal package. However, these abilities are only gained while you are in serpent form. Taking this schtick more than twice gains no additional benefits. *Prerequisite: Tentacles and Transformation.*





### Death Chisels

Your claws/spines/whatever are so sharp they pierce armor like tissue paper. Whenever you strike someone with your claws, you ignore your target's Armor protection. This power does not reduce your target's Toughness. A second schtick allows you to add X (a number of Magic Points you choose to spend) to your Damage once you've made a successful attack.

*Prerequisite: Abysmal Spines.*

### The Flying Fear

You can become a huge avian beast with enormous wings. In this form, your Move is doubled. On the ground, you can use your wings to strike opponents, doing Strength +3 Damage. In the air, you can buffet everyone standing in front of you with huge blasts of air by spending any number of Magic Points to reduce the Move ratings of the targets by that amount. A target reduced to 0 Move can't walk or run, but can attack. This reduction lasts ten shots. *Prerequisite: Flight and Transformation.*

### Immaterial Form

You can redirect the flow of your chi and become temporarily immaterial, transferring your physical form into the ghostly spaces between the mortal world and the Netherworld. This makes you completely immune to all physical attacks including unarmed attacks, bullets, melee weapons and explosions. You remain fully vulnerable to all forms of supernatural damage, including magic weapons, spells, creature powers, fu schticks, and arcaonwave effects. Damage caused by falls affects you normally.

While you are immaterial you also can not affect the physical world in any way. Not only can you not pick up a pencil or ride in a car, you also cannot use any attack form, including any creature powers, while in this form. However, while Insubstantial you are completely visible and can speak and hear normally. Unless you also possess the Flight schtick you are still affected by gravity. The chi flow of the Earth keeps you from falling through the ground (which is why you still take Damage from

falling). You can even climb stairs and walk on the upper floors of buildings which are still connected to the Earth. However cars, planes, boats or any other structure that is not firmly and permanently connected to the Earth is as insubstantial to air to you.

Becoming or ceasing to be Immaterial requires a full sequence where you can do nothing other than concentrate on the transformation. During the transformation from material to immaterial, you are vulnerable to all attacks. When transforming from immaterial form to material form you are only vulnerable to supernatural attacks until the transformation is complete. Once you have transformed from one state to another, you must wait for at least 10 minutes before transforming again. Shifting to or from the immaterial states places a considerable strain on both your mind and your body.

*Prerequisite: Damage Immunity and Insubstantial.*

### Mask of Humanity

You may vary your appearance to transform into a wide variety of human forms. You cannot imitate the form of a specific individual, but you can appear to be short, tall, black, white, male or female. Since this power is exceptionally difficult, purchasing it requires *double* the normal amount of experience. (In effect, you have to pay for it twice to get it once.) For the cost of an additional schtick in Mask of Humanity (which does *not* have a double cost), you can recreate the appearance of specific people you have studied carefully for at least a week immediately prior to your use of the schtick.

*Prerequisite: Transformation*

### Spiritual Passage

Your mastery of internal and external chi flows allows you to enter or leave the Netherworld at will. You don't need a portal to enter or leave the Netherworld, but you cannot bring anyone else with you. The opening you create only admits you and a small amount of gear and clothing you are carrying or wearing.

Without some form of sorcerous Divination, you also don't know where in the Netherworld or mortal world you will



emerge. However, if you need to escape from a locked room this schtick is a good bet. The only problem with this power is that it is not terribly quick. To enter or leave the Netherworld you must remain completely still and concentrate on opening the portal for a full sequence. While opening a portal to the Netherworld, your Action Value to resist any attacks is at -4 and if you do anything other than passively dodge while opening the portal you must start the entire process again next sequence. You also cannot open a portal more often than once an hour. Creating such gateways is an incredibly demanding process. You must be in your normal material form to open a portal; you cannot open a gateway to the Netherworld when you are immaterial. If you purchase a second schtick in this ability, you can make a large portal which allows others to enter or leave the Netherworld with you. This portal remains open for one full sequence, or until you one shot after you enter it, whichever comes first.

*Prerequisite: Immaterial Form*

### **Squamous Visage**

Not only is your countenance horrific enough to cause brain damage to unprepared mortals, it is also sufficient to cause all lesser beings who see you clearly to run in fear. The range of this power is equal to your Magic rating in meters, and it requires 3 shots to activate. Whenever you activate this power by displaying the full depths of your unwholesomeness, spend a Magic Point and make a Creature Power task check, Difficulty equal to the highest AV of any unnamed character within range. A number of unnamed characters equal to your Outcome instantly flee in terror at top speed for the remainder of the sequence. If they are cornered and cannot flee they faint, and do not regain consciousness until the end of the next sequence. Any remaining unnamed characters cannot approach you closer than your Magic rating in meters unless they make a Willpower check against your Magic rating. Any who are closer than this make the Willpower roll or retreat this distance away from you. While these characters cannot attack you in

melee combat, they are free to attack your comrades, or to attack you with guns or other distance weapons. *Prerequisite: Brain Shredder*

### **Transfer Life**

You can transfer chi energy between any two targets. By touching two targets you can perform an Absorb Life attack on one individual and transfer the Wound Points you would have gained to the other. You can even drain your own precious store of chi energy and give it to another. Using Transfer Life in this fashion allows you to transfer up to 10 Wound Points from yourself to another character every sequence. No roll is needed to give your own chi to another, but doing so is quite painful. However, you can then heal any Damage done to you with either Regeneration or Absorb Life, assuming no one kills you first. This ability can also be used to duplicate the affects of the Flow Restoration Fu Schtick or the Restore Chi effect of the Fertility Sorcery Schtick. Using the power in these ways functions identically to the previously named powers, except that both powers require that you touch your target.


Unfortunately each such use of this power costs you 5 Wound Points, and this Damage cannot be reduced or redirected in any fashion. The Wound Points used to power these effects are lost and not transferred to anyone. *Prerequisite: Absorb Life*

## **NEW CREATURE POWERS**

While the existing Creature Powers and their variants are quite extensive, there are a few additional powers which can also be learned. All of the powers listed here are ordinary creature powers that require no prerequisites and which may be learned normally.

### **Inhuman Leap**

Whether through possessing unnaturally long legs, odd joints or some other form of unusual anatomy you are capable of leaping four times your normal Move rating. This leap requires two shots and can be made



vertically or horizontally. Your peculiar physiology also allows you to land on your feet if you fall and automatically reduces the Damage you take from a fall by your normal Move score.

## Walk On Walls

Using suckers like a tree frog or an octopus, adhesion pads like a gecko, or thousands of tiny tube-feet like a starfish, you can walk on walls or ceilings like a fly. You can climb using your normal Move score, and can even use your normal Move score when walking across a ceiling. If desired you can even fight someone on the ground while you are standing on the ceiling. Doing this may not give you any direct advantage, but may increase the Difficulty of your opponent's attacks by a point or two, since attacking you is quite disorienting. Since you presumably spend a great deal of your unnatural life walking up walls and along ceilings you suffer no such disorientation.

# NON-COMBAT SHTICKS

By Rob Vaux

Okay, so you've got a character who isn't like the rest of the guys. He doesn't shoot a gun, he has no fu powers, and arcanowave just isn't his style. But he's got his own set of skills, skills that the party needs just as much. There's plenty of stuff out there that needs doing, and not all of it involves gun-toting heroes spraying bullets everywhere.

Security systems need to be bypassed, injuries stitched up and that '73 Camaro kept running in case the party needs a quick getaway. For those jobs, you've got your own kind of heroes. Doctors who patch the characters up after the firefight. Spies and PIs providing vital information. Gamblers who come up with that desperately-needed cash and even journalists providing PR for the PCs and their deeds. Characters like these are vital to the success of any party.

So why should they be denied the same cool schticks the other guys have?

Listed below are a series of schticks for less combat oriented characters, giving them the same edge that their Pain Hammer buddies have. With them, your medic, driver or beat mechanic can do his job that much better. We've broken them down into two categories: Specific schticks unique to characters of a particular type, and auxiliary schticks which any character can use.

The specific schticks are listed under the character types which can use them. Other characters cannot take them, unless they have a specific background that makes such a schtick dramatically appropriate without necessitating taking the type. (A self-promoting doctor with a flair for PR, for example, might be able to use a journalist's schtick.) The GM has the final say as to which characters can use specific schticks.

## SPECIFIC SHTICKS

You can give these schticks to starting characters if the type has a unique schtick that can be swapped out and replaced. Otherwise, you can get them by spending  $(5 + X)$  experience points, where X is the number of miscellaneous schticks your character already has. (A "miscellaneous schtick" is anything that isn't a gun, fu, magic, arcanowave or creature schtick.)

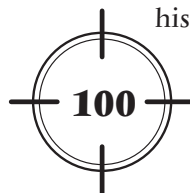
### Gambler

#### Know When to Fold 'Em

Accomplished gamblers can win at almost any game of chance. But they also know when the chips are down, and it's time to cut their loses. Even the best get beaten sometimes; the smart ones know when they're beat and can walk away before they go deeper in the hole.

The dumb ones keep trying to win it all back—and end up losing everything they have. With this schtick, the gambler can ignore one failed Gambling roll per scene. It is as if the roll had never been made; the character gets to keep his shirt and his reputation remains intact.

In certain high stakes games, the gambler may take this schtick one step fur-





ther; by spending a Fortune Die he can change one failed gambling check to a successful check. The check is considered only marginally successful; it grants no special bonuses or perks other than the stakes initially offered. But if the party's cash flow is riding on one roll of the dice, or you need a favor from a GMC and he won't give it to you until you beat him at poker, it can come in mighty handy. Great gamblers aren't great all the time; great gamblers are great when they have to be.

## Journalist

### Purple Prose

Every journalist knows how to write, but you've got a way with words that can influence the way people think. Praise from you can get a politician elected, or turn a struggling actor into a huge celebrity.

Similarly, a bad word can destroy a career, or bring a political boss down in flames. On the seedier side of things, you can draw attention to areas that need it—turn up the heat on a local gang, for example, or get another PC out of jail. All you need is a regular forum and a few days time, and you can affect the way people look at anything. Walter Winchell had nothing on you.

In game terms, this allows you to temporarily increase the Charisma of any character, be it PC or GMC. Similarly, you can temporarily decrease the character's Charisma by vilifying him. With three days' notice and two hours' writing time, you may either add or subtract one point to any single person's Charisma score or to any one Charisma-based skill. The effect lasts for one week plus a number of days equal to the Outcome.

