



MUTANT CHRONICLES™



FREELANCER'S HANDBOOK
GAME MASTER'S SCREEN



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4004

Heartbreaker™



AVAILABILITY CODES

All equipment is rated by the following availability codes:

- A — readily available at stores.
- B — only found at specialty shops.
- C — restricted use, you will need a permit, prescription or license.
- D — forbidden, black-market only.
- E — rare item, would be hard to find either because of its antiquity or its unavailability.
- F — available through corporate channels only (high tech).

It is up to the Gamemaster as to which type of equipment is available and how much it will really cost. These are intended as guidelines only. Also, see weapons' availability on opposite face.

ARMOR MANUFACTURERS

MANUFACTURER	COST MOD.	FAILURE RATE*
Capitol	x1	1-5
Bauhaus	x1.3	1-2
Mishima	x0.8	1-9
Imperial	x1.2	1-3
Cybertronic	x1.4	1
Other	x0.6	1-15

* Roll 1d20 if the damage from a single attack exceeds the armor's AV. If the result is in within the given range, the armor protects its wearer from this attack, but it thereafter useless.

ARMOR

MATERIAL	ARMOR VALUE	MATERIAL MULT.	AVAIL.	MISCELLANEOUS
Studded cloth	1	x0.5	A	Inflammable
Impact resistant plastic	1	x0.7	A	Double damage from fire
Ballistic nylon	2	x1	B	Inflammable
Bullet proof composite	3-4	x2	B	Fireproof
Light combat comp.	5-7	x3	F	Fireproof, protects against falls
Heavy combat comp.	8-9	x5	F	Fireproof, protects against falls
Extra heavy comb. comp.	10+	x10	F	Fireproof, protects against falls

PIECE OF CLOTHING	BASE COST	PROTECTS
Helmet	1,000	HEAD against all kinds of attacks
Shoulder pads (military type)	2,000	CHEST and HEAD in close combat; CHEST only in missile combat
Vest/Harness	2,700	CHEST and STOMACH against all kinds of attacks
Leg greaves (pair)	2,600	LEGS against all kinds of attacks
Arm greaves (pair)	1,900	ARMS against all kinds of attacks
Gloves (pair)	900	ARMS against all kinds of attacks in 25% of the cases
Jacket	2,400	ARMS, CHEST and STOMACH against all kinds of attacks
Pants	2,000	LEGS against all kinds of attacks
Trenchcoat	4,100	LEGS, ARMS, CHEST and STOMACH against close combat attacks; LEGS are only protected in 50% of missile attacks
Body suit	4,500	ENTIRE BODY, except head, against all kinds of attacks. Adds to other AVs.

Multiply Base Cost for piece of clothing by the Material Multiplier to get the total cost for a piece of armor. For a complete suit, reduce the cost by 25%. Finally, refer to the Armor Manufacturers Table for final cost and quality.

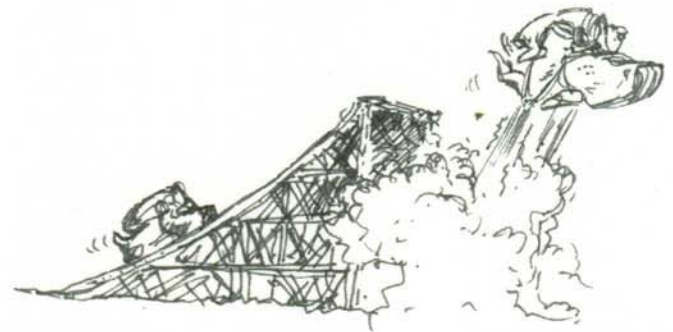
TRAVEL TIME AND COSTS

TRIP	TIME	COST
Mercury to Venus	1d6+3 days	4,990+150 Cardinal's Crowns per day
Mercury to Luna	1d10+8 days	7,940+100 Cardinal's Crowns per day
Venus to Luna	1d6+3 days	3,940+100 Cardinal's Crowns per day
Luna to Earth	3d6+12 hours	3,990 Cardinal's Crowns
Luna to Mars	1d10+6 days	5,490+100 Cardinal's Crowns per day
Mars to Victoria	1d4+22 days	14,990+100 Cardinal's Crowns per day
Victoria to Jupiter	2d10+15 days	*
Jupiter to Saturn	3d10+28 days	*
Saturn to Uranus	2d20+66 days	*
Uranus to Neptune	1d100+70 days	*
Neptune to Pluto	1d100+60 days	*
Pluto to Nero	1d10+3 days	*

* per agreement.

First class: cost x3

Third class: cost/3



EQUIPMENT

Air Filter	A	450
Backpack	B	1,600
Binoculars	B	720
Camo Paint Kit	B	30
Canteen, 1 liter	B	5
Canteen, 5 liters	B	30
Climbing Equipment Kit	B	2,000
Compass	B	30
Compound Archery Tackle (hi-tech bow and arrows)	B	5,000
Crossbow	B	5,300
Field Surgery Kit	B	3,800
Gas Lantern	B	680
Gas Mask	B	900
Gear Harness	B	300
Mess Kit	B	400
Night Goggles	F	3,000
Nylon Rope, 100 feet	B	200
Raft, inflatable	B	6,900
Rain Gear	B	640
Sleeping Bag	B	1,200
Survival Knife	B	1,200
Tactical Radio	B	6,400
Tents	B	4,000
Wet Suit	B	22,000
Wrist Compass	B	100

EXPLOSIVES

Demolition Kit (for priming and disarming explosives)	D	4,500
Dynamite (1/4 lbs.)	D	60
Flares	B	150
Mines	D	3,000
Plastic Explosives (1/4 lbs.)	D	180

AMMUNITION

AP Ammunition	D	2%
Hot Bullets	D	2%
Snowballs	D	1%
Hardballs	F	3%
Smoke Grenades	B	500/5%
Boke Grendades	C	500/5%
Stun Gas Grenades	C	1,000/5%
Incendiary Grenades	D	1,000/5%
Slime Grenades	F	1,000/5%

DRUGS

Anti-Toxins (1 cure)	C	300xDL
Antibiotics (1 cure)	C	300xDL
Ointments & Salves	A	25
Pain-killers (1 dose)	A	10

WEAPON ACCESSORIES

Ammunition, 1 clip	*	1%
Ammo Belt	*	1%
Bayonet	B	800
Bipod	B	300
Chain Bayonet	D	6,900
Clips	*	1%
Gun Maintenance Kit	B	200
Red-point Sight	F	as weapon
Telescopic Sight	C	50%

* Same as weapon

STREET GEAR

Baton	C	312
Compact Camera	A	400
Film (incl. development)	A	48

CARS

UNIVERSAL ROADKING MODEL A (CAP) Max 95 mph; 5 doors; 6 pass.; 65.000
GENERAL TRUCKS HIGHWAYMAN (CAP) Max 100 mph; 5doors; 8 pass.; 89.000
GENERAL TRUCKS OFFROAD B-52 (CAP) Max 105 mph; 4 doors; 4 pass.; 75.000
GEOPARD 266F (IMP) Max 120 mph; 5 doors; 4 pass.; 149.000
ASTON HEALEY MG7 (IMP) Max 200 mph; 2 doors; 1 pass.; 545.000
VINCIANO-TRAFFAUX 350BL (BAU) Max 100 mph; 5 doors; 4 pass.; 165.000
SACHS 9000GL (BAU) Max 120 mph; 4 doors; 4 pass.; 244.000
GIACCHIO FORZA 750 (BAU) Max 180 mph; 2 doors; 1 pass.; 480.000
YASHIKIN BANZAI 4W (MIS) Max 70 mph; 2 doors; 4 pass.; 55.000
YASHIKIN TOP PERFORMANCE (MIS) Max 85 mph; 4 doors; 4 pass.; 39.000
MATSU-HARADA SUNSET GLIDER (MIS) Max 100 mph; 5 doors; 4 pass.; 45.000

BASE SV

BASIC CAPABILITY

VALUE	B-SV
1-5	2
6-9	3
10-14	4
15-16	5
17+	6

ELEMENTARY EDUCATION

INT	# OF SKILL PICKS FROM START
1-5	4
6-9	5
10-14	6
15-16	7
17+	8

AGE

	27	33	39	45*	51*
STR	±0	-1	-1	-1	-1
PHY	-1	-1	-1	-2	-4
COR	±0	-1	-1	-1	-1
INT	+1	+1	±0	±0	-2
MST	±0	±0	+1	+1	+1
PER	±0	+1	+1	±0	-4

* Roll a d20 every year; if it is higher than your PHY value, you die from old age. If any of your basic capabilities reach «0», you die anyway.

BODY POINTS TABLE

PHY+MST	HEAD	ARM	STOMACH	LEG	CHEST
2-10	2	4	4	5	5
11-20	3	5	5	6	6
21-34	3	6	6	7	7
35-40	4	7	7	8	8
41-50	4	8	8	9	9
51-60	5	9	9	10	10
+10	+0.5	+1	+1	+1	+1

COMBAT STATISTICS

	MOVEMENT ALLOWANCE	OFFENSIVE BONUS	ACTIONS PER ROUND	DEFENSIVE BONUS	PERCEPTION BONUS
Result	squares/action m/min (COR+PHY)	OB (STR+PHY)	Actions/CR (COR+MST)	DB (COR+INT)	PB (INT+MST)
2-10	2 150	-1	2	+2	+2
11-20	3 175	—	3	+3	+3
21-34	3 225	+1	3	+4	+4
35-40	4 275	+2	4	+5	+5
41-50	5 325	+3	5	+6	+6
51-60	6 400	+4	6	+7	+7
61-80	7 500	+5	7	+8	+8
+20	+1 +100	+1	+1	+1	+1

DIFFICULTY LEVELS

DIFFICULTY	DIFFICULTY LEVEL (DL)
Very easy	1
Easy	5
Normal	10
Hard	15
Very hard	20
Extremely hard	25

THE RESISTANCE TABLE

Cross-reference the difficulty level and the basic capability value. You must roll lower than or equal to the given figure with 1d20 in order to succeed.

† = Automatic failure

— = Automatic success

DL BASIC CAPABILITY VALUE

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21
1	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
2	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
3	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
4	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
6	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	—	—	—	—	—	—
7	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	—	—	—	—	—
8	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	—	—	—	—
9	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	—	—	—
10	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	—	—
11	†	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	—
12	†	†	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19
13	†	†	†	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18
14	†	†	†	†	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17
15	†	†	†	†	†	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
16	†	†	†	†	†	†	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
17	†	†	†	†	†	†	†	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
18	†	†	†	†	†	†	†	†	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
19	†	†	†	†	†	†	†	†	†	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
20	†	†	†	†	†	†	†	†	†	†	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
21	†	†	†	†	†	†	†	†	†	†	†	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

etc.

UNCONTROLLED ATTACKS (1 ACTION)

RANGE	CS-MODIFICATION
1 square	-3
2-5 squares	±0
6-8 squares	-1
9-11 squares	-2
12-14 squares	-3
15-17 squares	-4
18-20 squares	-5
+3 squares	-1

AIMED ATTACK (2 ACTIONS)

RANGE IN METERS	RANGE IN SQUARES	CS-MOD.
3-150 m	2-100	±0
150-300 m	100-200	-3
300-450 m	200-300	-6
450-750 m	300-500	-9
750-1050 m	500-700	-12
+300 m	+200	-3

HIT LOCATION

MELEE	MISSILE COMBAT	HIT LOCATION
1-3	1-3	Left leg
4-6	4-6	Right leg
7-9	7-8	Left arm
10-12	9-10	Right arm
13-15	11-14	Stomach
16-18	15-19	Chest
19-20	20	Head

MODIFICATIONS TO THE SKILL ROLL

CIRCUMSTANCE	WOUNDS	LIGHT	WEATHER	STRESS	MOVEMENT	EQUIPMENT
-1	You have taken one or two hits in one body part	Dawn/dusk outdoors or single torch indoors	Wind or light rain	Someone fires at you	You're jogging	Your sword's blade is broken, making it unbalanced
-2	You have taken three or four hits in one body part	Full moon outdoors or single candle indoors	Heavy wind or heavy rain	People fire at you from several directions	You're running	You're in a car chase with a flat tire
-3	You are wounded in more than one body part	A single candle in a gym	Gale, snowfall or hail	«WARNING! Three seconds to auto-destruct!»	You're sprinting	Your rifle's sight is broken or uncalibrated
-4	One body part has zero body points left	Shrouded moonlight outdoors	Snow or hailstorm	Your clothes are on fire	You're running for your life	You try to scramble a TV network a Walkman
-5	Two or more body parts have zero body points left	Pitch black or blindfolded	Hurricane or blizzard	You're in midair, falling towards certain death	You're hanging from a helicopter	You try to bribe a prison guard with toothpicks

ATTACK ROLL MODIFIERS

SITUATION	ATTACK ROLL MODIFIER
Rapid volley attack	-4 to -10
Area spray	-3
Charging (missile)	x0,5 (rounded up)
Charging (melee)	-4 or -8
Aimed attack	+3 to CS or ±5 to hit location roll
Attacking someone covered up	-5
Running target	-3
Rapidly moving target	-5
Dark (dusk, dawn, shady alley)	-1
Very dark	-5
Target static (unconscious, etc.)	+2
Attacker wounded	-1
1 hit left in «attack arm»	-5
Range	varies

AVOID ROLLS ALLOWED/REQUIRED

SITUATION	# AVOID ROLLS ALLOWED/REQUIRED
Single round attack	1 avoid roll
Burst attack	1 avoid roll for each hit; 1 success avoids 2 hits
Full auto attack	Separate avoid rolls must be made for each successful attack roll
Rapid volley attack	Separate avoid rolls must be made for each successful attack roll
Area spray attack	1 avoid roll with +3
Grenades	Separate avoid rolls must be made for each piece of shrapnel
Incinerators	1 avoid roll for the entire attack
Shotguns	A successful avoid roll halves the damage, but doesn't avoid the attack
Taking cover	Any number of avoid rolls may be made during the round, but NOTHING else can be done.
Covering up	As normal. (Attackers get -5 to attack roll.)

WEAPON AVAILABILITY

Availability for weapons varies between different places and manufacturers. The rule on Luna is that weapons have availability «C» (license required), but certain weapons, for example lighter side-arms (damage <1d6), have availability «B» and heavier weapons (machine-guns and rocket launchers) have availability «D». All Brotherhood, Cybertronic and Doomtrooper weapons have availability «F».

CAPITOL: All weapons with «Func.: A» have availability «C»; all other weapons «B».

BAUHAUS: Same restrictions as in Luna.

IMPERIAL: All firearms have availability «C», but it's easy to get a permit.

MISHIMA: All firearms have availability «C», but anyone with Social Standing 5+ automatically has a permit (for them, availability is «B»).

CYBERTRONIC: Same restrictions as in Luna.

WEAPON TABLES

HANDGUNS	WEIGHT	LENGTH	MC	FUNC.	RANGE	STR	RT	JF	DAMAGE	COST
Bolter	2,2	36	18	S	30/45	9	1	4	1d6	1,900
Ironfist	2,5	39	25	A	40/60	10	1	3	1d6+1	2,700
Ronin	1,5	30	15	S	50/75	4	1	8	1d6	3,000
P1000	1,4	39	20	A	60/90	7	1	7	1d6	6,200
Aggressor	2,3	34	26	A	20/30	9	1	4	1d6	2,400
MP-105	1,9	31	58	A	50/75	7	1	9	1d6+1	7,200
Punisher	2,5	32	13	A	70/105	14	1	7	1d6+2	8,400
Piranha	1,0	21	11	S	70/105	6	1	3	1d4+1	19,900
Nemesis	2,2	38	40	A	100/150	11	1	8	1d6+1	13,500
Enforcer	1,0	27	6	S	70/105	8	1	8	1d4	1,000
Eliminator	3,0	50	20	A	100/150	12	1	1	1d6+1	10,200

GRENADE LAUNCHERS	SW	MC	FUNC.	RANGE	STR	RT	JF	#TA	SR	DAMAGE	COST
Ironfist	—	1	M	50/75	8*	1	5	1d3	1	1d6+1	—

SUB-MACHINE-GUNS	WEIGHT	LENGTH	MC	FUNC.	RANGE	STR	RT	JF	DAMAGE	COST
CAR-24	3,6	65/53	20	3	120/180	15	1	7	1d6+1	4,600
Windrider	2,7	51	22	A	160/240	7	1	3	1d6	5,500
CAW2000	3,0	63	30	A	180/270	9	1	7	1d6+1	7,800
Mk. IVP Intruder	4,0	64	20	A	100/150	15	1	2	1d6+1	7,100
Interceptor	4,6	56	40	A	100/150	17	1	5	1d6+2	6,200
MP-105GW	2,8	65/52	58	A	120/180	11	1	8	1d6+1	9,400
Hellblazer	2,6	46	34	A	80/120	9	1	9	1d6+1	9,000

GRENADE LAUNCHERS	SW	MC	FUNC.	RANGE	STR	RT	JF	#TA	SR	DAMAGE	COST
CAR-24	—	1	M	50/75	8*	1	5	1d3	1	1d6+1	—
Windrider	0,8	1	M	20/30	4*	1	3	1d3	1	1d6	850
CAW2000	—	1	M	40/60	5*	1	8	1d4	1	1d6+1	—
Plasma ammo for Intruder	—	20	M	100/150	15	1	2	1d4	1	1d6+1	—
Interceptor	—	1	M	40/60	9*	1	5	1d4	1	1d10	—
MP-105	1,0	1	M	30/45	6*	1	8	1d4	1	1d6+2	1,700

INCINERATORS	WEIGHT	LENGTH	MC	FUNC.	RANGE	STR	RT	JF	DAMAGE	COST
Gehenna Puker	25,0	140	7	spec.	20/30	30*	3	9	1d10+10	40,000

ASSAULT RIFLES	WEIGHT	LENGTH	MC	FUNC.	RANGE	STR	RT	JF	DAMAGE	COST		
M50	6,1	100/79	30	3	300/450	23	1	7	1d6+2	6,500		
Shogun	3,8	67	26	A	240/360	15	1	8	1d6+1	7,100		
AR3000	5,2	86	25	A	360/540	15	1	7	1d6+2	12,800		
Invader	7,1	83	30	A	260/390	27	1	5	1d6+3	11,600		
L&A Plasma Carbine	6,0	61	36	A	200/300	23	1	9	1d6+4	20,000		
Mk. 43 Intruder	5,0	72	20	A	100/150	15	1	2	1d6+2	6,500		
Panzerknacker	4,7	90/72	48	A	300/450	19	1	7	1d6+2	12,400		
Volcano	6,2	116	20	A	400/600	17	1	7	1d6+3	22,000		
Eruptor	8,0	128	12	A	600/900	21	1	7	1d6+4	27,750		
GRENADE LAUNCHERS	SW	MC	FUNC.	RANGE	STR	RT	JF	#TA	SR	DAMAGE	COST	
M50	—	6	M	100/150	23*	1/round	4	1d4	1	1d6+1	—	
Shogun	0,8	3	M	40/60	15*	1/round	8	1d4	1	1d6	1,100	
AR3000	—	4	M	70/105	15*	1/round	8	1d6	1	1d6+1	—	
Invader	—	14	S	100/150	27	2	5	1d4	1	1d10	—	
Plasma ammo for L&A P. C.	—	36	S	180/270	23	1	7	1d4	1	1d6+1	—	
Panzerknacker	1,0	4	M	50/75	19*	1/round	8	1d6	1	1d6+2	2,600	
Volcano	1,0	3	M	50/75	23*	1/round	7	1d6	2	1d6+1	3,900	
Eruptor Incinerator	2,7	8	M	12/18	31*	2	8	—	—	1d10	6,800	
SNIPER RIFLES	WEIGHT	LENGTH	MC	FUNC.	RANGE	STR	RT	JF	DAMAGE	COST		
SR-50	5,5	117/95	12	S	2000	21	1	9	1d6+4	10,100		
Archer	4,4	93	15	3	1700	17	1	7	1d6+2	7,100		
SR3500	5,0	102	20	A	2300	17	1	7	1d6+3	16,000		
Assailant	6,3	107/94	15	S	1200	23	1	9	1d6+4	14,400		
Rainy Dayer	3,4	100	10	S	800	18	1	9	1d6+2	12,000		
PSG-99	5,1	109/90	48	A	2100	19	1	8	1d6+3	18,600		
Mephisto	7,0	110	13	A	2600	25	1	9	1d6+4	24,500		
SHOTGUNS	WEIGHT	LENGTH	MC	FUNC.	RANGE	STR	RT	JF	DAMAGE	COST		
M516S	6,4	94	6	S	14/21	15	1/rnd	3	1d4	8,200		
M516D	7,7	88	12	A	10/15	21	1/rnd	3	1d4+1	9,600		
Airbrush	5,0	67	14	S	20/30	19	1/rnd	1	1d4	6,500		
SA-SG7200I	5,0	78	6	S	40/60	11	1/rnd	9	1d6	13,500		
Mandible	7,5	81/64	19	A	24/32	25	1	5	1d6+1	11,400		
HG-14	6,0	82/66	5	M	30/45	23	1/rnd	8	1d6	14,000		
Street version	4,6	64	5	M	6/19	13	1/rnd	2	1d4	var.		
LIGHT MACHINE-GUNS	WEIGHT	LENGTH	MBL	FUNC.	RANGE	STR	RT	JF	DAMAGE	COST		
M606	7,2	109	400	A	900	25	2	4	1d6+3	10,500		
Kensai	5,6	89	250	A	750	19	3	7	1d6+2	12,500		
SSW4000	7,0	97	750	A	1200	25	3	8	1d6+3	18,000		
Destroyer	9,1	109	2000	A	900	29	2	5	1d6+4	19,000		
MG-40	6,3	90	300	A	700	21	3	7	1d6+3	21,500		
Justifier	6,2	101	400	A	100/150	14	3	8	1d6+1	24,000		
HEAVY MACHINE-GUNS	WEIGHT	LENGTH	MBL	FUNC.	RANGE	STR	RT	JF	DAMAGE	COST		
Improved M89	20,0	104	1000	A	1000	29*	3	3	1d6+5	21,000		
Dragonfire	8,6	92	500	A	900	16	3	6	1d6+3	16,700		
SSW4200p	9,4	99	1000	A	1500	21*	3	7	1d6+4	28,500		
Charger	26,4	98	∞	A	700	33*	3	4	1d6+6	33,000		
Mega-charger	24,1	88	∞	A	280/400	30*	3	4	1d6+7	29,000		
Lumberjack	40,2	120	19	A	1500	42*	3	8	1d6+10	32,000		
MG-80	10,5	97	750	A	1000	23*	3	8	1d6+4	26,000		
Purifier	14,7	98	750	A	600	25*	3	7	1d6+4	26,500		
Purifier Incinerator	6,0	—	14	M	20/30	25*	2	8	1d10+2	8,600		
Deathlockdrum	12,9	96	40	A	1000	25*	2	8	1d10+1	32,700		
GRENADE LAUNCHERS	SW	MC	FUNC.	RANGE	STR	RT	JF	#TA	SR	DAMAGE	COST	
Deathlockdrum	—	19	A	100/150	25*	1	5	1d6	0	1d6	—	
ROCKET LAUNCH.	WEIGHT	LENGTH	MC	FUNC.	RANGE	STR	RT	JF	#TA	SR	DAMAGE	COST
DEUCE	12,8	81	6	S	200/300	25*	2	3	1d6	2	1d10+1	18,700
Daimyo	9,5	87	7	S	200/300	17*	2	8	1d4	2	1d10	17,700
SSW5500	12,0	93	7	S	160/240	23*	2	6	1d6	2	1d10+1	32,000
Southpaw	19,9	108	19	A	60/90	29*	3	5	1d6	2	1d10+6	45,000
ARG-17	10,7	80	11	M	140/210	19*	3	9	1d6	2	1d10+2	43,000



MUTANT CHRONICLES™

FREELANCER'S HANDBOOK
GAME MASTER'S SCREEN

MCBRIDE'S HINTS

BEFORE YOU START

So you want to be a Freelancer, huh?

The first question you should ask yourself is are you up to it? The life of a Freelancer may look good when you're pushing paper across a desk in the office. It doesn't look quite so good when you're looking down the wrong end of a Bolter. This is a hard, dirty business, and it calls for hard, violent men.

Sure, you think you've got the right skills and the right attitude. I've met a hundred guys like you. Soldiers just mustered out of some elite unit, looking to prove how tough they are. Clean cops that got sick of the corruption and decided they could do more good on their own. Guys who've just come into some money looking for some cool way of making it earn more. Most of them have seen one movie too many and think being a Freelancer is the answer. The problem is that this is the real world. You don't have your old buddies watching your back, and your first mistake might be your last.

Still with me? Still have visions of some cool Bauhaus blonde in a Favoricci evening dress striding into your office and telling you that only you can save her? Bad news, kid. That only happens in the movie-dromes. The only Bauhaus blonde I ever met pistol-whipped me and pushed me out of a fast car. I've still got the tire tracks on my back from where a motorcycle ran over me.

Maybe you think that some rich old guy is going to come and ask you to find his long-lost son-in-law, and maybe you'll get a shot at the grieving widow. It happens, but I've got news for you. Rich people didn't get rich by giving away their money. Chances are you'll end up stiffed for half your fee, and the widow will go off with some new rich guy. They always do.

Or maybe you think that you'll score big doing leg-work for the Megacorporations. I know you've heard all that stuff about Freelancers doing covert stuff for Imperial or Capitol. Again, it happens. But it happens for a reason. Deniability. The corporations skirmish at the edges of their spheres of influence, but nobody wants an all-out war in the industrial heartlands if it can be avoided. That's why they use us to do their sabotage and their killings and their kidnappings. Sure, they'll tell you that the sun shines out of your shoulder holster when they want you to do something, but you can bet that, if you get caught, then your buddies in ISC-4 will never have heard of you.

Still want in? Well you've proved one thing. Either you're very dumb or you're very desperate, so let's get down to brass tacks.



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THE PREMISES

For most guys, the hardest part is getting the money together to set them up. Offices, bribes, secretaries, these all cost. A lot of smart boys find that they just can't get it together. They head straight back to the comfortable secure world of corporate employment.