Purple Prose usually only lasts in areas which could hear the journalists' words; usually one particular city or territory. You should work out with the GM beforehand which area you can affect. Rural areas, foreign countries and the distant past are usually off limits. By spending a Fortune Die, however, you can increase the area of effect to include any civilized locale. (It takes a village, after all).

### Research Maniac

You know how to dig for a story's background, and always have a wide array of information handy. Contacts, libraries, the internet—all of them pour out their contents to you, giving you a fast track to any piece of news. You also have a good sense of how facts interconnect and can link stories to statistics with remarkable ease. You are considered to have an Info score of 1 in every conceivable category, even if you have no knowledge of it. This score cannot be used for anything but information: You might be able to determine the exact factory an engine was built in, but you won't be able to repair it. Similarly, an intimate knowledge of Heckler & Koch's history doesn't let you fire their guns any better. Still, an extensive array of facts might help you trace those explosives to their source or locate the kidnappers' hidden island fortress. You must spend at least one hour in a library (newspaper morgue, etc.), at a computer console, or "hitting" the streets for your contacts in order to use this schtick.

Note: You must still pay for an Info of 1 before you can raise it to 2; the schtick simulates an Info score, it doesn't replace it.

## Medic

### "It's Just a Flesh Wound"

You've been in some hot spots before, and have sewed up a lot of bodies. You might not be a doctor or have any medical training, but you know what leaky wounds look like and you've figured out how to close them so they don't open again. Even gunpowder can be used to cauterize injuries; all you need is a pen-knife and some thread. You can add an additional 2 points to the Action Result of the relevant task check (see Healing Rules in the *Feng Shui* basic book for more information).

### Snatched From Death

You've got a knack for shutting off that light at the end of the tunnel and dragging a dying character back to the agonizing pain of his current existence. By spending an extra two shots on any stabilization check that



specifically keeps a character from dying, you automatically succeed at the attempt. Such a check can only be made once per combat; if another buddy takes a second piece of shrapnel after you've stabilized him, he's out of luck. A character you've pulled back from the brink can only get more in-combat healing from fu schticks, magic schticks and arcanoware. Usually, he gets to lie quietly on the floor until Mr. Neurosurgeon can have a look at him. He remains unconscious and out of the action for the duration of the scene.

You must be conscious and able to move in order to use this schtick. You cannot use it on yourself.

## Private Investigator

### Eye in the Sky

You have a way of noticing tiny details that might not have any immediate bearing, but have a definite pay-off later on in the adventure—the buckle on the villain's belt that actually hides a blow-torch, the blinking light on the computer screen indicating a power failure and so on. Once per session, the character may make a Perception roll, Difficulty 9. If successful, the GM must tell him one clue hinting at a future plot development. The clue can be as important or mundane as the GM wishes; it's up to the player to figure out what to do with it. These clues only arise from things the character can see at the time he makes the roll; he can't be sitting in traffic and suddenly notice that the security camera ten miles away has a blind spot. Choose carefully when you make the roll.

## Spy

### Right Place, Right Time

A spy's primary job is gathering information, but in the course of their duties, many of them develop an exquisite sense of timing. Sometimes it's simply being in the right place at the right time to hear an important leak. Other times, it's more pressing—getting through a vault door before it closes, for

example, or disarming a booby trap before it goes off. But whatever the reason—whatever the mission—it translates into an extra few seconds when the operative really needs them.

In game terms, the character may take one additional action right before a given deadline—before a bomb explodes, a steel door closes, the villain's plane takes off, etc. During that action, the spy may do anything that has bearing on the deadline—snipping the wire, diving the extra few feet to the door, and so on. Combat usually isn't allowed—not unless it affects the deadline in some way—and the GM has ultimate authority on what constitutes use of the schtick. For practical purposes, the character must be aware of the deadline, and have a general idea of when it will hit (in other words, if there's a count-down involved, the spy can use the schtick).

Right Place, Right Time can also be used during surveillance and other observation missions. If the spy needs to hear something at a scene that she is in—a dinner party, for example, or a gathering of mobsters—he may spend a Fortune Die in order to be at the right place to hear it. This can't be used for trolling; the spy must have something specific in mind before he uses the schtick, or else it won't work. In addition, it has to be something that someone in the scene would reasonably be expected to talk about. A gangster might mention tonight's kidnapping to an underling, for instance, but a scientist wouldn't reveal the details of his highly secretive government project to a dinner date. The player should have some idea of the information she needs before the scene begins, and the GM should tell her whether she's likely to hear it before she spends the Fortune Die.

## Techie

### Blueprint Cipher

You've seen so many blueprints, schematics and building plans, you can identify the basic layout of any structure you enter. Things like load-bearing walls, electrical wiring for alarms and elevator shafts leading to secret subbasements become clear to you with just a cursory look of the outside of the building.



By spending a Fortune Die, you can tell where the exits are located, which levels have heavy electricity (and are thus more likely to carry computers and/or security measures) and where the corner penthouse is likely to be located. You must spend ten minutes examining the building externally before entering, otherwise the schtick doesn't work. If you can spend thirty minutes exploring the inside of the building unmolested, you can forego the Fortune Die to determine one pertinent fact (where the exits are or where the vault is, not both).

Keep in mind that the GM can choose to throw you for a loop if he feels it's dramatically appropriate. You know building types, not specific buildings, and there's always a chance that the owners walled off that fire escape you're so sure is on the south wall. In these cases, you don't need to give up the Fortune point. Such nasty surprises should only be used sparingly, and never if it results in death or other permanent consequences for the PCs. It is designed to provide an interesting curve ball for plot development, not render the schtick effectively useless. GMs: Use your best judgement and be fair.

## AUXILIARY SCHTICKS

These schticks are available to anyone who can afford them with experience points, but they aren't generally available to starting characters. There's always exceptions, of course, if you can talk your GM into letting you trade one of your other schticks for one of these. Otherwise, you buy them with experience points. Their cost is equal 3 + the total number of all schticks you have, including unique schticks, stat schticks, etc.

### Automobilus Indestructus

It's not that you're a great driver, although you might be, depending on your skills. But automobiles seem to want to please you, no matter how much punishment they've taken. Any car you're driving while involved in a chase keeps running, even after the tires are blown, the engine filled with sugar, and every glass pane in the city scattered across its grill. It might not run fast, and it will doubtless

fall to pieces the instant the bad guys disappear from the rear-view, but as long as you're behind the wheel, it keeps moving. The effects of any incapacitating blow (i.e. damage that permanently prevents forward momentum) inflicted on a vehicle that you are piloting are ignored until the chase is over (although they kick in the instant it is, so get ready to bail out if the gas tank got hit). This doesn't apply to weapons, special gadgets or any passengers (including the driver), just to the engine and the wheels.

### Duct Tape Magician

Similar to the "Fix It" skill, this schtick allows you to repair devices using only bare-bones equipment. If the computer is fried, the assault rifle jammed or the Geiger counter blown to hell, you can somehow make it keep going. This isn't the same as fixing a device; this is more like postponing its breakdown until you're done using it for the time being. If that busted pistol needs to work right now, you can probably coax a couple of rounds of action out of it. By spending a Fortune Die, you are able to coax the device in question to continue functioning until the end of the scene (or sequence if the object is a weapon). You may only spend one Fortune Die per scene in this matter.

This schtick won't cause a gun to fire without bullets, improve a device beyond its listed abilities or otherwise perform something impossible—it merely extends the life expectancy of a broken object by a few minutes.

Once the scene is over, the object is rendered irreparable; no amount of repairs will get it to function again. Signature Weapon holders should take note before using this schtick on their beloved Smith and Wessons.

### Photographic Memory

Photographs don't begin to cover it; your mind is a clutter-box of facts and figures. You remember everything you see and can play it back with perfect accuracy. You see details in your mind, and recall them as if they were right in front of you. By spending a Fortune Die, you can recall something your character may have been shown once; an address, a





building blue-print, the face of a wanted terrorist. If the player has been told something her character knows, but forgotten it, this schtick can be used for a free reminder. The GM needs to decide if such a tidbit is reasonable (a character can't remember how to build a nuclear bomb, for example, or gain instant Kung Fu just by watching someone practice), and if it has relevance in the current situation.

### **One With the Walls**

It's not that you're particularly good at hiding, or that your powers of stealth are so well-honed. You just have a knack for finding the best place to duck into—and there always seems to be an inconspicuous heating duct right when you need one. After spending one round searching, you can find a suitable hiding place matching whatever environment you're in at the moment (a copse of bushes in the woods, a pile of packing crates in a warehouse, etc.) You gain an extra +1 to any dodge AV made from that cover. This schtick is lost if your character's Strength ever goes above 9; you've gotten too big to squeeze into those little places.

### **Awning Magnet**

Falling from great heights is never a problem for you; there's always an awning, rickety fire escape or convenient truck full of mattresses to break your plummet. Add three to your Toughness when determining falling Damage, and with a successful Agility Roll (Difficulty 7) you can reduce the Damage value of the fall by 7 points. You may spend a Fortune Die to make an additional roll if you wish (no limit to the number of Fortune Dice you may spend in this manner). If you catch a flagpole or fire escape, however, you have to get down on your own.

### **Never Questioned**

Similar to One With the Walls, a character with this schtick has the uncanny ability to blend into any group. You've got a nondescript face and eyes that just say "I belong here." As long as you dress appropriately (in a guard's uniform, peasant's robes, dead-head's tie-dyes or anything else appropriate to the

setting) no one bothers to ask what you're doing here. You get a +2 bonus to your Charisma Action Value when attempting to pass yourself off as someone you're not. Note that this only works in general terms: You can appear as a policeman, but not Captain McDonnell; you can appear as a deadhead, but not Jerry Garcia, etc.

### **Getting The Drop**

You've laid a trap for someone in the woods, covered yourself with mud, and mystically stopped all movement for hours on end.

But how do you know they're going to stop there? Getting The Drop allows you to precisely determine exactly where that mook's going to catch his breath, hide his swag or take a well-needed cigarette break. This schtick allows you to get one free attack just before combat begins—above and beyond any initiative rolls. You must spend at least four minutes in preparation for this schtick to work, and the attack only works once per combat. Once prepared, you cannot move or take any other actions without blowing your cover (and spending another four minutes to hide again). You can allow other player characters to make the same attack, provided you spend an additional four minutes hiding them as well.

It goes without saying that the guards/mooks/motorcycle thugs you're setting up the ambush for will conveniently stop right where you're at—provided they have a reason to stop there in the first place (i.e., it's part of their circuit, they're traveling through there, etc.). GMs should exercise reasonable judgement when and where this schtick can take effect; as always, they have the final say.