Let's assume you've got the cash. You've got your mustering out pay or your inheritance or the ten grand you won playing hookjack. Your task is pretty straightforward. Get yourself some business premises.

By all means, look at those gleaming office skyscrapers down in the Capitol district. Then forget them. Maybe later, when you're very successful, you can afford a discrete little brownstone opposite the Pinnacle, but till then keep it strictly cheap and functional. You're a new boy on the street. You don't have a rep, and you don't have too many contacts. The folk in those discrete offices in the shadow of Luna Cathedral have both. The people who need that sort of operator will go to them. Your job is to get both a rep and contacts. Maybe then the fatcats will come to you.

Check out the press. Talk to landlords. Best places to look are the edges of the Industrial districts. Rents here for office space are cheap. You can make it cheaper still if you let the office double as an apartment. You won't be the first Freelancer who ever slept behind his desk. Just be careful about who knows about it. If it becomes public knowledge, any scumball with a grudge will know where to find you twenty four hours a day.

If you're really short of cash, or just cheap, then look for a derelict building, or a squat, and clear your own space. Chances are the landlord and the cops have already given up on the place. Problem is you may have to break a few of your neighbor's heads to get them to respect your property. And you'll have a hell of a time getting phone and utilities in. Still beggars can't be choosers, and there are ways round these little problems. If you know where to look, you can always find technical guys who'll hook you into the system for a fee. We'll get to all that later though.

Anyway, do a little legwork, find a place you like. Talk to the neighbors; see what the area is like. Make sure the place has a safe backdoor, an escape route, fire-escape, connecting corridor. You never know when you may have to get out in a hurry. If you can help it, don't pay more than 2,000 crowns a month for it. Try and get the fixtures included in the price. All you really need is a desk, a filing cabinet and a phone. The camp bed and sleeping bag are optional. So are the water dispenser and the curtains. I always like to get my name on the glass door between the outer office and my private space, but that can come later, once you've made some money.

Once you're in the office, don't take any guff from the landlord. Make sure maintenance is carried out on time. Clients notice these things. Ask yourself this: would you hire a Freelancer who couldn't even keep his landlord in line?



THE HELP

Once you've got an office, it's time to think about some people. You're going to need folk to help you with the work.

First you'll need a secretary. She can look after the paperwork, take your calls, deal with clients and generally lie for you when you have a hangover. Try to get one who looks good. Clients always like that, and it can help distract the gorillas when they come calling. Don't hire one who looks too good though. You don't want someone you could fall in love with. In this business, personal involvement is bad for business. I've had three secretaries shot in the line of duty. They were all good kids, and I feel for them. But it would have been a hundred times worse if I had been involved. Some guys don't mind this, though. Mad Jack Spillane has secretaries he loves killed every other week, and it just gives him an excuse to go on the rampage and slaughter a

few people. Of course, Mad Jack has done three stretches on Ryker's Mountain for culpable homicide now.

Next up, get a good book-keeper, one of those guys who know all the ins and outs of the business, like where to go to get licenses and permits or where the Company Registries are. If you have to wade through a paper trail during an investigation, someone who knows a dummy company from a real one and who can examine a set of books for a scam is worth his weight in gold. If you're ever involved in the sort of high finance case that the megacorporations spawn, then you'll be glad he's there. Make sure this is a guy you can trust. He's going to be looking after your money, after all. The best kind of book-keeper of all is someone who trusts you enough to put some of his money in the business. That way he has a real interest in seeing you prosper.

If you can't get a guy you trust, get one who knows you will hound him to the ends of the system if he crosses you.

If you can't keep them loyal, keep them scared. That's what I always say.

Next up, you're looking for two other sorts of guys. The first are the guys who can do your legwork. You want men who know how to talk and who know how to listen, the sort who can ask the right questions in the right places. These are the folk you send out to do the tedious business when you have more important stuff to do than check through the back issues of the Chronicle or go house to house.

The second sort are the guys who don't mind the rough stuff. Trust me, there comes a time in every Freelancer's life when it's all down to gunplay. When that time comes, you'll want someone at your back you can trust.

Trust. That's a word we'll keep coming back to. In Luna, in these dark times, there will probably never be a person you can trust absolutely. What you need are people you trust more than normal. That means finding folk who have more reason to be loyal to you than just a paycheck. You want guys who owe you favors (the sort they're grateful for, not the sort they'd rub you out to avoid having you collect.) If you need muscle, now is the time to get in touch with your old buddies from the army or the force. If you've got a cousin who is a good book-keeper, bring him in. If you've got buddies, try and get them interested. Remember, the day will come when you have to trust your life to these people, so do your best now.

If you have to hire somebody off the street, get a recommendation from someone whose opinion you respect. Don't hire any likely-looking thug who comes along. Conversely there are times when you meet someone and your gut tells you they're all right. Sometimes you just have to go with that feeling. Try and get a group together that thinks like a team. Listen to their opinions, respect their areas of expertise, share the profits. Give them reasons to back you.

We've looked at all the people who are essential. There are others you may need the services of sometimes. On a surveillance job, you may need a photograp-

her. There are loads of Freelancers, and staffers for the papers often moonlight. That being the case, you should cultivate relationships with them. They might provide you with a valuable in at the local scandalsocket as well. We'll come to this in the section on contacts.

Last, but not least, get yourself a lawyer. He doesn't have to be honest, though it helps. He does have to be good. There will, sure as the Darkness is waiting, come a time when you will need someone to spring you from the cops' sweaty clutches. You want someone who is capable of doing it—and fast. That's the time when a good lawyer will earn his fee.



Peter Bergfing 1994

THE GEAR

Once you've got your team together, you'll need equipment. Most of the muscle will come prepared with weapons they can use and armor they can trust. Some may have fallen on hard times, and you may have to provide for them. Don't rub this in. Let the man keep his dignity. Remember what I said about trust.

This is where we separate the professionals from the amateurs. When you talk equipment, a lot of guys think guns. They'll discuss the rate of fire difference between an M50 and a Tambu Shogun. My advice to you is to ignore these jerks. The first equipment a pro always talks about is armor.

Sure, a good assault rifle will let you mow down twenty goons in twenty seconds. Just remember, it only takes one bullet to finish you. Get the best armor you can afford. The thicker the better. Personally, I would recommend a ballistic nylon trenchcoat and a hat with reinforced headband for undercover jobs. If I think it might be dangerous, I wear as

much armor as is comfortable beneath, too. For jobs where you expect open warfare, get the best armor you can beg, steal, buy or borrow. If some corporate stuff comes your way during a mission, lose it and find it later when no one's around.

Remember, you can never have too much armor between your skin and a bullet. The best gun in the world is no use if you're too dead to use it.

However, now that I've stressed the importance of armor, don't let me put you off guns. These are the basic tools of the trade for most of us. Get a gun you can use. Don't buy an M50 because it looks neat and has a lot of killpower. Buy it because you know how to use it, because it was what you learned in the AFC. Remember, a gun is only as good as the man carrying it. If you're better with a pistol, stick with it. Better the devil you know.

Actually, my best advice to you is to get good with a pistol or an SMG real quick. The police won't thank you



and shook his head sadly. «Sad, bloody sad,» he said.

«You got kids, McBride?» he asked.

«No. Have you?»

«Had two. Killed. Terrorist attack in Heimburg. Two years ago.»

«I'm sorry,» I said. He cleared his throat.

«Bauhaus must have known about Taggart.»

I looked at him. Blain was the sort that obviously knew more than he was saying. Like the rest of us, he was wearing the sort of nondescript heavy body armor favored by soldiers of fortune, and—also like the rest of us—his papers identified him as a freelance security consultant, a mercenary, but I knew better. Blain had the look, the train-hard, fight-easy, haunted-eyed look that marks the men of the Imperial Special Forces, the ones who have been taught to look the Darkness in the eye and never, ever give way. You could almost see the Blood Beret perched on top of his graying head. The rest of our merry little band had the same look, and not for the first time. I wondered what I had gotten myself into. How had I come to be

standing in a dead village in the disputed warzones of the Venusian Outback after three weeks of slog-ging through swamp and jungle?

A simple job, that's what the man from Four had described it as. One of our long range commando chaps has gone loco. All that sun and devilberry juice must have gone to his head. We're sending in a team to bring him out. We need chaps who have been in the jungle, who know the score, who can be trusted not to talk.

Yeah, it was a simple job, all right, as if anything that had been dreamed up by the paranoid.



for carrying heavy weaponry around in the street. In fact, some of our more zealous law enforcers might just shoot you. Get yourself something that's concealable under your coat. Leave the heavy hardware for those missions to the outback where nobody will be around to ask awkward questions.

The other old standby is don't draw a gun unless you're prepared to use it. And always ask yourself, do you really need to draw it? A lot of guys get off on the feeling of power a Bolter in their fist gives them. It stops them thinking about other solutions to problems. As my ex-partner, Bentoni used to say: «So many guns around town, and so few brains.» Of course he was shot by a psycho killer, which proves that nobody likes a wise guy.

Get a camera, a small one, without an automatic flash. These can give you away at the most awkward times. If you

can afford them, telephoto lenses are always a good investment. You can take pictures of the bad guys from outside shooting distance that way.

Don't buy a flashy car. Get something comfortable and fast that doesn't stand out in the crowd. Remember, you will almost certainly have to tail someone in it, and there will come a time when your life will depend on your ability to make a fast getaway. Lastly, get something with a big back seat. You or your associates may have to sleep in it. Myself, I find the Universal Motors Roadking just about perfect. In my opinion, it's the finest Freelancer's car ever built and Capitol's greatest gift to humanity.

Last but not least, you'll need money. You can never have enough of this fine stuff. It is useful not only for the purchase of equipment but for bribing folk and keeping your liquor cabinet stocked. Don't leave home without it.

CONTACTS

In this business, it's not *what* you know, it's *who* you know.

You are nothing without contacts. This is the area that stumps most would-be Freelancers, but it's not really as hard to deal with as you might think. The movies and the vidshows have all left us with the image of the hard-bitten Freelancer who knows a man in the Cardinal's office and has the ear of the Assistant Chief of Police. Real life is not like this, but we all of us have contacts we can cultivate, if we know how.

Start small, and think of the folk around you. What about the guy who sells the *Chronicle* outside your office building? Be nice to him. Tip him on Holy Days. Strike up conversations when necessary. Do the same with the elevator boy in your building.

Why?

Because these people have eyes and because they are in the same place everyday. They notice things that are out of the ordinary. Believe me, they can save your life by telling you about the three suspicious characters who were asking about your movements or the large man who waited outside your office for three hours. Keep these folk happy, and it will serve you well.

Beyond that, we move into

more rarefied realms. I'm sure your previous career must have left you with at least one useful contact. If you were a cop, what about your old buddy on the force? If you were in the military what about that guy whose life you saved, the one who now works in private security? If you worked for the Prosecutor's office, you must still know folk in the legal

system. If you worked for a corporation, there must still be someone who likes you on the inside.

Don't forget your old pals. Make an effort to keep in touch. Talk to them about what they're doing if they are allowed to talk. These people can prove invaluable.

And don't forget that your associates might know some of the right people too. Cultivate them all. If someone asks you for a favor, and it won't cost you too much or get you into trouble, do it. In this business, you can never have too many people owing you.

During the course of your business, you will come across useful contacts, so cultivate them. Remember, a lot of these people will be in the same position as you. They never know when they'll need a favor from someone like you. Let them know you're the kind of guy who can deliver.

There are some people that it's essential for a Freelancer to know. Seek them out. Let them know you exist. Be friendly, but don't crawl (unless you're good at it). If worse comes to the worst, try and get something on them. Everybody has something they'd rather hide, and little digging might bring this into the light.

Don't underestimate the power of the press. Doors are open to journalists that are not open to humble Freelancers. Sometimes the rich and the powerful deign to talk to them. Sometimes the gossip that newshounds hear and never publish can be useful. Never forget that reporters are at the sharp end of one of the most powerful investigative machines in our society. Not only do they have access to great archives of information, they can also provide you with some of that useful true dope.