### **Permanent Dry Cleaning**

Regardless of the hellish circumstances you find yourself in, you always look marvelous. The torn jungle clothes and bloody cuts have a certain panache when you wear them. That fried and smoking arcanoware on your back really brings out the color of your eyes. And no matter what hideous slime pit you've just dragged yourself out of, everyone comments on how good your hair looks. This isn't to



say that your equipment is undamaged—the clothes are still unwearable and your personal gear is still thrashed beyond repair. It just means that your sense of personal style transcends the material world. You make a permanent bloodstain look better than anything on the Paris runways. In system terms, you never suffer any penalties for Charisma-based skills (although bonuses can be removed if necessary).

### **Toothpicking Lock-Pick**

You don't like locked doors. Never have. There's invariably cool stuff behind them that you'd love to see. When the people around you refused to open them for you, you learned to open them yourself.

Today, there isn't a lock in the world you can't pick; you don't even need proper tools to do so. When used in conjunction with the Intrusion skill, it allows you to pick any lock you wish using nothing more than the equipment at hand—toothpicks, loose wires, even the fillings in your teeth. Any equipment requirements for using Intrusion are waived for someone with this schtick—quite handy when you're stripped naked and dumped in a cell.

### **Puppy-Dog Eyes**

Remember the beginning of *Conan the Barbarian*, where James Earl Jones gives Schwarzenegger's mom the most peaceful, kind-hearted look in the world—and then cuts her head off? You've got that in spades. No matter how hard-hearted the bastard, one painful look from your baby blues will have him bawling like a little girl. Any GMC attempting to strike a killing blow must pass a Willpower check equal to your Charisma in order to do so. Failure means he can't bring himself to settle your hash. (The GMC doesn't lose his action for that round; he simply isn't allowed to use it killing you.) This schtick has no effect on GMCs incapable of feeling emotions. Killbot XJ-36 won't go all weepy just because you look forlorn.

Of course, the use of this schtick is waived if you're being particularly aggravating. Kicking or shooting at someone doesn't leave them vulnerable to this kind of emo-

otional manipulation.

### **A Kiss for Luck**

Sometimes, it's giving your one true love a final kiss before she heads off to certain death. Other times, it's handing your best buddy the lucky rabbit's foot you've had since grade school. Whatever the particulars, it involves handing a tiny piece of yourself to someone you trust. Your karma is such that those little gestures have a tangible effect. By spending a Fortune Die at the beginning of any scene, you can give one other character a +1 AV to one skill of your choice for the remainder of the scene. You may only spend one Fortune Die per scene in this manner. If the GM wishes, this schtick may be contingent upon a particular item—the lucky rabbit's foot, for example—or limited to a particular character. Details are up to the player, and should reflect some aspect of his or her character.

### **Bar Betting**

You've got a knack for the ridiculous little contests that go on in drinking houses around the world. Willie Mays's batting average for June of '55, the skill to hit three bulls-eyes consecutively, even the ability to talk a bartender into doing something with a shot glass that could get him arrested—whatever it is, you know how to do it. More importantly, you know how to get drunks to bet on it. This is incredibly handy when you need to procure some quick cash. For every thirty minutes you spend in a drinking establishment you can procure up to a hundred bucks (Buro Hours, yi, whatever) from gullible patrons; the GM determines the exact amount based on your roleplaying. This schtick may be used only once per bar per month (or they get wise), but there's no limit to the number of bars you can visit. One night in a city harbor district could net you enough to finally get that RV you always wanted.

Characters who choose this schtick must pick a particular style of bar betting, such as Sports Trivia, Waitress Baiting, or Impossible Feats Involving Coasters and Pretzel Bowls.

# Athelete

*"Yo, Adrian! I'ma go in dere and win one for... uh... you know, dat one guy."*

Every age has its square-jawed, rock-muscled athletes. Antiquity celebrated its Olympians. The 1850s had its boxers and sumo wrestlers. In the 1990s, neckless footballers and thick-thighed soccer heroes had their days in the sun. And in 2056, consumers eagerly tune in "Combat Shopping" hoping for some diversion.

A lot of jocks are happy to endorse athletic shoes or take cushy training jobs from the king, but for a few, sport means something more than a gravy train. For the highest level of athlete, sport is a metaphor for life. Discipline, teamwork, a never-say-die spirit—these virtues are as important off the field as on it.

These few athletes see their gifts as an opportunity to help, inspire and guide the youth of their age into a better tomorrow. Some of these talented jocks even become entangled in the Secret War, where they're not just playing for the championship—they're playing for the future.

On the other hand, there's also a few pro athletes who get stuck on the wrong side of a fix from the Ascended. Rather than go on some high-minded crusade, they just want revenge on the bastard who cost them their gold medal.

**Juncture:** Any

**Attributes:** Bod 7  
Chi 2  
Mind 5  
Ref 7

*Add 5 points to one secondary attribute of Body or Reflexes. Divide 4 points among any other secondary attributes. Max for all secondary attributes is 12.*

**Skills:** Guns +1 (8) [Max 10]  
Martial arts +5 (12) [Max 13]  
Leadership +3 (9)  
Seduction +1 (6)  
Intimidation +3 (8)  
Info/Sports +5 (10)  
Driving +1 (8)

*Add 4 skill bonuses. Swap Guns and Martial Arts if desired.*

**Schticks:** Two stat schticks (see page 63) based on an eligible stat.

**Weapons:** One from the appropriate juncture

**Quick Schtick Pick:**

*Stat Schticks:* Me First, Shattering Blow

*Weapon:*

69: Boken (treat as club)

1850: Cricket Bat (treat as club)

Contemporary: Steel briefcase full of stock options (treat as club)

2056: Hockey stick (treat as club)

**Wealth Level:** Rich



# Velocity Addict

[HONK! HONK!] "Yeeecchaaaaaw!"

Let others chase after wealth, romance, vengeance, or the power to warp the world into a distorted reflection of their desires. The only power you crave is the power to go as *fast as you possibly can*. The wind in your hair, the rumble of an engine, and the feeling of g-forces pulling your face back into a grotesque grimace—that's your meat. That's what you live for.

Maybe you're an urban tough intent on reliving *Grease* without all those simpy songs. Maybe you're a young



Turk on the racing circuit, trying to get your fair shot at the trophies, the glory and the motor oil endorsements. Or maybe you're just a good ole' boy, never meanin' no harm, beatin' all you ever saw an' gett'n in trouble with the law since the day you was born. No matter where or when you were born, under the skin you're cousin to all the other speed freaks rocketing along the city viaducts or dusty country highways.

Unfortunately, there are some people who'd like to take your freedom away. In 1996, habitual speeding can result in big fines and (worse yet) the loss of your license. In 2056, it's more along the lines of savage beatings and extensive personality modification. But the song of speed runs through your blood, and you're not going to let a few spoilsports in State Trooper brown or Public Order chrome shut you down.

Perhaps as you enter the Secret War, you'll come to realize that the freedom of the open road isn't the only freedom that matters.

(Even if it is the most important)

**Juncture:** Contemporary, 2056

**Attributes:** Bod 5  
Chi 0  
Mnd 5  
Ref 5

*Divide 5 points among your primary attributes.*

**Skills:** Driving +10 (=15)  
Fix-it +7 (12)  
Martial Arts +5 (10) [Max 13]  
Info/Racing +5 (10)  
Gambling +3 (3)

*Add 3 skill bonuses. You may change Martial Arts to Guns if desired.*

**Schticks:** 4 driving schticks (see page 117)

**Weapon:** 1 weapon of appropriate juncture

**Quick Schtick Pick:**

*Driving Schticks:* Signature Ride, Greased Lightning,  
Jackrabbit Start x2

*Weapon:* Big wrench (treat as club)

**Wealth Level:** Working Stiff



Illustration by Paul "Prof." Herbert

# Other Trouble

TWO NEW WAYS TO GO FULL THROTTLE

## SUPPLEMENTAL FIGHTING RULES

By Rob Vaux

Everyone knows that beating people up is loads of fun—you wouldn't have bought this game if you didn't—but even Cracked-Finger-Drunken-Monkey-Shaolin-Body-Slam Kung Fu can only do so much. Sometimes, a hand-to-hand combatant wants a little extra; something more than just pounding the bad guys into oblivion. Maybe you need them alive for questioning, maybe the pistols in their hands are just too distracting. Or maybe you just want to hurl them through that front window, causing a spectacular shower of low-grade glass in the parking lot.

Whatever the reason, you've got to put some mustard on in order to get the job done properly. Below is a list of new fighting moves designed to help you achieve that additional effect—that extra zing which separates the faceless mooks from the mighty player characters. What they lack in brutality, they make up for in style—and as any *Feng Shui* character can tell you, style is the most important thing of all.

### Holds

Sometimes, you don't want to hurt

your opponent; you merely want to keep him from hurting others. Or he's a pal who's been brainwashed and that Cracked-Rib Kung Fu schtick is just a little too lethal. Holds render an opponent immobile and hold him for an indefinite period of time. A hold requires a Martial Arts check with a Difficulty equal to the target's Action Value + 1. If successful, the target is trapped in your hold, and cannot conduct any actions except try to break out of it. Every shot, the immobilized target may try to escape by making a Strength task check with your Strength as a Difficulty. If he succeeds, he breaks free of the hold and may pound on you as normal. If you conduct any actions except a passive dodge, he can break free of the hold as well.

A held opponent can serve as cover, providing he is pointed in the right direction and you don't have to move him excessively. Add +3 to the Difficulty of any attacks with the held opponent between you. An attack which misses by 3 points or less strikes the held opponent instead, injuring him as it would any other target. Armor piercing bullets, grenades, high explosives and other heavy weapons ignore these rules—your held opponent is only flesh and blood, after all.

### Throws

Throws in this case mean picking up an opponent and hurling him away from you (as opposed to grenades or hurled weapons,



which have different rules). They vary widely in intent and effect; sometimes they can pull people out of harm's way, while other times they hurl some vicious thug off the top of a building. The basic mechanics, however, remain the same.

In order to properly throw someone, you must first get your hands on him—a Martial Arts check with a Difficulty equal to the target's Action Value + 1. This grab takes 3 shots. After that, it's another 3 shot Martial Arts check to teach him how to fly. This second check has the Difficulty of a standard attack. (Particularly huge or powerful opponents—those with Strength or Body of 9+—may increase the Difficulty by a point.)

If you're fighting an unnamed character, throwing takes him out if you exceed his defense AV by 3 or more, instead of the standard 5. (Imagine getting hit on one whole side of your body with force equal to all of your weight and then some: That's what it's like getting thrown.) If you throw one mook into another, or into several others, the second Martial Arts check has the standard penalties for multiple attacks: -2 if you're throwing one mook into another, -3 if you're throwing one mook into two others, etc.

If you throw a named character, the GM should decide the base Damage based on what you throw your victim onto:

Target Lands On...	Damage
Couch	2
Hard floor/gravel	10
TV or other electronic equipment	13
Plate glass window	15
Oak furniture	18
Bouncing off a moving vehicle	22
Off a rooftop	*

\* *Falling damage as per Feng Shui rulebook*

The range of any thrown person is 2 meters, plus one for every three points of Strength the thrower has.

Regardless of the fall's Outcome, the target starts the next shot flat on his back and must spend a shot getting up if he wishes to keep fighting. The target can avoid this by

taking a stunt action and making a Reflexes check with a Difficulty of 10 or the amount of Damage suffered (whichever is higher). Certain schticks allow a character to absorb falling damage or land upright, both of which may apply here. As always, the GM has the final say.

### Strangles

Strangles consist of locking your hands, shins, belt, police baton or other object around your opponents' throat and squeezing until he's either unconscious or dead. This differs from snapping his neck in that nothing gets broken; rather, a strangle simply cuts off air to the lungs (or blood to the brain). In *Feng Shui*, it's usually used in a non-lethal capacity—unless the strangler in question lacks the training to kill someone another way.

In order to execute a strangle maneuver, you must first connect with your opponent's throat—a called shot with an Action Value penalty of -2. Once you have your dainty digits in place, you automatically inflict a number of Wound Points each shot equal to the following formula: Strength + (Attack Outcome of the initial strike) - (Victim's Toughness). The target can break the strangle with a Strength check of his own: Difficulty equals the strangler's Strength + Attack Outcome of the initial strike. As you can see, it's important to get a good strong grip before beginning your throttle.

The damage continues until the hold is broken or the target loses consciousness (that is, fails a Death Check), at which point he no longer struggles. Lights out.

While you are strangling someone, you cannot do anything but passively dodge. If you actively dodge or take any other action, the stranglehold is broken.

It's possible to knock someone unconscious instantly with a strangle hold (similar to the famous Spock hold), but this requires formal training to pull off. Anyone with the fu powers Beak of the Crane, Talon of the Crane or Point Blockage can try to pinch the nerves in the neck, rendering the target unconscious without the agony of a prolonged struggle.

Such a move only works on unnamed



characters, however. The bigger fish don't go down that easily. However, it only requires and Outcome of 3, not the usual 5.

## Joint Breaking

The bad guy's making a series of hand gestures that shocks and offends the helpless Girl Scout troop behind you. How do you get him to stop? Break his fingers at the knuckle, of course. Joint breaking consists of snapping the bone near or at some pivotal joint, rendering the limb or digit completely useless (and causing an agonizing amount of pain in the bargain).

Breaking a joint requires the Martial Arts skill. It can only be used with hand-to-hand weapons or unarmed combat; firearms cause more trauma to the flesh and surrounding tissue, and lack the crisp, clean snap of breaking bones. The attacker must declare which joint he is aiming for and make a called shot with an Action Value penalty of -1. (Some joints are harder to break and have a higher AV penalty.) Success indicates the body part has been struck, causing Damage of Strength -2. (The lower damage value reflects the limited body area affected and the fact that limbs aren't as necessary for staying alive as major organs.) Whether the bone breaks depends upon the final Outcome of the roll. If it's 6 or less, the bone doesn't break and the target gets off with a nasty bruise. If it's 7 or higher, the bone breaks, causing additional Damage and specific trauma, depending upon which joint is struck. Consult the table below to determine the exact effect.

**Wrist/Fingers:** +0 Damage. Cannot manipulate items well with the affected hand. Can still carry objects (with extreme pain), but cannot use them effectively. Any attempt to attack with that hand is at -1 Impairment.

**Elbow:** +2 Damage. -2 penalty to aiming firearms. Hand-to-hand combat cannot be conducted with this limb. Arm cannot be lifted above chest height.

**Shoulder:** +3 Damage, effects as elbow above. Cannot lift arm above waist-height. This is a trickier joint to break, so the called shot penalty is -2.

**Ankle/Toe:** +1 Damage. The target is

incapable of running. Kicks and other martial arts maneuvers involving the feet cause two fewer points of Damage when they hit.

**Knee:** +2 Damage. Target immediately falls to the ground unless he makes a Reflexes check, Difficulty 8. Kicks and other martial arts maneuvers involving the leg are impossible. Walking is impossible without support.

**Hip:** +6 Damage. Effects as knee, above. The leg cannot support weight at all; movement impossible without assistance. Breaking the hip is very difficult, so the called shot penalty is -3.

A spectacular success (Outcome of 11 or higher, 13 or higher for the hip) means the bone has completely shattered and now sticks out of the limb in a gruesome display. Add 5 to the Damage value indicated above, and the limb is now completely useless until it receives serious medical attention (legs will bear no weight at all, while arms and hands lie useless. Hope it's not your pitching arm, buddy).

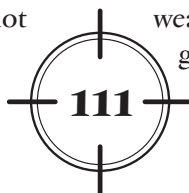
Healing such injuries is up to the GM. We recommend placing the affected character in a cast for at least two game sessions. Following that, the limb functions normally, although the GM may wish to penalize actions utilizing it for another 4-6 sessions. Details should vary according to the circumstances.

## Disarming

A disarm is a called shot aimed at an opponent's hands, designed to separate him from whatever weapon he's brandishing at you. It causes no Damage, but if successful, puts the weapon safely out of his reach and in your hands.

Using a martial art maneuver to disarm requires that you be within striking distance of your opponent. Guns and other projectile weapons must be within range, and the target's hands cannot be behind cover. (Heavier weapons cannot make disarming attacks; they lack the proper finesse). A disarming maneuver requires a called shot with an AV penalty of -1 if the target weapon is a firearm, -2 if it's a melee weapon. Increase the penalty by 1 if the target is more than 20 meters away.

While the target takes no Damage, the







weapon itself might, depending on how hard you hit it. With an Outcome of 7 or less, you don't get the weapon: It's undamaged but knocked away from both of you. An Outcome of 8 or more means the weapon is now in your hands. Signature weapons are harder to take away: On an Outcome of 9 or less, they go flying, and it takes an Outcome of 10 or more to take it away. (But usually it's worth it to see the look on its owner's face...)

If the weapon goes flying away, it should take at least two shots to go get it, or one shot to kick it even farther away.

## Flying Kick

A flying kick consists of launching yourself from a reasonable height (or from the ground, if you've got leg strength like Barishnikov's), leaping over your opponent, delivering a vicious kick to the head or upper body and landing behind him again. You must have the Martial Arts skill to perform this maneuver, but it looks really cool. A flying kick is considered a stunt action.

The first part of the maneuver involves a jump—a Move check with a Difficulty 10. Lower the Difficulty to 5 if you start from a raised position such as a loading dock, catwalk or windowsill. The Move check takes two shots. (If you have Prodigious Leap or some other jumping schtick, you can use that instead.) On your next shot, you can make the kick as a standard Martial Arts attack. If it's successful, add +3 to your Damage roll, indicating the increased effect surprise and gravity has on your kick. You must also spend one shot landing. This requires a Move check with a Difficulty of 5. If you fail, you fall flat on your face and spoil the cool factor of the maneuver you just executed. Otherwise, you land safely and can continue your fight.

If you wish, you may substitute the kick with a blow from a fist or melee weapon while executing this maneuver. Damage should be adjusted accordingly. Handguns and other firearms cannot be used; it's hard enough without worrying about aiming too.

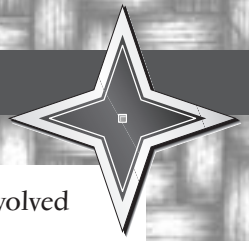
## Instant Knockouts

Sometimes it's possible to deliver a bone-rattling thump in just the right place, causing synapses to fry and the higher brain functions to shut down for a quick strategic revamp. Break a chair on somebody's skull and you've got instant concussion—which can be very useful if you're up to your eyeballs in hostiles. A few well-timed blows and you're up to your eyeballs in unconscious hostiles, which is much less unpleasant.

In real life, knocking someone unconscious only requires brute strength and ignorance. (That's also all you need for unnamed opponents.) If you want to knock out a named character, you also need the blessing of the plot. After all, it's a pretty unsatisfying ending if the main bad guy gets knocked unconscious, then the PCs stand around and unload their Glocks into his supine form. Therefore, if you're trying to escape from a named character, or otherwise get him out of the way, it's possible to knock him out. If, however, you knock him out and then get ready to kill him, he wakes up in time to dodge the kick or bullet. Similarly, if you knock a main bad guy out, handcuff him to a radiator and cheese it, he remains knocked out. If you knock him out and handcuff him to a railroad track, he's going to wake up. It doesn't make biological sense, but it makes dramatic sense. (If this seems unfair to all of you who were looking forward to knocking out Homo Omega and dissecting him, remember that the knife cuts both ways: Now you don't have to worry about being knocked unconscious and killed while defenseless.)

With those considerations in mind, here's the rules.

Roll to hit as normal, with a AV penalty of -2 for the called shot. If successful, the Damage from the attack is halved, but you make a Strength -2 check against the target's Constitution. If that succeeds, the target is unconscious until it's dramatically appropriate for him to awaken.



# CAR CHASES

By Greg Stolze

*"The highway's lined with broken heroes..."*

—Bruce Springsteen, "Born to Run"

## WHAT A CAR CHASE IS

If you're reading this, odds are you play *Feng Shui*. If you play *Feng Shui*, it's a sucker bet that you're familiar with that staple of action flicks: The car chase. Typically the hero is either trying to run the bad guys off the road and catch them, or is trying to avoid being run off the road and captured. At the end of the sequence, someone has either crashed, escaped or been stopped.

That's a real simple description of a car chase. Of course, "four guys got onstage and played some instruments" is a simple description of Led Zeppelin's farewell concert. Clearly there's more there. In fact, there's so much more to the interaction of fast cars, treacherous pavement and square-jawed racers that it inspired an entire sub-genre of pop music in the '50s and '60s.

The soul of a *Feng Shui* car chase is description, just like the fights. You can say "I'm going to catch up to his car" and roll your Drive score, but is it really worth the effort? Instead, you want to be interacting with the landscape, with the other cars and with the bad guys themselves. If your GM is worth anything, you'll also be interacting with set pieces, a promiscuous assortment of exotic vehicles, and (at least on occasion) fire and things that go boom.