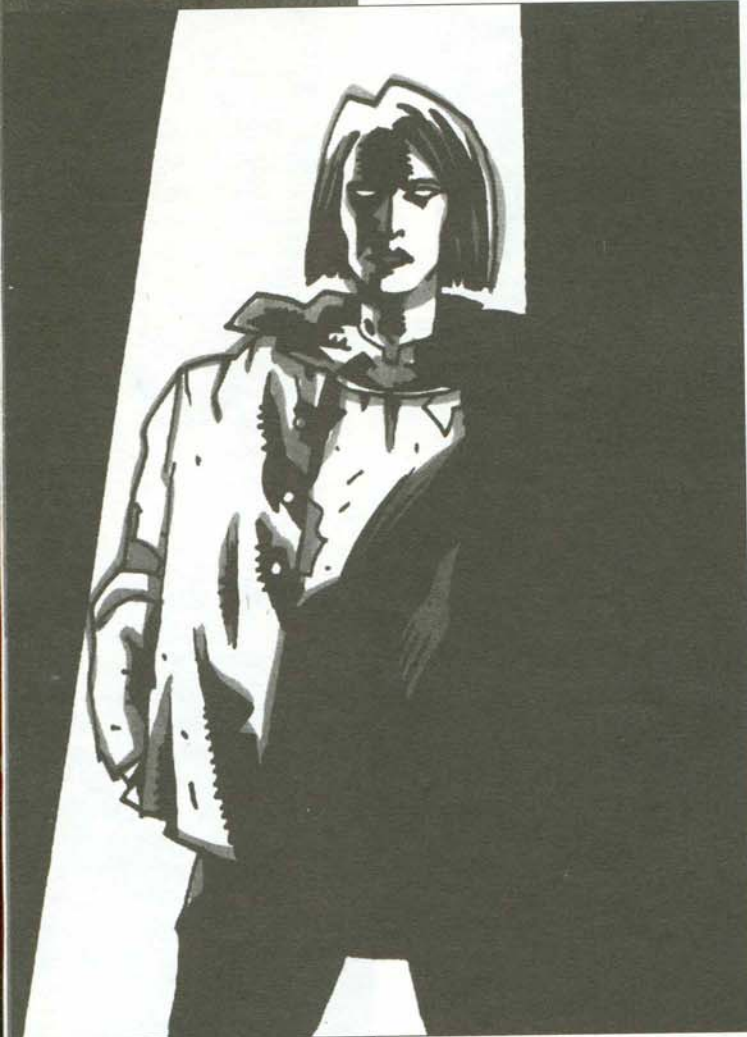
Hang out with the press hacks if you can. Listen to them. Flatter them. Feed them useful tidbits of information you might have come across. Promise them an exclusive on the big case you're working on (if you happen to be working on one and its the sort of thing that you can afford to expose.) Get them drunk—I've never yet met a reporter that didn't drink. Its part of their contract. Don't let them know too much about your business if it can't stand close scrutiny.

Lawyers are people you will encounter with all the regularity of salmonella outbreaks in Mishiman restaurants. Don't flinch from them. They are a powerful group in our society, and they often represent other still more powerful interest groups. Be polite to them. Be nice to your own lawyer. If a lawyer asks you to do a case for them, give them a discounted rate, and LET THEM KNOW you're doing it. Its a favor you may be able to call in later.

In your daily affairs, you'll come across shysters and small time attorneys. Small time lawyers often know small time crooks. These can be very handy people to know. These lawyers may even offer you work. Do it, and let them know you're a guy who can keep your mouth shut. Make a point of keeping in touch with them after the case. Make it look as if you're trolling for work. Remember, the point is just to find an excuse to talk to these people, to get a foot in the door, to get them talking and to remember your name. You must establish a relationship with them.

devious minds that run ISC-4 could ever be simple.

I wondered what exactly Taggart had been doing here, what could possibly have justified the giant airstrike that had destroyed this place? What could justify sending a crack force of ex-Blood Berets to search every village in the area for his presence? Rumor had he'd been running an arms smuggling ring in Bauhaus territory, supplying rebels and terrorists.



The same thing applies to corporate officials. If you're brother-in-law works for Capitol, then make sure you send him a bottle of hooch on Feastdays. If he's cheating on your sister, don't mention it. Hold it over his head. Don't do anything too elaborate. It might attract the attention of corporate security. If corporate security does become interested, make it absolutely clear that there is nothing sinister about what you're doing. Let them know you're available for work. You never know.

If you absolutely must make contact with a corporate employee with whom you have no personal connection, keep it casual. Find out where all the local Imperial office boys go for drinks after work and hang out there. Strike up a conversation. Or phone up a secretary with a business inquiry and get talking. Ask her out for a date. But above all, be careful. Deal with corporate people as cautiously as you would a rabid wolverine. The megacorps are very nasty and very powerful, and they don't take kindly to folk messing with their people.

That counts double for the Brotherhood. Yes, I know that they are our friends and they have the best interests of all humanity at heart. I've seen Father Avunculus, Brotherhood Inquisitor at the moviedromes too.

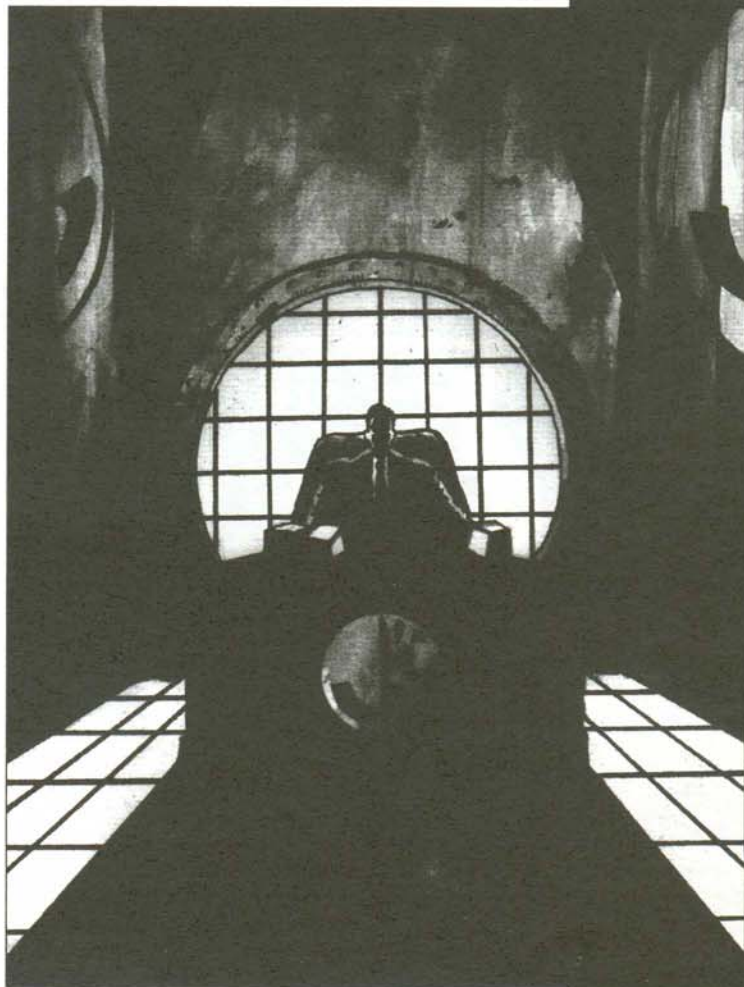
The thing is Inquisitors are not like him in the real world. Sure, there are rosy cheeked, friendly Brothers at the Cathedral. They show children round the memoritaphs and preach to us about the Cardinal's love for us all. Just don't expect the men from the Second Directorate to be like that. If you do, you may find yourself in a blood-stained cell below Luna cathedral confessing to more than your impure thoughts about your secretary. These people are holy warriors fighting a holy war, and they mean business. Never, ever, forget that.

Having said that, the Brothers can be among the best contacts imaginable. The Brotherhood's influence is felt in every nook and cranny of our worlds. It has people everywhere, and its arm is long. If you do them a favor, they won't forget. If you do them a wrong, you probably won't live to forget it. From time to time, you may find the Brotherhood tossing work and information your way. Don't imagine they're doing this for the good of your soul. The Brotherhood always has its reasons, even if they're not clear to you at the time.

Criminals are great contacts, for obvious reasons. They can get you hot cars cheap, hook you into the phone and power systems at low cost, arrange for untraceable guns and so on. The only problem is that, for obvious reasons, they don't like their business becoming well known. Many are prepared to kill to stop this happening. So, if you do happen to have a few buddies from your days on Ryker's Mountain work gang, make sure they know you can keep your mouth shut. Always protect your sources, and never give their names to the law. If you need to find a criminal-type quick, certain seedy lawyers, ex-cops or crime beat reporters might be able to furnish an introduction. Of cour-

se, it's always possible, if you're an ex-cop, ex-newshound or ex-criminal, that you'll know the appropriate people anyway. Not all of them will be bad. These are hard times, and many good and honest folk have been driven to a life of crime.

Lastly, a word about the servants of the Dark Apostles. Have nothing to do with them. If you come across any trace of the Dark, report it to the Brotherhood. Not only will your conscience be clear when next you confess, but you may establish yourself as a useful contact in the eyes of the Brothers. Conversely, you might just book yourself a one-way ticket to a confession cell. Even so, avoid doing business with heretics. Not only is your life in peril, so is your soul. No amount of money is worth that.



I wondered whether it had been a coincidence that the very village we had been about to visit had been bombed flat the morning we were supposed to arrive. The horrible thought that, if we'd made better time, those charred corpses could have been us sprang to mind. Coincidence? When I'm dealing with the deadly bureaucrats of the Imperial Security Command, I don't believe in coincidence.

«This is useless, Sarge,» said Curtis over the scrambled radio link. «We'll find nothing here. This place is toast.»

«Check the bodies,» Blain said. «Taggart was wearing dogtags.» It took ten minutes of

searching, but I found it, a small silver tag, dangling round the charred neck of a blackened corpse. It was Taggart all right. He must have been running for cover when he heard the planes come in. I tried not to think of what his final moments must have been like. I showed the tag to Blain. He smiled a brief, savage smile, took the tag and then gave the order to move out.

We were only a hundred meters from the jungle when I heard the choppers. I turned and saw them, armored Dragonflies, descending

BRIBES

Bribes are a useful adjunct to any Freelancer's life. They are a tool as much as a gun or a camera. Just remember, if you've got to bribe somebody, do it cautiously. Don't just hand them a wad of money and say, «This is a bribe.» (This does not apply if it happens to be your monthly stack of protection money.)

The trick with bribes is never to insult the other man's dignity or integrity. (Even if that is what you're doing.) Always let people save face. The best bribes are the subtlest and don't even involve cash changing hands. They are a favor for a favor—you-scratch-my-back-I'll scratch-yours.

The basic rule is that if you are going to bribe someone, make it worth their while to take it. A bribe has to be big enough to be tempting, yet not so big you can't pay it. Obviously, circumstance and the relative illegality of what you're asking will influence cost. You can pay a cop an «on-the-spot» fine to ignore your parking violation. Do it dis-

creetly, and I'm sure it'll work. Remember—not all private cops are well paid. Corporate police are, though, and they have higher standards of professional ethics drummed into them. It may not be worth their while accepting your on-the-spot fine if their large salaries and private health care plans are at risk. Be cautious with them.

Getting away with murder is more difficult. Even the poorest paid private cop is going to think twice about not arresting you. Ask yourself how much would this be worth to you to not report it. A year's salary? Two years? Remember you're asking someone to risk the work gang or the death chair for you. If you can afford it, go the whole way.

Other forms of bribes are routine in our society. Corporations regularly bribe contractors and vice-versa. Deals are often struck that are not in the best interests of anybody except the two parties negotiating. This form of bribery is big business. Best leave it to the lawyers.



MARKETING

There's no such thing as bad publicity for the beginning Freelancer. Get your ad in the papers and the phone book. Get a stack of calling cards made up and hand them out with liberal abandon. Tell satisfied clients to recommend you to their friends. Tell friends of unsatisfied clients that you're somebody else. Success breeds success, and word of mouth

can often be your best bet. If you have a friend at the Prosecutor's office who people always ask for a reliable man, make sure you are the reliable man he always mentions. Make sure he knows you appreciate it, too. If you can claim it was self defense, always leave one of your cards with the corpses after a firefight. The scandalsheets love it.

WHAT JOBS SHOULD YOU TAKE?

All of them. Just like there's no such thing as bad publicity, there's no such thing as a job too dirty. At least not when the client first comes through your door. Always find out what they want. Always find out how much they are willing to pay. You can back out later if the water gets too hot or too many people are dying of lead poisoning. Once you're in, do some research. See if there are any hidden traps or secret agendas. If there are and you don't like them, always refund the client's fee and walk. Of course, by this time, you may find out you are in too deep and someone wants you dead. In that case, do unto others as they would do unto you, only do it first.

Many Freelancers refuse some missions out of ethical

principles. Some won't carry out assassinations, even if these are justified and sanctioned by a megacorporation. Others think that there's no job so dirty that the money doesn't look good. I leave it up to your individual consciences to decide what sort of character you are. Just remember, at the end of the day, you've got to eat. Someday, it might come down to a choice between your life and somebody else's. Don't criticize until you've been there.

Bear in mind that many illegal missions pay better than legal ones. If you do have to do something of which you are not proud, then make sure your paycheck reflects this. And always remember that people who want other people quietly removed rarely like to leave loose ends hanging about.

WHEN THE BAD BOYS COME TO CALL



There will come a day when you think everything's going smooth as silk. There will be money in your pocket and booze in your hip flask. The coffee will smell almost as great as your secretary looks. You'll just have cracked a big case. Your name will be known. Your debt payments will be almost gone. You'll be feeling flush, certain that finally, at long last, you're getting somewhere. Life will be good.

That's the day when you'll hear a squawk from your outer office, then your door will be thrown open. Three very hard men in very bulky suits which conceal very big

guns will be standing there. They will be very polite but very firm. They will talk about insurance. They will talk about how dangerous your line of work can be. They will want money. You will finally have made it big enough to be shaken down.

You will have three choices:

- 1 Blow the suckers away
- 2 Join the gentlemen
- 3 Pay

All three have their problems.