I'm working up these rules so that car chases can become a dynamic and thrill-doused part of *Feng Shui*. To get that, here's what I decided.

1) *It should work a lot like fighting.* After all, if you're playing the game, you've already mastered the combat system, unless you're running a game that's all threats, politics and intrigue... (I'm sorry. That joke just gets funnier every time!)

2) *The players should do most of the work.* Two reasons for this. First, the GM has enough on her plate. Secondly, I figure

the more you actually do, the more involved you feel.

So then, car chases basically work like this.

- They're broken down into sequences, exactly like combat sequences, with shots and initiative and all the rest.
- If you're driving and you're close enough, you can attempt to ram, sideswipe or otherwise damage another vehicle involved in the chase. Basically, you attack with your car. Each attack takes 3 shots, but I'm sure you expected that, right?
- Drivers can also attempt to go faster than their opponents. A driver who goes fast enough doing this can get away from the chase altogether.
- People who aren't driving can keep up the fight, as long as they're in some kind of vehicle that hasn't crashed or been outrun. Standard combat rules apply, though if you're fighting while balanced in the back of a speeding El Camino you may have some AV or shot penalties.

Later on, various cars are described in game terms. Each car has two numerical stats, **Pep** and **Wreck**. Pep is a measure of the car's pick-up, handling and general ability to gobble up pavement like a hungry kid eating french fries. Wreck determines how much abuse a car can take before turning into modern art.

## PEP: THE "LIL' DEUCE COUPE" ELEMENT

If you're trying to outrun someone, you want a car with high Pep. It's also desirable if you don't want to get outrun. Pep works as a direct bonus (or penalty) to your Drive score. If you have Drive 14, but you're stuck in a lousy car with Pep -3, your effective Drive score is only 11. On the other hand, if you trade up to something with Pep +2, your Drive score rises to 16. The usual Pep score is between



### Movement to Pep Conversion

Mov	Pep
1	-5
2	-4
3-4	-3
5-6	-2
7-8	-1
9	0

For Movement scores of 10 or higher, just divide by 10 and round to the nearest point. However, you can *only* use your personal Movement score in a car chase if you have a schtick that lets you move superhumanly fast.

+5 and -5. Any exceptions are *exceedingly* rare.

Pep seems like a big bonus, doesn't it? Well, it is. The greatest chef in the world can't make a simple ham sandwich if he doesn't have any ham. Similarly, a grand prix driver is going to have trouble winning a race in a dump truck.

You can kind of convert positive Pep into Move by multiplying it by 10 (for negative Pep, consult the chart above), but Pep really works best when compared to other Pep scores. It's an abstraction (much like the concept of the "combat sequence" itself) that incorporates acceleration, top speed and control. I could rate every car on each of those factors, but that would make the system so complicated that you'd need an hour to figure out who's ahead after three blocks.

Lots of characters in *Feng Shui* have schticks that let them move around real fast: Sorcery's Movement schtick, an abomination's Aerial Mobility Unity and the creature schtick Flight all might allow PCs to involve themselves in car chases even if they don't have a car *per se*. All you do is divide your Move rating by 10 to get your personal Pep. If your Movement is less than 10, use the chart. Unless you've got an absurdly high Move rating, the race is likely to be very one sided—like a foot race between Ben Johnson and Lyndon Johnson. My advice? During that first sequence, grab onto a car and get your bad sorcerous/supernatural/abominable self inside.

## WRECK: THE "DEADMAN'S CURVE" ELEMENT

Not everyone prefers a subtle, tense, adrenaline-packed race between two lightning-quick automobiles. Others prefer to smash into each other with big, heavy trucks. Here at *Feng Shui* we aim to please. Thus, each car has a Wreck score. It's a combination of Wound Points and Toughness for vehicles. Your average suburban sedan or commuter's compact has a Wreck score of about 7-9.

There's no real conversion ratio between Wreck and Toughness. If someone's trying to damage a car with his fist during a car chase, assume he just got a bruised fist. (The exception to this is the fu schtick Vengeance of the Turtle, which is so rare it gets its own sidebar.) Ordinary handguns, if they hit, do a single point of Wreck. (The shooter rolls against the Drive score of the target vehicle's driver.) Three round bursts and shotguns do 2 Wreck. (In this instance, there is no extra damage for a "ka-CHINKed" shotgun.) Sorcery attacks do 2 Wreck, unless it's Lightning, Transmutation or Disintegration. Disintegration and Transmutation do 3 Wreck. Lightning does no damage but messes with the electrical system, permanently costing the car 1 Pep.

If a driver opts to ram, sideswipe or otherwise use his car as a weapon, he rolls Drive. The difficulty is his opponent's Drive score. If he succeeds, he does Wreck damage equal to the Outcome of the roll. Most vehicles take a point of Wreck every time they're used to ram, however. Heavily armored vehicles like tanks and Checker cabs may be immune to this blowback damage at the GM's discretion. (A tank ramming a motorcycle probably isn't going to take damage, but it might if you run it into another tank.)

Don't bother tracking the Wreck for unnamed characters. If a PC beats the mook's Drive score by five or more with a Drive roll, the car crashes. The nameless character then either (1) dies a rotisserie death or (2) gets out, stamps



his foot and glares in frustration at the PCs. (The GM decides which option best fits the tone of the scene.) GMs may want to make exceptions for exceptional vehicles, or may require particularly colorful stunts to affect them.

When a PC's car or the car of a named character drops below Wreck 0, it's time to start making Wreck checks. This is a Reflex check against the difference between 0 and the amount of Wreck damage the car has taken. These work just like a Death Check, only if you fail one your car crashes instantly.

## GETTING THE LEAD OUT

To keep chases somewhat orderly, we're introducing a unique mechanic called the Lead. If you're going to run a car chase, you need some kind of token to indicate who's going the fastest. I recommend a nice matchbox car, but anything will do in a pinch.

This token is hereafter referred to as the Lead. (That's "lead" in the sense of "everyone else follows" not in the sense of "lumpy gray

### Vengeance of the Turtle

The text of Vengeance of the Turtle on page 86 of *Feng Shui* says "If you succeed in striking a non-living vehicle barehanded or with a kick, that vehicle is destroyed." That's simple enough, but it's something of a game-breaker with our new car chase rules, so we're changing it a little bit. If the vehicle is *stopped*, the punch or kick destroys it. If the car is being driven, Vengeance of the Turtle does Wreck damage equal to Strength + Outcome.

Another issue that might come up is using Vengeance of the Turtle on a real big vehicle. This fu power has no problem making steel mincemeat out of motorcycles and cars, but the idea of a Shaolin monk destroying an aircraft carrier with a single kick is a little much (even for *Feng Shui*). So here's the rule of thumb: If a vehicle is big enough to contain more than two rooms inside it, then Vengeance does Wreck damage equal to Strength + Outcome, even if the vehicle is at rest. Thus, a big semi truck can't be automatically destroyed, nor can a boat big enough to have a cabin, a bathroom and a cockpit, nor can a SCAF-PLAT (see below) or the above mentioned aircraft carrier. Tanks, pickups and APCs at rest are all still fair game.

metal.") The Lead initially goes to the driver with the highest Drive score. (This includes the bonuses and penalties derived from the vehicle.) The guy with the Lead is in front of everyone else. Other people may be in second, fifth or





whatever place, but only the Lead really matters for our purposes. Either you're winning, or the rules don't bother to pay attention.

- The guy with the Lead has an additional +1 to his Drive, since he has a better view of what's coming and only has to worry about aggression from behind. (Not strictly realistic, as some race fans have pointed out, but it does provide motivation to be #1.)
- The leader cannot be forced out of the chase until (1) his Wreck hits zero, (2) the driver dies and no one grabs the wheel or (3) someone else takes the Lead.
- The leader can also attempt "escape rolls" to get out of the chase altogether. Each escape roll takes 3 shots, and is rolled against the best pursuer's Drive score. To get out of the chase, the leader has to make three escape rolls in a row. He can do other things between rolls, of course.

*Example: Johnny Lightning is out ahead of Deputy Cletus and wants to get away. He rolls an escape roll and succeeds. However, Deputy Cletus is shooting up Johnny's beloved T-Bird with a shotgun as the chase goes on, and Johnny doesn't like that. So he fires back at Cletus as his next action, hitting him. For his next two actions, Johnny makes successful escape rolls, so he gets away, leaving Cletus an ignominious dinner of trail dust. If Johnny had failed any one of the escape rolls, he would have to start over and try to amass three successes.*

- Anyone who keeps the Lead for two entire sequences without losing it once—even if he doesn't make a single escape roll—has the option of ending the chase by escaping, leaving the rest of the drivers behind like a pack of snubbed little brothers.

Annoyed by the fumes of another driver's tailpipe? The simple solution (of course) is to take the Lead away. Each attempt takes three shots and should be described in some fashion. ("I'll swerve into oncoming traffic then slide back in at the intersection" is much better than "I'll go faster.") You do this by beating the leader's Drive score with your

Drive roll. He can actively dodge this as normal, adding +3 to his Drive and kicking his next action back a shot. If the roll is successful, the Lead is yours. Go Speed Racer, Go!

## STUNTS

As with all things *Feng Shui*, the key to making this fun is to come up with bitchin' stunts. Just about anything is possible, if the GM puts up with it, but here are a few sample difficulties for common car chase events.

### Shooting at the Driver

The Difficulty of hitting someone in a car is equal to the Drive skill of the driver, and only the driver can make an active dodge. However, if he does actively dodge, it raises the AV for everyone in his car for that shot.

Anyone in an enclosed car has 75% cover, meaning any attempt to hit him is at +4 Difficulty. This *only* applies if someone's shooting at the person, not the car. People in convertibles have 50% cover (giving a +2 Difficulty) and people on motorcycles have no bonus.

Kindly GMs may decide that gunshots that would have hit someone if that person hadn't been taking cover behind the car hit the car instead, doing a point of Wreck. It's up to the GM however: Individual mileage may vary.

### Shooting the Tires

This is a -3 penalty stunt, but if it succeeds it not only inflicts a point of Wreck, it reduces the car's Pep by 1 as well.

### Playing Chicken

If you somehow set it up so that you're playing chicken (that is, driving straight at another car in order to cause a head-on collision), roll Intimidation against the other guy's Intimidation. If you succeed, he swerves and either gives up the Lead or comes to a complete stop. If you fail, make a Willpower check against Difficulty 10 or come to a complete stop yourself. Otherwise, it's a head-on impact. Hope you got crumple zones.