As well as wasting expensive bullets, option one will inevitably involve a confrontation with the organization that sent these men. That could be very painful if it's a large and very well-organized group. If you do intend to waste them, I would suggest that you do some research first and find out whether you are up to it. If you think you are, by all means go ahead. You will have rid humanity of some pond scum and done wonders for your reputation as a hard case.

However, it may be that these men seem to belong to an organization that is just too large for a small time Freelancer like yourself. You could suggest integration and the sharing of your resources. Of course, this means that you will have effectively gone back to working for someone else, someone who will be taking a cut of your hard earned cash. On the positive side, you will still be alive.

It may be that your new friends are not in the market for partners. You will be faced to ask yourself a tough question. Can you look yourself in the mirror when you shave in the morning if you cave in to these guys? The answer is, of course, you always knew you'd look good with a beard.

Alternatively, you could make a run for it and start all over again somewhere else. By now you maybe have enough dough to afford that office/condo at Grand Square? Just maybe it will take a handful of armed neanderthals for you to realize it's time to move on?

AND FINALLY...

...there are three golden rules for any Freelancer. These are:

- 1 Cash only. Nobody can buy anything with promises.
- 2 Get at least 20% up front. You've got to eat.
- 3 Prioritize your expenses. In descending order, you need

to worry about new clothes, salaries for your employees, taxes and rent.

Follow these rules, and you can't go wrong. So what are you waiting for? Get out there and do business!

from the sky. I saw the earth kicked up at Magillan's feet before I heard the crack of the bullet being fired. I watched the man being blown apart, even as I sprinted for cover. Sweat ran down my back. I kept expecting a surge of pain and the splintering of bone as a heavy caliber bullet ripped through my armor. I dived the last few meters, plunging like a swimmer into the new, green undergrowth that has already started to sprout at the jungle's edge. I heard the clipped voices of the

squad giving situation updates over the radio. Blain was calmly giving orders. I heard the blaze of Invaders as the squad returned fire.

Some instinct told me to keep radio silence, that the mission had

MISSIONS

Most adventures for Freelancers take the form of a mission. The player characters will invariably be approached by someone who needs their services. They will hopefully manage to perform their assigned task and collect their fee. Sometimes their next mission may

involve finding and collecting their fee from a runaway client. These missions should be exciting, intriguing and hopefully give the players a chance to exercise their special skills and contacts. When, as a GM, you come to design your own missions, you should consider the following things.

STRUCTURE

At their simplest, all missions follow the same basic pattern. There is *the opening*, where the players are briefed and get involved in the mission. There is *the investigation*, an extended middle section where the players gather clues, skirmish with the opposition and start to get some idea of what's really going on. And there is *the climax*, when the players finally get to resolve the case, usually in a burst of violence which will leave most of their opponents dead, in jail or fled.

The opening is the trickiest part. You need a hook that immediately gets the players' attention in a striking and original manner. This can be as simple as having the stereotypical beautiful Bauhaus blonde walk into their office, burst into terrified tears and plead with our heroes for their help. Or a mission could open with a barrage of gunfire from unknown assailants that lets our heroes know that someone is out to kill them and they'd better find out who and why—fast! However you choose to open the mission, you should try to give the players an urgent reason for investigating the matter. A request from the Inquisition is always a good way of doing this. It contains an element of compulsion (who in their right mind is going to cross the Inquisition?) and an element of menace (if the Inquisition is involved then it has to be BAD news.)

The investigation can be summed up in one word: complications. This is the stage of the adventure when our heroes discover that things are not quite as they seem, when obstacles are placed in their way. The Bauhaus blonde's missing husband turns out upon investigation to be a mobster on the run. The missing person the Inquisition is looking for is a powerful heretic. The reason the Inquisition are using our heroes to find him is that he could sense the presence of a Brother. The people who shot at our heroes are a mob

of psychotic killers who hunt people for sport. They got our heroes' names from the phone book. This is the point where armed opposition starts showing up to menace, harass and or even attempt to kill our heroes.

The climax is where the heroes hold all the parts of the puzzle and set out to resolve it. Perhaps they are surprised by what they find. Perhaps the Bauhaus blonde is not the mobster's real wife. Perhaps she is an assassin sent by another mob. Perhaps our heroes finally find the heretic only to discover him in the throes of performing some arcane and nasty ritual. Perhaps they are lured into a trap by their hunters.

Anyway you should give the players an exciting way of resolving the problem set out during the opening. Violent or not? Well, that's up to your players. Don't force them to use violence if they feel bad about it, but if their Firearms SVs average like seventeen plus, let them use their hardware.

Any loose ends can be noted as hooks for further adventures. Maybe the blonde escapes? Maybe the ritual that the heretic was performing causes some strange psychic force to be loosed later? Maybe the psychotic killer-mob are the result of another failed Cyberchemicals experiment? Who knows?



OPPOSITION

When designing a mission, you should keep the level of opposition reasonable. Try to tailor things to the strength of the party. There is no sense in sending a bunch of reporters and detectives into battle with a Nephrite and a full company of Undead Legionnaires. They are simply going to die. You should, in the interest of fairness, give the adventurers some chance of surviving. One way of doing this is to make sure that the players have the edge, either numerically or in terms of weapons and armor. Remember, to complete a mission the players have to survive. It's no fun having your character blown away every time he steps out of his office.

You should try and cater to the tastes of your players, too. If they are combat freaks, give them lots of gunplay. If they like solving puzzles, give them a mystery they can get their teeth into. Not all encounters need be violent, and not all opposition comes from men with guns. Obstructive corporate officials, interfering clients and useless hirelings can all help provide interesting obstacles in a mission.

Whatever you do, try to make sure every player character has an important part to play. Give your players a chance to use their special skills and show off their knowledge. Give everyone something to do, and your players will be a lot happier.



been compromised. I kept on my stomach and wriggled like a snake through the moist sludge of decomposing leaves. Ferns lashed my face. Overhead, a cloud of bright birds took to the sky, frightened by the sudden outbreak of war.

Over the radio, I heard the voices of the squad, and I constructed the story of the battle in my mind.

Thompson and Cleary were pinned down over by a fallen tree. I could hear the thunder of Thompson's Destroyer Light Machine Gun as he tried to sell his life dearly. Blain was trying to rally the squad about three hundred meters away to my right.

I froze as, about three meters away, a group of Venusian Rangers, skull-masked and silent as ghosts, raced along the trail towards the sounds of gunfire. Their white armor made them look like specters risen from the ash of the dead village. I could have cut them down with one swift burst, but what was the

point? I didn't know how many more of them might be following along behind.

My heart pounded. My spine was slick with sweat. I counted to ten and then made myself move. From the corner of my eye, I caught a flash of white, and I threw myself across the trail and hit the dirt rolling. A hail of automatic fire kicked up little plumes in the dirt where I had just been.



So much for stealth, I thought, and snapped off a burst with the Invader. I heard a man scream and fall. I raced off through the undergrowth, keeping my head down, trying to get as far from the place I'd been as possible before the pursuit started. There were just too many of them to fight, and if I wanted answers to what was going on, I'd need to stay alive. I half-scrambled and half-slid down a long slope, clutching at hanging vines to slow my fall. The Invader slid from my grasp. I hit the dirt rolling and came to my feet. Even as I did so, I saw that I was staring down the barrels of about ten AG-17's. The Skull masks looked impassive, but I knew I was not far from death. Briefly I considered trying to leap for my gun. Very briefly.

«Don't shoot,» I said. «I surrender.»

FROM THE FILES OF MICHAEL MCBRIDE

To get you thinking of your own missions, here are some that we have had released to us from the files of Michael McBride, Freelancer. They

should give not only some idea of the structure of a mission, but also how adventurers can go about solving them.

TRACKING THE HERETIC

«I knew it was going to be bad when I got a call from the Brothers. Inquisitor Kane wanted to see me as soon as was convenient. I thought about refusing for all of five seconds—I've never liked the thought of those blood-stained cells under Luna Cathedral—then I took a cab down there. As a rule, I try to keep the Brotherhood happy.

I was ushered into a meditation cell. The Inquisitor was waiting. He handed me a file. Find this man, he said. That was all. The meeting was over.

The file was sketchy. It gave the name, age and last known address of one Lucius Theroux. There was a brief description appended. It was all on that thick, bonded paper the Brotherhood uses. At the top of every page was stamped the Inquisition seal. Just the sight of it made me nervous.

I called the office and put my legmen on the case. Icepick went off to the Archives to check on Theroux's records. The Bruiser contacted his old buddies in Missing Persons. I wondered what I'd got myself into. I tried the address. Of course, there was no one there. I talked to the neighbors.

Theroux hadn't been there for weeks. They told me he was a very strange man, and he had become stranger yet before he vanished. He had recently acquired a jade amulet. Some of the neighbors swore they had seen him fondling it and talking to it. Every door I knocked on, I got the same story. Theroux was a lunatic. On the fifth door, I got lucky. The guy was an amateur photographer. He took photographs of everything in the neighborhood. He had a photograph of Theroux talking to his amulet. The neighbor thought it funny. Theroux looked like a strange character right enough. Middle height, silver hair, lined face, bright, piercing eyes. The runes on his amulet were disturbing.

I got in touch with Icepick. Records showed Theroux had a sister. Icepick had talked to her. She claimed that she hadn't heard from her brother in years. Icepick said she had seemed very scared. He had left one of our cards in case she changed her mind and wanted to talk. He had looked in through her window after he'd finished the interview. The sister had phoned someone. The Bruiser had turned up absolutely zip. We decided to regroup at the office and see if we could come up with anything. To be honest, I was absolutely baffled.

When I got to the office, I could see green flames blazing inside. A wall of heat drove me back from the door. For a second, I was convinced that I could see a humanoid figure in there but that was impossible. Nothing could survive in such an inferno. Could it? I grabbed a fire extinguisher and tried to do something about the blaze. The flames never faltered, not even after the fire brigade started hosing it down.

As suddenly as they had sprung up, the flames vanished. I thought I saw a figure racing from the office. When I looked closer, I saw glowing footprints outlined in flame. Even as I watched they faded. I didn't have much choice—I followed them. Icepick and the Bruiser came after me very nervously.

The prints led down and down into the basement of the building, and from there into the



network of ancient tunnels that run right below the city, a legacy from those near-forgotten days when there was no air or heat. We broke out our torches and plunged into the labyrinth. The word *trap* was never far from my lips.

The attack was sudden and terrifying. You may have heard rumors of cannibal tribes of mutants beneath the city. I can tell you that they're not just rumors. Half-naked savages with filed teeth and mad eyes attacked us. In the middle, ordering them on, was Lucius Theroux.

Things got pretty hairy. They had the numbers. We had the firepower. In the end, we broke them, and the survivors vanished into the darkness, Theroux with them. Supporting

a badly wounded Icepick, we were in no condition to follow. We just followed the route back up.

After that, I was called back to the Cathedral. The Inquisitor listened impassively to my story. I wished I could see the face below his mask and maybe read what he was thinking. In the end, he merely handed me an envelope. In it was a banker's draft, drawn against the Cardinal's Bank of Luna, for the sum of 35,000 crowns.

The money covered the repairs to the office and Icepick's medical bills. That was all. I wondered how the Inquisitor knew. I wondered when I would meet Theroux again too.»



LOST PROPERTY

«It seemed like a simple enough case. The client was a dumb jerk whose car had been stolen. He wanted it found. To be more exact, he wanted the briefcase he had left in the front seat found. I asked him who he worked for. When he told me it was Capitol, I almost refused the mission there and then. It doesn't pay to mess with the big boys. Why not simply report the matter to Capitol Security, I suggested helpfully? He turned pale, and that was when I knew. I told him if he wanted me to work for him, he'd better give me the truth, and no guff.

He almost broke down and cried. The briefcase contained important blueprints. He's been taking them home to work on them after hours. They should never have left his office. If Capitol found out, he'd be fired or worse. His story stunk like a week-old fish, but the ten grand he offered me up front helped plug my nostrils. I figured if my client had been engaging in a little freelance industrial espionage and had been ripped off himself, it wasn't my problem. I was pretty short of cash at the time.

I called in the legmen. Icepick, I sent to check out all the car thieves. The Bruiser was to check out the shady car dealers, see if he could find a car that fitted the description of my client's vehicle. Me, I talked to a few guys you might describe as criminals if you are the sort who likes dodging bullets. To cut a long story short, we found the car. We leaned on the dealer. He gave us the name of the man who had sold him it, in strict confidence. We checked out that man's apartment. We found the car thief there. He was wearing a nice new hand-tailored Bauhaus suit and drinking champagne from the slipper of a very expensive blonde. We asked him about the briefcase. The Bruiser was not gentle. In the

end, he told us that he'd opened it and couldn't believe his eyes. It contained blueprints with the Capitol logo on it. Through a fence, he had sold them to Bauhaus. Well, I thought, that's the end of the matter. No way was I hitting a megacorp.

On the way back to the office, a black Bauhaus sedan pulled up beside our car. The men inside wore good suits. The whole ensemble was set off very nicely by matching Panzerknacker assault rifles. The men proceeded to show us how to use them. Bauhaus security had decided to call on us. I swore that if I lived through this I would defenestrate that car thief. He must have phoned the Bauhaus offices. We traded shots all the way to the West Sector Bridge. Things looked bad till the Bruiser managed to finally force the sedan through the barrier. I watched the car fall into the great concrete canyon between the skyscrapers. It was a long time before it hit the street below. Flowers of fire blossomed in the road.