### Running People Down

Roll Drive against the target's Dodge Action Value. The base Damage is Outcome + 1 for every estimated 10 km/h of speed. This only applies to hitting pedestrians.

### Going Up on Two Tires

Or, if you're on a bike, popping a wheelie. This stunt is Difficulty 10.

### Jump!

Any time you jump a car, it's a minimum Difficulty 10. This can rise significantly if you have to jump a long, long distance, but we're going to let individual GMs decide.

### Leaping From One Car to Another

This is a Difficulty 15 Martial Arts check. The difficulty drops to 10 if you have some schtick that lets you make exceptional jumps (such as Prodigious Leap, Abundant Leap, any Flight schtick, etc.). If you fail the check, you take a point of Damage for every 10 km/h your vehicle was traveling, and this Damage cannot be reduced by Toughness.

### Bootlegger Reverse

This is when you pop the parking brake in order to make your car spin around and face the opposite direction. The Difficulty is 20, minus the current shot number. (Presumably, the later in the sequence it is, the more momentum you've built up.)

## SCHTICKS

Sure, a good Drive skill is nice—but it's even nicer if you have some spiffy schticks to spice it up. Naturally, these schticks only work when you're behind the wheel.

Not everyone can start the game with drive schticks. The Velocity Addict obviously has them. The Maverick Cop can pick drive schticks instead of gun schticks on a one-for-one basis. Spies and Techies can take two drive schticks instead of their unique schticks, if they so choose.

Characters can gain new drive schticks in the course of play by spending experi-

ence points. New drive schticks cost  $(4 + X)$  points per schtick; X equals the number of drive schticks you will have when you get the new one. You can't get drive schticks until your Drive skill is at least 12.

### Jackrabbit Start

When the light turns green, your accelerator foot gains fifty pounds. You're the kind of offensive, Type A driver who really gets on the nerves of everyone else on the highway, but you tell yourself it's because you always get the good parking spaces before they do.

For each schtick spent on Jackrabbit Start, you may add 1 to your Initiative result at the beginning of each sequence. You must be in a car (or other vehicle) to add to your Initiative, and your first action in the sequence must be to do something with that vehicle.

### Ram Speed!

You are wantonly destructive and have long treasured a secret *Death Race 2000* fetish. Or maybe you just have a lot of demolition derby experience. In any case, you're real good at using your car as an implement of blunt trauma.

For each schtick spent in Ram Speed, you do 2 extra points of Wreck when you ram a car. If you hit a pedestrian with your car, each schtick in Ram Speed increases the Damage by 3. You can't have more than three schticks of Ram Speed.

### Greased Lightning

You have the reflexes of a young Mario Andretti. You can parallel park at 45 km/h. To you, fender benders are like subatomic particles: You accept that they exist somewhere, but you don't expect to ever directly experience one.

If you take this schtick, the shot cost of all Drive actions is reduced by 1. You may not take more than one schtick in Greased Lightning, and you can never reduce the shot cost of a Drive action below 1.

### Signature Ride

You've got a close, special bond with your car (or horse, or helicopter, or what-





ever). You call it by a pet name, spend hours polishing it with a diaper (or combing out his mane, if it's a horse) and like nothing better than popping the hood and tinkering. Like a signature weapon, a signature ride is part of your essence and character.

Like signature weapons, signature rides can't be destroyed (see page 141 of *Feng Shui*). They might get damaged or vandalized, but even if they crash out from loss of Wreck they can always be fixed up, good as new. Furthermore, when you're behind the wheel of your signature ride, you get a +2 bonus to your Drive skill. No one else gets this bonus, and you only get it from that particular car. For example, if your signature ride is a purple Cadillac with zebra print seat covers, fuzzy dice and a genuine mink steering wheel, you only get the bonus behind that particular purple Caddy: No other Cadillac (no matter how purple) gives the bonus.

## TWENTIETH CENTURY CARS

A variety of cars are listed below for possible PC acquisition. Each one has a brief description, along with the Pep/Wreck ratings in parentheses after the name. At the end of each description is the Wealth Level appropriate for ownership. Some just say "restricted." That means that private citizens don't own these, except under the most extraordinary of circumstances.

It should be noted that beginning characters only have a chance of owning a car if they're from the 1990s juncture. Earlier junctures obviously haven't invented them yet, and in 2056 personal vehicles are as rare as impartial government.

### The Porsche 911 (+2/7)

The car so fast they named an emergency response number after it. With a power peak at 5750 rpm, the 1995 Turbo model can go from 0-60 in a hair under four seconds and look good doing it. If you really want to piss off your fellow motorists, take a page from Douglas Adams and slap on one of those "My

other car is a Porsche!" bumper stickers. (Rich)

### 1987 Ford Escort (-2/7)

Okay, I've never seen one of these in any cinematic car chase, but I owned one for nearly a decade and it was a good car. Maybe the two stroke, four cylinder engine wasn't a rampaging powerhouse, and maybe its boxy shape never turned any heads—but dammit, the '87 Escort had heart. It started in the winter when it was ten below under eight inches of snow, it got good gas mileage and it never let me down when I needed it. I figure the least I can do is write it up here. When I sold that car, I felt like I was putting Old Yeller to sleep. Honest. (Poor)

### Nameless Prowl Car (-1/8)

This is your standard black & white police car with the radio in front, flares and a shotgun in the trunk, and gumball lights on top. The stats above are for patrol cars when nameless beat cops are driving them. (Working Stiff)

### Named Character Cop Car (0/10)

This is really the same as the prowl car, but a named character behind the wheel gets better results out of it. Witness the success of a prowl car in *The Blues Brothers*. (Working Stiff)

### 1994 Jeep Grand Cherokee SUV (-2/10)

If you live on a farm, or in Alaska, or if you're going through the Australian outback—then you might have an excuse for owning one of these. If you're a forest ranger, a desert geologist, or an ethnographer who's leaving civilized areas to research the herbal medicines of obscure South American tribes—then owning a sport ute is understandable, maybe. But as it happens, most people who could really use one of these lumbering, filth-spewing, environmental rape kits are making do with old, seasoned pickup trucks. The people driving sport utes are overwhelmingly soccer moms, and the closest most come to "off-roading" is going over the potholes in front of Williams-Sonoma. To be fair though, they are pretty durable.

(Working Stiff)


**Lamborghini Countach** (+3/5)

This Italian fireball is for people whose need for speed borders on the pathological. The Countach has a top speed of 290 km/h, and can do a standing quarter mile in 12.9 seconds. More importantly, it looks like its going Mach 5 when it's still in park. Get one in candy apple red and you rule the road. Of course, a red Countach is a total cop magnet. Police pull these babies over on general principles, figuring that even if you aren't speeding now, you will be soon. It stands to reason: No one buys a Countach to drive the speed limit, just like no one gets a satellite dish so they can watch PBS. (Rich)


**Porsche 911**

**Ford Escort**
**BMW 328i Convertible** (+2/7)

Running a quarter mile in fifteen seconds, this is really the car of choice for a midlife crisis. Just make sure your hairpiece is stuck on tight when you put the top down.

On the other hand, if you really *are* cool, you can try and find a paint job that matches your H&K P7 pistol. Then you have a double dose of "fine German craftsmanship." (Rich)


**Police Cruiser**
**1996 Infiniti J30** (+1/8)

This car has so much self-confidence it doesn't *need* a name like "Panther" or "Whirlwind"—a few modest digits will do just fine, thanks. I suppose if I could exert the power of 210 horses, I'd be self-confident too. Or if someone thought I was worth enough money to make a down payment on a house. Just know this; if you throw a "Don't Laugh, It's Paid For" bumper sticker on a J30, you can expect some killjoy to key your paint job within, oh, about eleven seconds. (Rich)


**Jeep Grand Cherokee**
**Humvee** (-1/11)

Originally dubbed the "High Mobility Multi-Purpose Wheeled Vehicle," it's a surprise that this burly, blocky thing was built by the U.S. military and not by the Buro. They were okayed for civilian use and will set you back around \$60,000—more if you want the CD player and air conditioner. However, that money does get you a tough vehicle with


**Lamborghini Countach**

a fair amount of off-road cred. The Hummer (as the civilian version is known) sits sixteen inches off the ground and has 170 horses under the hood. Be warned though: The costs don't end at the car lot. This bad boy only gets ten miles to the gallon. (Rich)

**1965 Restored Vintage Ford Mustang** (+2/9)

This roadster can pass just about anything on the highway—except a gas station. Built back before the catalytic con-



**BMW 328i Convertible****Infiniti J30****Humvee****1965 Ford Mustang****Pontiac Firebird Trans Am**

verter emasculated American muscle cars, the Mustang's full-throated roar still leaves your modern sports cars feeling a little inadequate. (Yeah, I know, this thing probably pollutes as much or more than the sport utes I mocked, but it's okay for a Mustang because (1) they didn't know any better back then and (2) it's got such a cool name.) (Working Stiff if your score in Fix-It or Info/ Classic Cars is 10 or higher. Otherwise Rich.)

**Pontiac Firebird Trans Am (0/8)**

Here's the sports car for thousandaires. Once you get your black Trans Am, all you need is a blonde girlfriend and a Van Halen CD. Happy trails, my friend. (Working Stiff)

## TWENTIETH CENTURY BIKES

Motorcycles aren't enclosed, so you can't attack another vehicle's Wreck with them. You can, however, make standard Martial Arts attacks against fighters who are also using non-enclosed vehicles.

**1986 Vintage Harley-Davidson Sturgis (+1/2)**

Harley-Davidson makes large, low, powerful bikes designed to be ridden from one end of a big country to the other—year in and year out. A roadster like this weighs more than a racer—much, *much* more—and with a top speed of only 110 mph, the racer will bury it on a short stretch. On the other hand, no one cruises the highway on a racing bike for a host of very good reasons, the primary one being that, after an hour, a racing bike is about as comfortable as a nice cozy crucifixion. (Working Stiff)

**1996 Yamaha Thunderace (+3/1)**

The '96 Thunderace is a top of the line racing motorcycle. It can get up to 170 mph—faster if you shave your legs and your head. Not for amateurs, and not for the timid. (Rich)

**1996 Honda Rebel (-1/1)**

This bike was built to its cost, and within those limits it's well built. It's not going any faster than 80 mph unless you're driving it down a steep mountain with a powerful tailwind, but it's a reliable and nimble cycle. However, it is *small*. If anyone bigger than 5'10" gets on a Rebel, he's going to have to deal with his elbows hitting his knees. (Poor)

**1952 Vincent Black Shadow (+2/3)**

Hunter S. Thompson immortalized the Black Shadow in *Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas*, and describes it better there than I



**Honda Rebel**



**Vincent Black Shadow**



**Harley-Davidson Sturgis**



**Yamaha Thunderrace**

could here. Suffice to say that this is a wicked, resentful, vicious and sullen vehicle—but one that gets results. Basically, it's the Courtney Love of motorcycles.

The Black Shadow, while somewhat finicky about how you start it, is a *tough bike*. As a consequence, whenever one fails a Wreck check, it's damaged enough to need repair, but it can always *be* repaired. Black Shadows never get totaled. Furthermore, their reputation is such that anybody who rides one adds +2 to their Intimidation skill when confronting someone who'd realize the implications of Vincent ownership. (Working Stiff)

## GROUND VEHICLES OF 69 AD AND 1850

**Horse** (-4/1)

Indisputably a classic, the horse is a staple of action heroes going back to the earliest days of film. Hell, there were stories about heroes with loyal, magnificent steeds even *before* there were movies. There's just something indescribably macho about having the surging power of a stallion between your legs, but for the life of me I can't figure out what it is.

There are a couple unique advantages to horses, the first being that they aren't stupid. When you jump on trusty old Silver, he's going to be sensitive to your mood. This means that if you're in trouble (and what *Feng Shui* hero worth the pulp of his character

sheet ever runs out of it?) your horse responds. Furthermore, riding a horse gives you a +2

Initiative bonus when you and everyone else in the chase begin from a dead stop. This is because a horse is alive, doesn't need to warm up like a machine, and it weighs a lot less than a car. It takes a lot less time to get up to cruising speed. Of course, that cruising speed is a lot slower than a car, so you only get that bonus for the first sequence of a chase, and *only* if you *all* started from a

dead stop. (That's why Indiana Jones

was quick to jump off his horse onto the top of the Nazi truck in *Raiders of the Lost Ark*.)

Just like motorcycles, you can't try to Wreck a vehicle with your horse, but you can make hand to hand attacks against other riders.

If you take your horse as a signature ride, you get a real smart horse. Like Trigger, he comes when called, drops the bucket down to you when you're trapped in a well, and generally behaves more sensibly than his owner. (Poor)

## OTHER 1990s GROUND VEHICLES

**Garbage Truck** (-5/15)

The speed on a garbage truck goes up to -4 if it isn't filled to the brim with stinking, putrid waste. But what possible advantage (from the GM's perspective) is there to letting people drive an empty garbage truck? So I'm just assuming any garbage trucks involved in your car chases are chock full of rank, stewing, juicy filth. (Working Stiff)

**Vietnam Era Tank** (-3/35)

Assuming an old tank has been kept in good order, it can reach a good clip on open road, it can drive over trees and it's completely immune to Wreck damage from small arms fire.

Further, the only Sorcery blast schticks that affect it are Lightning, Disintegration and Transmutation (which all work normally).



Of course, everyone who gets behind the controls of a tank wants to shoot the big gun. In a tank of this era, you can only shoot when the tank is stationary. Furthermore, it's a Difficulty of 20 to hit a moving target. The big gun does do 30 Wreck + Outcome though. (If one of those shells hits near pedestrians, just treat it like a big explosion from page 140 of *Feng Shui*.)

Against pedestrian and nonmilitary vehicles, you're much better off with the standard mounted machinegun (14\*\*/—/100). (Restricted)

**Bulldozer** (-5/30\*)

Bulldozers have a lot of Wreck because they're heavy duty and built to last, but the cabin isn't armored. If someone makes a called shot at the driver area (either with a gun or by jumping their car through the air at it) the Wreck score is only 1. However, when making Wreck attacks with a bulldozer, it does +1 Damage. (Working Stiff)

**Backhoe** (-5/20\*)

Like the bulldozer, a backhoe doesn't have an armored cabin. Wreck attacks with the shovel part of a backhoe are even nastier than a bulldozer ram: Such attacks do +2 Wreck Damage. (Working Stiff)

**M1A1 Main Battle Tank** (0/45)

This tank saw a lot of action in the Gulf War, once they fixed some problems with the sand filters on the jet intakes.

You read that right. The M1A1 Abrams actually uses a *jet engine*. Couple that with blazer reflective armor, a big damn gun and enough computing power to run a game of "Pong" (or automatically calculate ranges from a laser targeting scope), and you've got the nastiest ground assault vehicle of the twentieth century.

Like earlier tanks, the M1A1 can't be damaged by small weapons or by non-exotic blasts, and it has a standard machinegun mount (14\*\*/—/100). The M1A1, however, can shoot quite well while moving, thank you very much. Thanks to its advanced targeting systems, the difficulty of hitting a moving

vehicle is reduced down to the target's Drive rating. The Wreck Damage is 40 + Outcome. Be very afraid. (Restricted)

**Bigass Hovercraft** (-1/20)

God bless Jackie Chan for showing us the chase potential of the bigass hovercraft. (It's in *Rumble in the Bronx*, if you're wondering.)

When attacking a hovercraft, know that any blunt attack (like ramming or sideswiping it) is just going to bounce off. Only penetrating things (like knives) or sharp things (like an improbably huge sword that you get from a conveniently placed store and wedge in the door of your car) are going to do damage. (Restricted)

**Peterbilt Eighteen Wheeler** (-3/30)/(-1/15)

"You're a trucker? How's your peterbilt?"

Okay, now that's out of the way...

These stats are for any big, eighteen wheel truck in the *Convoy / BJ & the Bear / Any Which Way But Loose* mold. The first set of stats (-3/30) is for when it's hauling the trailer, and the second (-1/15) is just for the engine section by itself. Say, does anyone remember the name of that Patrick Swayze movie with the big truck? The one where he's, like, an ex-con who winds up running guns or something? (Rich. Everyday heroes can own one of these if they're wildcat truckers—an everyday hero type of job if there ever was one.)

(The Patrick Swayze movie was *Black Dog*. Co-starred Travis Tritt, if it matters. -Ed.)

## GROUND VEHICLES OF 2056

Private ownership of vehicles is largely prohibited in 2056. The crackdown started with crushing emissions taxes coupled with massive subsidies for mass transit. Eventually, the Buro just nationalized all the oil companies and stopped selling to the public. Now all individual vehicles are in the hands of the police, the government, the army or illegal dissidents. These vehicles are all electric, and most run off batteries. The police cars get powered up at the station, while rogue electrocycles take



their power where and when they can get it.

A few old chassis have been retrofitted to run on electricity, and are used for local deliveries, but they're slug-slow (Pep of -5) and automated—no steering wheel or gas pedal or anything. A techie could graft on some controls without even a roll, but it would take a couple hours. If he's in a hurry, the program running the truck can be interrupted in one sequence with a Fix-It roll against Difficulty 10.

**Jammer Electrocycle** (special/1)

Actually, it's not only the Jammers who use these—any renegade thrill seeker might build one in order to defy authority and get some kicks. Being home made, these are almost universally frail and unreliable. Furthermore, the unpredictable quality of the components (most of which have to be stolen or bought black market) make electrocycles an uncertain property in the best of times. To simulate their uneven performance, make a closed roll at the beginning of every sequence. The result is the Pep of the electrocycle. (Poor)

**RRPT** (0/10)

Sleek, black and fairly fast, the Public Order Rapid Response Police Transport (pronounced "ripped") is the next generation of cop car. They're built to the aerodynamic ideal you see in so many of the rounded cars of the 1990s, but they have no chrome or brightwork on them anywhere. Except for the lights, they're pure black. (No, they don't need a logo on them: Everyone knows who's behind the wheel.) They're pretty much like cop cars from the 1990s—technology improved, but there's only so much you can do with an electric car. Besides, Buro cops are almost universally confronting pedestrian enemies. Speed isn't that much of an issue, as long as it's faster than public transport. If most horses hadn't been killed for food when the global weather system went crazy, Buro cops would probably be riding those. (Restricted)

**POGIR**  
1/20)

The Public Order Group Impropryety



**Rapid Response Police Transport (RRPT)**



**Public Order Group Impropryety Restraint Wagon (POGIR)**

Restraint Wagons are slow, clunky mop-up vehicles used for mass arrests. They look like big, gray plastic minivans, usually with a seal on the side and sirens on the top. Up to twelve cowed and restrained dissidents can be flung in the back. (Restricted)

## AIRCRAFT OF THE 1990s

For our purposes, the only difference between an airplane and a ground vehicle is that you can do different stunts with a plane. It's probably not very true to reality, but it's true to action movies, where you often see Arnold chasing semi-trucks in a jump jet. If the PCs are in cars and are chasing a flyer, the GM might let the flier get away automatically if the plot demands it. Or she might run through a complete chase scene. It all depends, so if the bad guy gets away flying while you're driving, don't make a stink.

**Jet Fighters** (—/10)

You'll notice that no Pep score is listed for jet fighters. This is because they're so fast that there's really no meaningful way for a car to chase them, or be chased by them. If your enemy is airborne in a jet plane and wants



to get away, he does (unless you're in a jet too, in which case your GM can just assign them equal Pep scores and be done with it).

Jets usually have a couple machineguns—use the stats for the Buro Hellharrower. Similarly, they've got some big air to air missiles, fired with the Guns skill. They do 10 Wreck or serve as a big explosion if they hit near a pedestrian.

Incidentally, if you want to borrow a page from *Jewel of the Nile* and drive one on the ground, it's got Pep +3 on straightaways, but only Pep -2 on the corners. (Restricted)

**Personal Prop Planes (0/8)**

This covers your basic crop dusters, Piper Cubs and the plane that Indiana Jones used to escape from South America. (Working Stiff)

**Small Helicopter (-2/8-10)**

Use these stats for most civilian use helicopters—traffic copters, rich-guy transportation and Medevac choppers (if, for some bizarre reason, a *Feng Shui* character ever got injured). This also covers the chopper that T.C. flew back on "Magnum P.I." (Anyone remember T.C.? Anyone?) (Rich, or Working Stiff if you just run the thing for someone else.)

## AIR VEHICLES OF 2056

The best vehicles in 2056 are airborne, and these are *all* restricted (of course). Most of these work by harnessing antigravity, though there is one old-style helicopter still in use.