I knew then, I was going to die. If a megacorp wants you dead, your life is over. I wracked my brain for a way out, and when I came up with a plan I thought was crazy enough to work, I called Major Strasser at the local Bauhaus security operation. I suggested a deal. To my surprise, he listened.

In the end it all worked out. My client got the plans back from Bauhaus. He managed to keep his job. Me, Icepick and the Bruiser got to live. Major Strasser got a new agent in the local Capitol office. He paid us 70,000 crowns for setting up the whole deal. I didn't even betray client confidentiality. I just told the client the only way he would ever get the plans back was if he went to see Strasser. Strasser has the whole thing on tape. I can't find it in me to feel sorry for the client.»

THE TROPHY HUNTER

«I had heard of the Colonel. When I seconded to the Blood Berets he had been quite famous. He had led several successful missions against the Dark Legion on Venus, including the strike that destroyed the Citadel of Valpurgius. He had been honored for it by the Serenity herself. I was surprised that he'd called on me. I had left Imperial's service under a cloud. I was even more surprised when he told me what he wanted.

He needed me to find a collection of artifacts that he and his men had found in the ruins of the Citadel. There were five artifacts in all. He gave me a list of the owners and their names. I was to find them and inquire how much the owners wanted to part with them. I was suspicious. Who would want artifacts found in a Citadel? Why would anyone keep such things? And why did the



Colonel want them?

Good questions, he replied, and by various subtle means, without ever quite coming out with it, he led me to believe he was working for ISC-4 and this was part of an investigation. This all certainly sounded weird enough to come under Four's jurisdiction, so I decided to believe the 10,000 crowns he offered me.

Icepick and the Bruiser hit the trail and found the soldiers easily enough. They were all in Luna. I spent the whole day on the phone and then on the Underground shuttling across the city. I talked to every one of them, and none of them would part with their trophies. They wouldn't even talk about them or how they found them. Things were getting weirder. That night I called on the Colonel. He was staying at the Imperial Grand. I told him the bad news. He said no

The cell was small. My bruises were bad. I could taste blood in my mouth. The air smelled of the disinfectant that had been used to wash away a lot of blood stains. Our Bauhaus friends like things clean and efficient. I was sure that once they'd extracted the information they wanted from me, I would be disposed off cleanly and efficiently.

I forced myself to get up, to make my battered body work. I tried to work out what had happened. The operation had been compromised. I wondered by whom. I had my suspicions. It was a pity I would never get to act on them.

The door opened. I flinched, thinking that this was it, my life was over. I was surprised to see it was Blain. All my suspicions were confirmed. He had been the one who led us into the trap. He had been the one who had guided the squad to their doom. He had been the one working for Bauhaus.

«Why?» I said, asking the only question that sprang to mind. I really wanted an answer. What could make a former Blood Beret betray his comrades.

«Quick.» he said. «Put this on. We've got to get out of here.» It was a Bauhaus uniform. It nearly fitted me too.

I almost didn't move. I suspected another trap. I was going to be a spy, shot while trying to escape. Still any action seemed preferable to none. And every step took me closer to Blain. If he betrayed me again I would have one chance to kill him with my bare hands. He must have seen the smile on my face. He brought up the gun hastily.

«Don't even think about it,» he said.

We moved out into the corridor. I saw the guard. He lay with his head at an odd angle. We moved quickly.

«Why?» I asked him again.

«They've wanted Taggart for



matter, he would talk to the men himself. Maybe they would listen to him. I gave him their addresses, took my fee and left.

The next day, Icepick called with the bad news. The first name on the list I had given him yesterday was dead. The poor sucker had nose-dived under a train on his way to work. I had a bad feeling about this. I called the Grand but the Colonel was out. I tried phoning the other names on the list. I could only get through to one. I got over there fast. The old soldier still wouldn't talk. He looked scared. I toyed with beating the truth out of him, but this guy had been a Blood Beret. He might have beaten the

tar out of me.

I told him his old friend was dead. He didn't look surprised. All day we sat waiting till finally darkness came. The phone rang. It was Icepick. Number 2 on the list had died. Cerebral hemorrhage he said. Shortly after that the Bruiser called in. Number 3 was dead. A car crash.

I suggested to the soldier that we

move out. He wanted none of it. I sat there feeling guilty because I knew that somehow I was the cause of all this. I checked my gun, and we waited for the inevitable.

It happened. The gaslight flickered. There was a draft as the door opened. I opened fire. In the muzzle flash I saw something huge and dark and terrible. It gestured at me, and a wave of force hurled me across the room. Everything went dark. When I came around, the walls were painted with blood. The hidden safe was open, and whatever had been in it was gone. The old soldier lay on the carpet. Slowly it dawned on me that the ringing in my ears was the phone. It was Icepick. Number 5 was still alive, and he was ready to talk.

Bruised and bloody, I headed out. I reached the apartment at the same time as the Bruiser. Number 5 shivered and quaked and seemed embarrassed and scared. He had sold the Colonel his artifact he said. He had broken the oath he and his comrades had sworn twenty years ago. Slowly and numbly, he told us what had really happened in Valpurgius' citadel.

They had fought their way into its darkest heart and confronted the Nepharite himself. They had destroyed the artifact that was the source of his strength and driven him off, but they had all been drawn to the thing's pulsing remains. They had been fascinated, for the thing was beautiful, and something about it compelled them to take it with them. They were not quite lost to honor, though. They swore that they would keep it safe. Each would protect his own piece. They would never reassemble it. It would be a trophy, a reminder of their victory over the Dark. So they had deluded themselves. Each had coveted the others' trophies, but they had never sought each other out. They had remained that strong-willed at least. Now it looked like the Colonel was going to reassemble Valpurgius' power source.

The old man showed us a bill of lading. His piece of the artifact was en route to Victoria, in the asteroid belt.

There was only one thing to do. I called Inquisitor Kane. The old man was led away to those blood-stained cells beneath the Cathedral. Kane told me to pack my bags. He and I were going to Victoria. He needed someone who knew the territory. He gave me a draft for 75,000 crowns to cover my expenses. I knew things were going to get bad. I visited the Sage, an old Mishiman holy man of my acquaintance. I purchased an ancient holy symbol from him, then I did something I had not done in a long time. I prayed.»



years. He was running a destabilization ring, filtering arms and equipment into the Bauhaus zone.»

«So?»

«The terrorist attack two years ago. The one that killed my wife and kids.»

Suddenly I knew where this was leading. «It was Taggart, wasn't it?»

He nodded.

«That's why you volunteered to lead this mission.»

«I needed to find out where he was.»

«Why the airstrike?»

«Wasn't my idea. I wanted to kill him with my bare hands. It wasn't Bauhaus either. If they wanted me dead, I wouldn't be here now.»

«You called the V-Rangers in, though.»

He shook his head. «I had a deal with them. They wanted Taggart alive. I wasn't going to let them have him. He was all I ever wanted from this deal. Getting him was my reason for living. They came to investigate the airstrike. Things got out of hand.»

THE ORB OF PROMISES

«The trip from Luna to the Asteroid belt was uneventful. It had been a long time since I had been there. It hadn't changed much. Imperial has always been a profoundly conservative culture. I made a few calls to old contacts. The Inquisitor paid his respects to his brethren. We headed straight to the Colonel's residence. He was at home. He had not left it for the last month. He had been very ill. We talked to the old officer. The Inquisitor listened and pronounced that he was speaking the truth. Whoever had visited my office, it had not been the Colonel, just someone who looked very like him. We had hit a brick wall.

Following a hunch, I headed back to the spaceport. I spent a couple of hours talking to the baggage handlers and the cabbies. The Light was with me. I found the cabbie who had taken the Colonel's doppelganger into the City. For 1,000 crowns, he could even remember which hotel. I was unsurprised to find it was the Grand. I called Kane and headed for the Grand. We came through the door of his hotel room with our guns out and

half a dozen of the Brotherhood's finest troopers behind us.

It was no use. Our quarry was gone. Kane was in a cold rage. He proceeded to tear the room apart. His vandalism was rewarded when he found a sketch of the

reassembled artifact in a desk drawer. It showed a fat man holding out a glowing sphere.

The sphere was covered in intricate runes. Kane went suddenly quiet. The statue was of the Dark Apostle Semai holding the Orb of Promises, he said. This was worse than he had thought. Tired and angry, we returned to the Brotherhood's monastery.

I did not sleep well that night, and my nightmares were full of fat men holding out orbs that promised impossible rewards. Visions of the Colonel and dark tunnels and ancient chambers filled my mind. I awoke to the sound of gunfire.

There was rioting in the street. A strange mad rage filled me, and I felt the urge to go and join in. I kept my hand on the holy symbol I had purchased, and slowly the unnatural rage faded. In the streets, the violence intensified. Her Serenity's soldiers were meeting the rioters with their usual restraint. I raced out into the corridor. Kane joined me. He told me this rioting was not natural. It was being caused by



an outside force. He did not have to draw me a diagram explaining who was responsible. I followed the Inquisitor into the strife-filled street.

He led me through the rampaging mob till we came to a massive mine shaft entrance. I remembered it from my dream. We went on down oddly familiar corridors, past giant pipes and under enormous ducts. We emerged in a deep, dark cave. The Colonel was waiting. He had the statue in his hand. I shot him in the head. He laughed, and his form writhed, and standing before us was a towering Nephrite. Kane spoke his name: Valpurgius. The dark creature had waited a long time for his vengeance on the corporation that had destroyed his Citadel. He told us so. The Colonel had destroyed his home. Now he would destroy the Colonel's. It would have sounded insane if I had not seen what had happened in the streets. Now that he had finally regained his artifact, the Nephrite's power was awesome. I thought I was going to die. I had reckoned without Kane.

I felt a sudden wrench as the Inquisitor called upon the Art. The Nephrite countered. Titanic energies flickered back and forth. I took careful aim at the statue. Valpurgius sensed what I was doing, and a wave of green flame washed over me. The Holy symbol on my breast heated. It was



white hot against my chest. I lived, though, and squeezed the trigger. The Nephrite staggered and screamed. Kane chanted a spell and the monster began to decompose. I pumped a few bullets into its body for luck.

I returned from Victoria with the blessing of Cardinal Victor Rubicus, 150,000 crowns and the holy symbol of the Brotherhood branded into my chest. The holy symbol I had purchased had melted and run. I'll carry the mark till the day I die.»



We headed up a flight of stairs toward the roof. No one tried to stop us. If it wasn't Bauhaus who had run the airstrike, who was it? Then, as I stepped into the moist night air, I knew. Taggart had been going rogue. Four had sanctioned sending Blain after him, and they must have known what was going on. Blain was on the edge, and he knew ISC had backed the terrorist operation that killed his family. He had been cutting deals with Bauhaus to get at Taggart. I had been caught up in several intelligence fiascoes. I wondered about the others. I thought about the timing of the airstrike. Four could kill half-a-dozen birds with one stone, and Bauhaus would get the blame.

Below us, I could see the camp, a typical Bauhaus jungle fort, all concrete and barbed wire and trenches. Doubtless there were minefields out there, too. There were helicopters on the roof, fueled and waiting. We climbed into one, and I began the pre-flight checks. Blain got out again. The last I saw of him, he was heading back downstairs. He was a strange man, and I wondered why he had saved me. I asked him.

«You were sorry about the kids,» he said. I pulled back on the stick, and the helicopter leapt skywards. About a minute later there was a huge flash behind me, as if someone had planted a demo charge in the fort's main ammunition dump. I gunned the engine. The night was dark, and I had a long way to go.

EXPENDABLE

«I knew I was in trouble when Major Strasser called at my office. He was polite and as icily well-mannered as only a Bauhaus aristocrat can be. He talked about my former client, the one who had worked for Capitol and lost his car. I did not like the way the conversation was heading, and I told Strasser so. He ignored my outburst as if I had never spoken.

Our mutual friend was getting nervous, he said. He was convinced that Capitol security was onto him. His department was being investigated. It was only a matter of time before he was caught. Or more likely, before his panic gave him away, Strasser added nastily. Our mutual friend wanted out. I asked him what that had to do with me. Strasser told me.

Our friend was going to vanish. Bauhaus was going to relocate him. The megacorp treats its agents well, and they didn't want the embarrassment of having one found in place by Capitol. I was to contact him, take him to a safe house and baby-sit him until transit to Heimburg could be arranged.

Why me, I asked? Because our friend knew me and trusted me a little. He would know it wasn't part of a setup. Strasser said all this with a straight face, too. I knew the real reason. Deniability. If Capitol caught up with us, I had no immediate connection with Bauhaus. Sure, both sides

would know the truth, but they could both pretend they didn't. Face would be saved on both sides. I told Strasser I didn't like it. He asked me if 250,000 crowns would change my mind.

To cut a long story short, Icepick wanted nothing to do with it. I arranged for the Bruiser to cover my back. He brought in a couple of reliable, closemouthed friends, Stiletto Bob and the Highwayman. We picked my ex-client up outside his apartment one night and drove him to a place out in the Perimeters. I drove the client. The others followed in a plain sedan. As far as we knew, we weren't followed.