**SPUD-U (+5/5)**

Cops use these more than the army, though the army has its share. Public Order Single Person Urban Defense Units are wickedly fast flying motorcycles, built on a wide variety of models. They're usually armed with two synched Blue Spears in a turret, though a few have a forward mounted Hellharrower. There's also an Arcanowave variant, the SPUD-U-A, described on the next page. SPUD-U's don't have an onboard power generator—only a battery that's good for about ten hours of



**Single Person Urban Defense Unit**



**BuroMil Grav-Car**



**BuroMil Superconducting Assault Vehicle (Antigravity)**



**BK97 Attack Chopper**

continuous cruising, or four hours at top speed. Recharging these anywhere but at a Buro-controlled government power teat requires a Fix-It roll against Difficulty 9. (The SPUD-U-A doesn't need fuel, of course. It eats.)

**BuroMil Grav-Car (+4/35)**

This is a fast attack unit used for aerial assault. It looks vaguely like a 20th century sports car, but instead of a trunk there's a small fusion generator, and the engine cavity is partially occupied by a turreted Hellharrower. (The turret drops out the bottom of the car and faces downward.) There's another turret on the roof, this one with twinned Blue



Spears. Adorning the hood is a rack of eight Woodchuck 70mm missiles (25 damage, 4 Wreck).

This is a hot vehicle—not just metaphorically, but literally. The fusion reactor kicks off a lot of heat, and the Buro had better things to spend their money on than a really good air conditioner. It's usually 90 degrees in the cockpit—hotter in the summer.

Along with the SPUD-U-A, this has become the vehicle of choice for Netherworld operations. A few have even been camouflaged to look like Honda Accords for use in the 1996 juncture. These disguised grav-cars have none of the guns but all of the speed and armor of their futuristic cousins. (A very nice air conditioner replaced the two turrets, making this one of the more comfortable BuroMil vehicles.) Plus, when necessary, they can fly.

### **BuroMil Superconducting Assault Vehicle (Antigravity) (+2/50)**

The SAV(AG) is, predictably, referred to as a "Savage" by the few, proud crew members who drive these over the crumbling cinders of any and all resistance. The Savage is a flying tank, shaped something like a cough lozenge with treads. (It doesn't fly all the time: Driving over things is usually more efficient.)

Where the grav-cars are hot, Savages are cool. The superconducting circuits needed to make twenty tons of hardware float around like the world's deadliest butterfly only function at zero degrees Celsius. Thus, in addition to floating, Savages are usually etched with frost, hung with icicles, and surrounded by a sinister fog of condensing moisture.

There's more to the Savage than intimidating

### **The SPUD-U-A**

Anyone who takes "SPUD-U-A" as an arcanowave schtick can drive any SPUD-U-A. This can be done one of two ways: Plugged or unplugged. If you drive it unplugged, you use your Drive skill and don't need to worry about Mutation Points. If you plug it into an AI/O port, you can drive it with your arcanowave skill as long as it's plugged in, and you can substitute your Arcanowave skill for any Drive rolls (except information or contact rolls, of course).

SPUD-U-As typically come with 3-4 AI/O extension cords built in that can be plugged in to the user's AI/O ports. These cords end on the bottom, sides or top of the SPUD-U-A and allow the user to plug in weapons on the outside and fire them from the inside.

If anyone without the SPUD-U-A arcanowave schtick climbs into the cockpit, the device tries to eat him. Teeth and throats swell out of the seat and controls, chomp chomp chomp. The Damage from these feeding apparatuses is equal to 15 every 3 shots, plus the result of a closed roll. To get out of the cockpit while being eaten requires a Strength test of 9. (Yeah, it might seem harsh, but this is roughly equivalent to climbing in an alligator's mouth.)

SPUD-U-As are highly restricted. Even if you have the schtick, you're expected to check the device back in to HQ after each mission. They also require about twenty pounds of meat a day to survive. (Just toss it up into the cockpit.)

looks, of course. There's also a turreted Hellharrower and a retractable missile launcher (loaded with the same 70mm missiles as the Grav-Car, only the tank can hold a full rack of





24). The big weapon, however, is a gravity beam that can pull or push with the equivalent of Strength 20. In itself, that's not too impressive. But the Grav/Antigrav Oscillating Beam System (or "GOBS") can switch between pulling and pushing a hundred times every *second*. That means anything that gets caught in the beam (which is about 10cm wide and up to a half mile long) gets very hot, very fast, while being shaken to pieces. This weapon does a flat 50 points of Damage to people and other living things, ignoring Toughness. Fortunately, it was really designed to raze cities instead of vaporizing individuals, so individuals get a +5 to their passive dodge AV when avoiding the GOBS.

What a GOBS is *very* good at is cooking vehicles. If it hits (using the attacker's Guns skill against the target's Drive AV) not only does it do 10 Wreck to the vehicle, it does 30 points of Damage to anyone inside. (The beam does get a bit dissipated going through anything sturdy.) This Damage does *not* ignore Toughness. (Restricted)

### **BuroMil BK97 Attack Chopper** (+1/25)

The BK97 (or "Rampage") is a descendant of the AH-64 Apache. It was used for invasion and assault support, back when the Buro had any kind of entrenched, meaningful resistance. The idea was that the missiles would shoot down planes and soften up tanks, while the machine-guns would keep any lesser vehicles and individuals in a state of discomfort. Initially they were in place to support infantry advances. As Grav-Cars and Savages started seeing wide use, there was less need for aerial support, and once the SCAF-PLATs came online, the Rampage was largely relegated to guarding and patrolling occupied areas. It's still used for guard duties today. (Meaning the "today" of 2056.)

The standard Rampage carries a Megathreat 30mm caseless chain gun (15/—/1500) and a compliment of 144 70mm Woodchuck missiles (25/—/144) as well as a Madame Curie microwave laser cannon (15/—/—). The Madame Curie is a nasty weapon: Not only does it do damage primarily by cooking internal organs, it ignores armor. The Megathreat

and the Madame Curie both do 2 Wreck, and the Woodchucks do 4 Wreck.

Some routine patrol Rampages are more lightly armed, with just the chain gun and half a compliment of missiles. (Restricted)

### **BuroMil Superconducting Armored Fire Platform (SCAF-PLAT)** (-2/6000)

Better known as a "flying fortress," this moves and it carries people, so technically it's a vehicle, but the "fortress" part of "flying fortress" is really the more accurate part of the name. This flying behemoth is about as long and wide as an American football field, and it's five stories high. A SCAF-PLAT usually carries four SPUD-U's and two Grav-Cars on it. These run interference when the floating fortress' five GOBS (a weapon described above, in the section on the Superconducting Assault Vehicle, if you aren't reading in order), ten turreted Hellharrows, and twelve missile launchers (each of which is loaded with 72 Woodchuck missiles) are insufficient. (That is, not very often.)

The purpose of the SCAF-PLAT is to destroy cities, and for that they have a bottom mounted plasma vent that takes about half a second to melt a steel girder—from 300 feet up.

As you may have guessed, the SCAF-PLAT is not something you blow up from the outside. Taking down one of these monsters is done from the inside (probably by sabotaging the fusion generator, or wrecking the superconducting circuits, or fiddling with the plasma vent). Floating Fortresses are described in greater length in *Seed of the New Flesh*, for those who are just dying to blow one up. (*Very Restricted*)

## **BOATS**

### **Zodiac skiff** (+1/1)

These sounded so cool in the novel *Zodiac* that I decided to put 'em in here. Basically, this is a rubber raft with an insanely huge motor stuck on the back. According to Neal

Stephenson the propeller is the only thing that touches the water when these get up to speed. However, their Pep decreases by 1



for everyone other than the skipper who gets aboard. The perilously tiny Wreck number represents the downside of such a nimble, lightweight hull. (Poor)

### **Cigarette Boat** (+3/7)

Okay, who else started humming the theme from "Miami Vice" as soon as you saw the phrase "cigarette boat"? You can fess up, it's okay. These are racing boats, officially. In practice, they're more often used as "Hey ladies, check out this incredible symbol of my virility!" boats. That, or "Run! It's the Coast Guard! And we've got eight pounds of cocaine hidden in the cooler!" boats. (Rich)

### **Tugboat** (-3/30)

Big, slow, powerful, used for moving barges around. Really, is there anything else you need to know? (Rich to own, Working Stiff to operate)

### **Motorboat** (0/4)

Your average, middle class, burger-munching, Budweiser-drinking man's water ski boat. Or, in Hong Kong, your average, middle class, squid-and-noodle munching, Tsing-Tao drinking man's water ski boat. (Working Stiff)

### **Sailboat** (-5 to -4/3-10)

Sailboats come in all shapes and sizes, from tiny sport catamarans (-4/3) to large junks (-5/10) to modern yachts and big schooners from the 1850s (both -4/10). None of them ever get faster than Pep -4 (not even with the tinkering described under "Going Even Faster," below) and most of them aren't going to make that unless they've got up a sizeable bit of momentum. (There's a reason that most boat chase scenes use motorboats, see?) (Poor-Rich)

intimate quality time spent secluded in your garage, foundling, lubricating and rebuilding your precious, precious vehicle.

Since any Velocity Addict worth his hex nuts is going to constantly be tinkering with his creation, here are some rules for making your vehicle go even faster. There are two skills that can be used: Fix-It and Info/Classic Cars.

The Difficulty for any attempt to increase a vehicle's speed is the new Pep, times four. If the Pep is a negative number, the Difficulty defaults to 10. With a successful roll, you can increase the Pep by one point. You can never increase a vehicle's Pep by more than two points.

Furthermore, Info/Classic Cars only lets you work (surprise surprise) on cars.

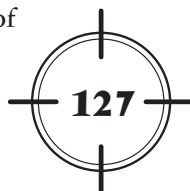
Getting your car all cherried out takes time and equipment, of course. To get a standard roll, spend X days working on the vehicle, where X = four days or twice the current Pep rating, whichever is higher. You can attempt a rush job, but each day you shave off the required time increases the Difficulty by two. It never takes less than a full day.

It's also possible to armor a car. This isn't hard—the Difficulty is 7, or 8 for cars that are already armored. A successful roll and three days work increases the car's Wreck by 1—but also decreases its Pep by 1. (Hey, armor's heavy.) You can do this as many times as you want, until Pep hits -6 and the vehicle turns into an immobile pillbox. As with souping up the acceleration, you can cut corners to cut time, by increasing the Difficulty by 1 for every day you shave off.

You cannot make either of these tasks *easier* by taking longer than the required time.

## **GOING EVEN FASTER**

Driving your beloved vehicle is only half the fun of being a motorheaded gear junkie, of course. That's the most accessible, public part, but equally important is the private,





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## Missing in Action

A short two-page appendix, "For Brand New Roleplayers," had to be removed from this book for lack of space. We've made it available for free download from our website: [www.atlas-games.com](http://www.atlas-games.com). Please stop by and have a look.