The next few days were the worst of my life. Every time I heard footsteps in the corridor, I thought of Capitol agents. When dirigibles floated in the sky overhead, I imagined Free Marines landing on the roof. Every time I listened to the radio, I expected to hear of a Capitol manhunt. In the end, I didn't even know something was wrong till the door blew off its hinges and the corporate troopers came right in. It was instinct that threw me flat on the floor. It was training that made sure I held my breath. I saw the Bruiser go down, his chest stitched with bullet holes. I saw the Highwayman fall clutching a shattered arm. I rolled behind the couch and took



the pin out of the grenade I had been saving for just this occasion. I threw it at the incoming troopers and listened to their screams. Then I blew a hole in the thin plasterboard walls with my invader. I ran through into the next apartment and out into the corridor. I gunned down two soldiers and kept moving. There was no sense taking the fire escape, it would be watched. Instead I headed down toward the basement and the web of tunnels that I knew fanned out from there. I hid in them for two days before I emerged.

I called Strasser. He told me that our client had called his girlfriend on the phone. The call had been traced. I cursed the client for an idiot and headed back to the office, hoping that Capitol wouldn't stoop to reprisals against a small Freelancer now that they had got what they wanted. I found myself glad that the Bruiser and his friends were dead and couldn't talk. And I hated myself for that.»

OLD FLAME

«The man from ISC-4 was so jovial that I knew he wanted something really badly. He complemented me on what Inquisitor Kane and I had done on Victoria. Her Serenity's Government was very grateful, yes, indeed. I almost told him that Her Serenity's gratitude and 20 crowns would buy me a beer, but I didn't. Even after all these years, I could not show disrespect for the Monarch. It just goes to prove how much of your upbringing stays with you.

Yes, indeed. They were grateful. And if I could see myself clear to performing one more small service for the Crown, perhaps a way could be found to bring me back into the Imperial fold. I almost laughed. I had been outside the clan structure for so long that the offer held very little attraction. But I was still enough of an Imperial to be interested. I was even more interested when he told me the nature of the small favor.

He showed me her picture, and even after all this time, it took my breath away. You never forget your first love. He looked at me expectantly, and I said her name: Sabrina Axelthorpe. He nodded approvingly, then told me she was an agent and that she had gone over to the Darkness.

I couldn't believe it. It wasn't possible. Perhaps not, he replied but we don't know that for certain. She had been working for Four, he told me, assigned to infiltrate Securum, a division of Cybertronic, and she had not reported to her control in months. I looked at him. I'd been outside Imperial long enough not to share all their prejudices against Cybertronic. He showed me a small fanatic smile, and I knew there would be no reasoning with him.

I was to make contact with Sabrina, he said. I knew her well. I could tell if she was subtly...different. I could tell if she had been turned. He didn't need to add that I was expendable either. There was no sense in Four throwing another good agent away on this one.

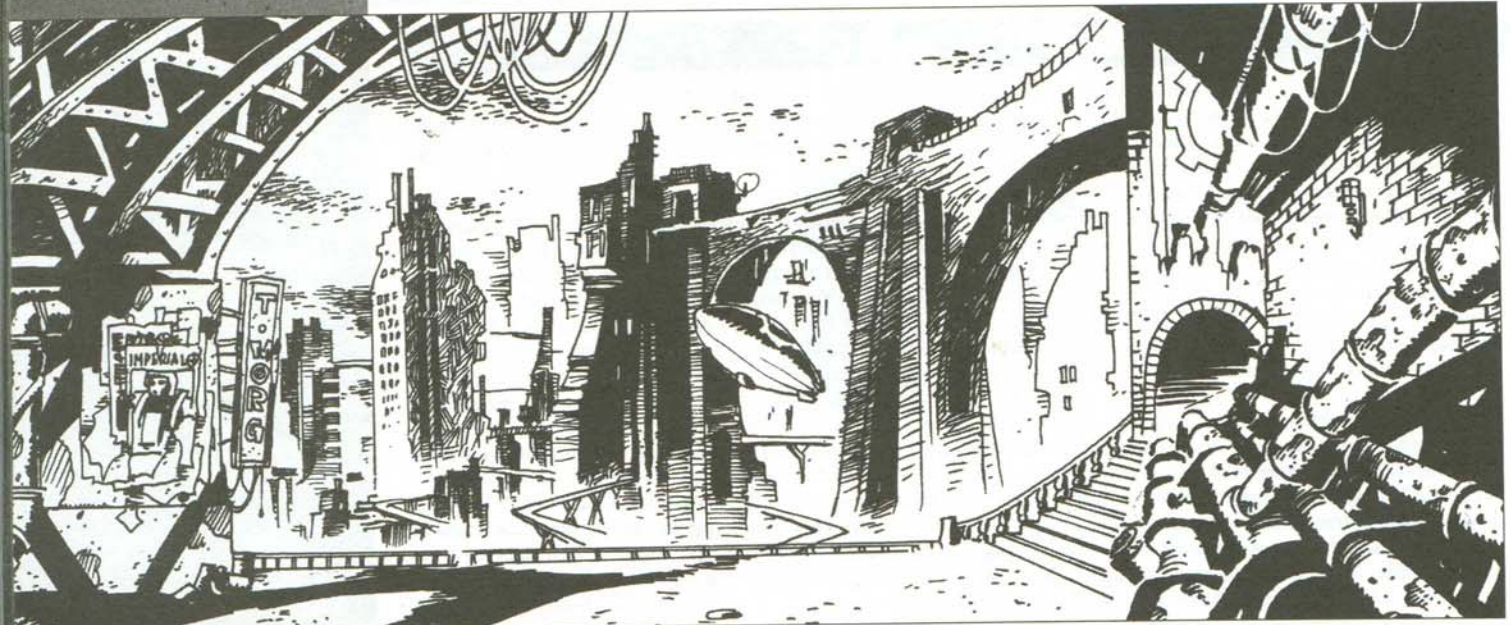
That's how I ended up standing in the rain outside Securum's offices. I almost didn't accidentally didn't bump into her. It all seemed sordid somehow. I did it, though. At the end of the day, it was something I needed to know.

It all went smoothly enough. What a coincidence, meeting like this, eh? Nice seeing you again. We exchanged phone numbers. I flattered myself that she was as pleased to see me as I was to see her.

Two nights later we met for a drink. It was fun. We talked. We filled in the gaps in our history. We remembered old times. We wondered why we had ever gone our separate ways. We went back to her apartment. It was a secure place, under Cybersecurity guard. In the morning, she seemed almost disappointed when I began to talk about Four.

She told me she was in deep, that she had come across something big. So big that she felt she was being watched. She had kept quiet, running silent, waiting for her opportunity. I felt for her. I know what it's like to be under deep cover, to be scared of your shadow, to think that everyone is watching you, waiting for you to slip. I told her this. I told her to make the break. I told her that I was still a little in love with her and found to my surprise that it was true. She cried, just relieved to have someone to talk with after the long, lonely months. She told me that she would meet me at my office that evening. She would bring the files.

I waited for her, remembering what she had been like, and why we had split. Things had not been as rosy as we'd pictured. She had been cold and driven, ambitious beyond belief. I tried to forget that and remind myself of the good times. It was a long wait. I was relieved when I heard her footsteps outside the office. She came in. There was a strange wild look in her eyes and a P1000 in her hand. She pointed its muzzle right at my head. I'm sorry, she said. I'm sorry they sent you. So am I, I said, and pulled the trigger of the Bolter I held below the desk.»



CAMPAIGNS

At their simplest, campaigns are just groups of missions involving the same characters. During the course of the campaign, some characters will gain experience and grow and others will die or retire. There are many ways a campaign can be made more enjoyable for the characters.

ONGOING STORYLINES

Not all stories need to be resolved in one mission. Often you can have a linked series of adventures that have a continuing storyline.

For example, in one mission the players may come across a cult of heretics. During their next mission they may discover this same cult had been behind a series of terrorist attacks. Later, in another scenario, when investigating a criminal mastermind, they may find that the cult provided him with weapons and the services of their monsters as enforcers. Finally, the characters may decide to track the heretics down, or the heretics may decide to come and get the characters for interfering in their plans. In this way, a single storyline can be developed through a series of missions. This can be particularly satisfying if the GM uses a process of slow revelation so that the players only gradually realize what is going on and that all these seemingly unconnected elements are linked.

CONTINUING NPCs

The players may well encounter the same NPCs over and over again. These NPCs don't necessarily have to be villains. They can be employers or minor characters or rivals. Examples from McBride's adventures above are Major Strasser, Inquisitor Kane and the Nepharite Valpurgius. Using the same NPCs means that your players will have a sense of a consistent universe, as well as long running foes to hate and powerful allies to impress. Sometimes seemingly minor characters will take on a life of their own and become major parts of your campaign. This is great when it happens.

And remember, the power of the Dark Symmetry is strong. Just because the players think an enemy is dead, doesn't make it so. Perhaps Valpurgius may yet return to take revenge on McBride.

ACTIONS HAVE CONSEQUENCES

Sometimes the player's actions will directly affect their future adventures. Perhaps the villain who escaped them will come back for revenge. Perhaps the favor they did the Brotherhood has been recorded and can be called in. Perhaps the megacorp they crossed will decide to take vengeance. Slowly but surely your campaign will come to life as the players begin to take charge of their own destiny and their power and influence grows. This is a thing you should encourage.



STYLE

As you play, you will gradually come to discover the style of play that suits yourself and your players. You may discover that you like running violent slaughterfests or that you prefer running intricate mysteries.

Providing your players are enjoying themselves, this is fine. You will find that trouble arises when your players enjoy a different style of play than yourself. If all they want

to do is firefight their way through the jungles of Venus, then there's little point in giving them murder mysteries to solve. In these situations, the best thing to do is compromise. Try and put in enough of what entertains you to enjoy yourself, but give the players what they want. After all, the idea of playing *Mutant Chronicles* is for everyone to have fun.

TOPE

After a while you will discover that your campaign has taken on a tone. McBride's adventures are dark investigations in a deeply corrupt world. This does not mean that yours have to be the same. You can run jaunty fast-paced adventures if you want, or you can run disturbing and terrifying horror stories about the fight against the Dark Legion.

As always, the trick is to find something that suits yourself and your players. There's no sense in drowning your players in vats of blood and human entrails if what they

want are snappy, cool detective adventures. When starting your campaign, aim for a mix of different styles and tones and see what you and your players enjoy most. This should give you some clues for the unique direction your campaign should take. You never know, you might be surprised.

Just remember that the *Mutant Chronicles* takes place against a wide and varied backdrop. There's room for every style and tone of adventure.



NEW BACKGROUNDS

In the *Mutant Chronicles Roleplaying Game*, there was not enough space to cover all the possible professions. In the vast and complex worlds of the mega-

corporations, there are many more types of work available than those given. Here are several new professions suitable for Freelancers in search of employment:

REQUIREMENTS:

INT 9. TECH UNIVERSITY OR MEDIA COLLEGE

COMBAT:	—
FIREARMS:	1
COMMUNICATIONS:	3
MOVEMENT:	1
TECHNICAL:	3
FREE:	2
SOCIAL STANDING:	1D20
PER-MODIFICATION:	+1

REQUIREMENTS:

NONE.

COMBAT:	1
FIREARMS:	1
COMMUNICATIONS:	4
MOVEMENT:	1
TECHNICAL:	1
FREE:	2
SOCIAL STANDING:	1D10
PER-MODIFICATION:	+1

REQUIREMENTS:

NONE.

COMBAT:	—
FIREARMS:	—
COMMUNICATIONS:	3
MOVEMENT:	1
TECHNICAL:	1
FREE:	2
SOCIAL STANDING:	1D10
PER-MODIFICATION:	±0

DESIGNER

You are one of the people who design the products in everyday use in the world of the *Mutant Chronicles*. You could be an architect, an artist or an automotive engineer. You possess specialist skills that make you useful to the business world, and enough talent to make a living without drawing a monthly salary from any single employer. In these dark times, when work is scarce you may find yourself drawn into another more shadowy world where your skills will be put to more imaginative use.

MUSICIAN

The folk of the megacities need to be entertained. They seek release from the overwhelming gloom of their surroundings in the dance halls and jazz clubs. Music is everywhere. You are one of the people who provide it. You are a singer or an instrumentalist. Your work constantly brings you into contact with the criminals and the hustlers who run the clubs and bars. You sleep by day and work by night, and you've seen a lot of strange stuff go down. Down through the years, you've learned to hustle for work and deal with wise guys who thought they could fleece you.

SPECIAL RULES: Every Musician is assumed to be able to play a musical instrument or to sing. If an instrumentalist, you should decide what your character plays: drums, saxophone, trumpet, double bass, etc. For every two year term you spend as a musician this skill is increased by one pick automatically.

FREELANCE REPORTER

You are a freelance reporter. You don't work for any one paper—you work for those who will pay you the best price for your scoop. Probably you deal with one or two papers or magazines on a regular basis, but you are not on their payroll. You contact them when you have something for them. You could be a paparazzi who hounds the media celebrities of the Megacities on behalf of the popular magazines. You could be an investigative journalist seeking out corruption in the labyrinthine worlds of the corporations. Or you could simply be an ambulance chaser looking for his next big story.



PRIVATE EYE

You are involved in the classic Freelance operation. You own or work for a small detective agency, investigating whatever your clients pay you for. You track down missing persons, you recover stolen goods, you get blackmailers off people's backs. You deal with those cases that the cops don't want to know about. You walk the line between the world of the criminal and the world of Joe Citizen, and you try not to cross it.

CONSULTANT

You are one of the top experts in your field. You are so good that you have a reputation throughout the worlds of humanity. If the police, the corporations or the wealthy elite need advice in your area of expertise, then your name comes at the top of any list they have. You are a recognized authority in your field and, as such, command suitable fees.

SPECIAL RULES: Consultant is the only background where you can exceed 8 picks in a skill during character generation. You are allowed to use 2 free skill picks exactly as 2 hero points (see bottom of page 152 in the Rules; the second bullet).

REQUIREMENTS:

NONE.

COMBAT:	1
FIREARMS:	1
COMMUNICATIONS:	1
MOVEMENT:	1
TECHNICAL:	—
FREE:	3
SOCIAL STANDING:	1D10
PER-MODIFICATION:	+1

REQUIREMENTS:

TO BECOME A CONSULTANT, YOU MUST HAVE ALREADY APPLIED THE MAXIMUM OF 8 PICKS IN TWO CHOSEN EXPERT SKILLS.

COMBAT:	—
FIREARMS:	—
COMMUNICATIONS:	1
MOVEMENT:	1
TECHNICAL:	1
FREE:	4
SOCIAL STANDING:	1D20
PER-MODIFICATION:	±0



SKILLS

EATING OUT

As with everything else in the world, you get what you pay for. If you want to eat haute cuisine off antique porcelain plates, then you will pay though the nose for it. The costs given here are for a meal for one.

- HIGH CLASS RESTAURANTS: 1,000 crowns or more
- GOOD RESTAURANTS: 250 crowns or more
- CHAIN RESTAURANTS: 100 crowns or more
- LOCAL DINER: 50 crowns or more
- FAST FOOD PLACE: 30 crowns or more
- STREET VENDOR: 10-20 crowns

DRINKS

You can, of course, pay monstrous sums for ancient vintages of wine. Most people who drink do it to get drunk. This is a relatively cheap pleasure for the common person.

In a bar, expect to pay the following:

- BEER: 10-20 crowns per pint
- HARD LIQUOR: 10-30 crowns per shot
- WINE: 60 crowns or more per bottle
- COFFEE AND SOFT DRINKS: 5-10 crowns
- Buying from a store you will pay less:
- WHISKY: 100 crowns or more per bottle.
- ROTGUT: 25 crowns per bottle
- WINE: 25 crowns or more per bottle

In this and other *Mutant Chronicles* sourcebooks, we have added many more new skills, some of which are related to previous skills (*sub-skills*). If you feel that some of these sub-skills better represent your concept of your character, then you can convert over to them

using the rules given below.

If you prefer to stick with the more generic system in the *Mutant Chronicles Roleplaying Game*, that too is possible. These are your characters, and it's your game. You should use whatever system suits your style of play.

SUB-SKILLS

If you want to use the sub-skill system given here, some of your skills will be converted to a number of sub-skills. The advantage is that you will receive more skill picks to distribute; the draw-back is that your range of skills will narrow.

The skills that have been sub-divided here are:

GENERIC SKILL	SUB-SKILLS
Administration	-> Management, Accountancy, Law
Dealing	-> Bargaining, Marketing, Interplanetary Economy, Investment, Begging, Bribery
Social	-> Social, [Corporate] Etiquette, Streetwise, Fashion Awareness
Conning	-> Conning, Disguise
Sleight of Hand	-> Sleight of Hand, Lockpicking, Pick Pockets

MAKING SUB-SKILL PICKS

A new or old character using the sub-skill system will make skill picks just as usual, exactly as described in *Mutant Chronicles*. The only difference is that skill picks made in a skill with sub-skills will be transferred to the sub-skills.

The first skill pick in a generic skill will allow the character to make one skill pick among its sub-skills. However, every additional skill pick on top of the first will give him TWO skill picks among the sub-skills!

Example: McBride spends two hero points making two skill picks in Social. He may then distribute three skill picks among the sub-skills Social, Imperial Etiquette, Streetwise and Fashion Awareness. Shortly after, he spends four hero points in Dealing, and then receives seven skill picks to be freely distributed among Bargaining, Marketing, Interplanetary Economy, Investment, Begging and Bribery. Feels good to be a hero.

Any bonuses (from Adolescence Events, Special Events or other) in a generic skill are transferred directly to all its sub-skills. B-SVs are calculated separately, though.

LIMITS ON SUB-SKILLS

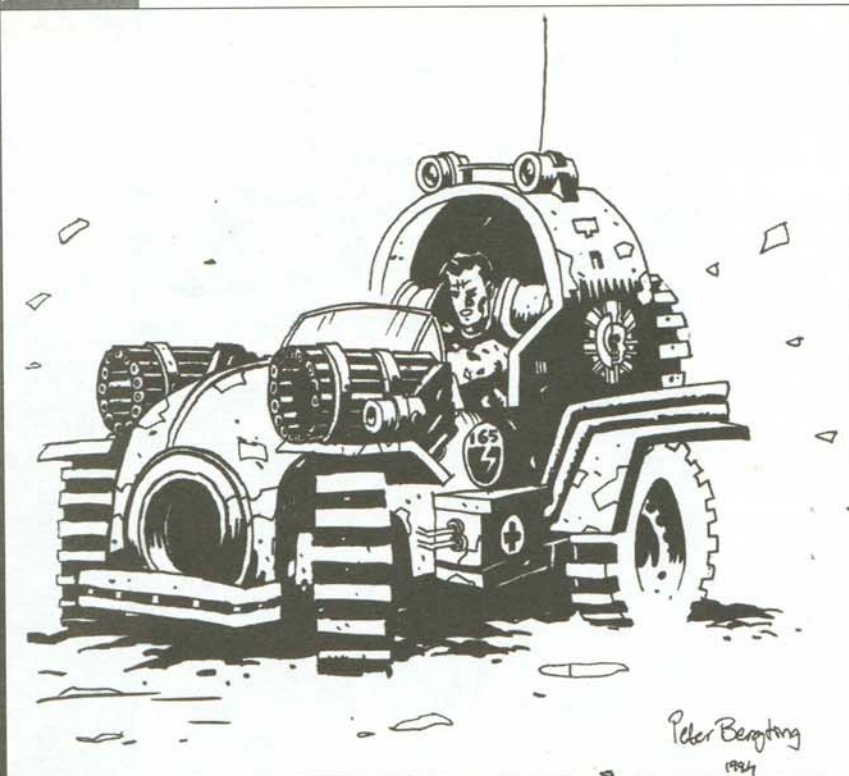
Still, the normal rule is that you may not make more than eight skill picks if your SV is higher than or equal to the basic capability that the skill is based on (as described in *Mutant Chronicles* on page 152).

However, sub-skills are sometimes not based on the same basic capability as the generic skill, and in this case, it's the *sub-skill's* basic capability that sets the limit.

When extending a skill into sub-skills, you may make any number of skill picks in the generic skill. You could make as many picks in Social (the generic skill) as you wish, as long as there are Social sub-skills that can receive more skill picks.

USING SUB-SKILLS

Using a sub-skill is resolved exactly as a usual skill. A generic skill that has been expanded into a number of sub-skills is not used any more, except for skill development purposes (see above).



CONVERTING EXISTING CHARACTERS

Existing characters who has made picks in a skill with sub-skills can convert over to using sub-skills instead. This is handled according to the above rules, but no sub-skill can receive more picks than the generic skill had originally. If

you can't distribute all your new skill picks, they're lost.

Example: Martinez has six skill picks in the generic skill Dealing when his player decides to convert over to the sub-skill system. This means he receives eleven picks to distribute between the sub-skills Bargaining, Marketing, Interplanetary Economy, Investment, Begging and Bribery. None of these may receive more than six skill picks.

ADMINISTRATION SUB-SKILLS

MANAGEMENT

BASIC CAPABILITY: INT

Management enables you to run a business, manage people and keep things running smoothly. By using this sub-skill, you should also be able to tell if a business you're investigating is well or badly run and, if so, to what degree.

ACCOUNTANCY

BASIC CAPABILITY: INT

This dull sounding sub-skill can be invaluable, not only in keeping your business' books straight and making sure all your tax returns are filed and permits paid for, but also for following a paper trail in those cases involving corporations. With access to the proper records, you can spot dummy corporations, money laundering and all sorts of illegal and fraudulent activity.

LAW

BASIC CAPABILITY: INT

You understand and are qualified to practice within the legal system of your community. This can be particularly useful in getting your friends off on technicalities, browbeating low ranking policemen and generally knowing where you stand legally when asked to perform any act. It also means that you can earn a good living as a lawyer.



DEALING SUB-SKILLS

BARGAINING

BASIC CAPABILITY: PER

If you're proficient in Bargaining, you know how to negotiate, bargain and cut a deal. Use of this sub-skill will often enable you to get favorable terms in your business dealings.

MARKETING

BASIC CAPABILITY: INT

You understand the basic principles of marketing and advertising goods. At the simplest level you know where and when to place advertisements and how to get discounts on them. You know how to turn any publicity to your own use and counter the claims of opposing products. Your skills can be used to sell anything from cars to political views.

INTERPLANETARY ECONOMY

BASIC CAPABILITY: INT

You understand the structure of the interplanetary economy and the workings of the megacorporations. At a glance, you may well be able to take several different news items and read between the lines to work out what a corporation's real strategy is.

INVESTMENT

BASIC CAPABILITY: INT

This sub-skill enables you to know a good bet in the investment market and to understand the fluctuations in stocks and shares. You should be able to pick out what stocks will rise and what stocks will fall.

BEGGING

BASIC CAPABILITY: PER

You know how to panhandle and maximize the benefit of any afflictions you may suffer from. You are particularly skilled at evoking the sympathy of passers-by. A successful skill roll will double your yield when you beg. (See the *Earning a Living* section.)

BRIBERY

BASIC CAPABILITY: PER

This skill means that you can effectively analyze who is bribeable and what it will cost to bribe a person in a given situation. This is very useful in the corrupt societies of the *Mutant Chronicles*.



ENTERTAINMENT

For entertainment, people go to the cinema or the theater or the dance hall. They pay the price of admission, and they have their fun. The costs given here are minimum prices. Good seats at a show can cost much more. Films tend to be very escapist in nature. The theater is the place where society's more intellectual members take their leisure. Dance halls and nightclubs are where you go to meet members of the opposite sex.

CINEMA TICKET: 30 crowns and up
THEATER TICKET: 100 crowns and up

OPERA TICKET: 150 crowns and up

SPORTS EVENT: 50 crowns and up

DANCE HALL ADMISSION: 20 crowns and up

NIGHTCLUB ADMISSION: 100 crowns and up

EXCLUSIVE NIGHTCLUB ADMISSION: 250 crowns and up

CONSUMER GOODS

TV: 10,000 to 30,000 crowns

RADIO: 1,000 to 5,000 crowns

SET OF OFFICE FURNITURE (desk, files, swivel chair, etc.): about 10,000 crowns per person



CLOTHING

In the world of Mutant Chronicles, clothes make the man. The way you dress is a powerful personal statement about who you are and what you do. The better you dress, the better you will be treated. People assume that if you dress successfully, you are successful. Your clothes go a long way toward creating your image. Most Freelancers will be interested in business suits. Pants, vests, jackets, hats, shirt and ties.

TAILOR-MADE. *These designer clothes are worn only by the richest and the most successful. They are beautifully made and hand tailored for each customer in the appropriate style. You would pay at least 5,000 crowns for a suit and consider it a bargain. 10,000 crowns would be more usual. Bauhaus and Imperial in particular specialize in the production of such stuff.*

Trenchcoats cost between 2,500 and 5,000 crowns. Shoes are about the same. Hats cost around 500 crowns.

If you start adventuring with Social standing 9 or 10, you own at least 25 complete tailormade costumes.

GOOD CLOTHING. *This is the best of mass-produced tailoring. It is good-looking, durable and well-made. You can buy it off the rack in department stores. 2,000 crowns is a realistic price for a suit. Trenchcoats cost around 1,000 crowns. Shoes are about 500 crowns. Hats are about 250 crowns.*

This quality is normally worn by citizens with Social standing 7 and 8.

AVERAGE CLOTHING. *This is the area dominated by Capitol's Universal Garments division. Such a suit costs about 800 crowns. Trenchcoats cost about 300 crowns. Shoes are about 200 crowns. Hats are about 150 crowns. Social standing 4-6.*

SOCIAL SUB-SKILLS

SOCIAL

BASIC CAPABILITY: PER

If you're proficient in Social, you know how to get on well with people, how to ingratiate yourself with them and how to be charming and witty. This sub-skill is useful in everything from flattery to seduction. There can, of course, be negative modifiers when dealing with certain people.

[CORPORATE] ETIQUETTE

BASIC CAPABILITY: INT

This sub-skill is incredibly useful when dealing with nobility and the top-ranks. It allows you to be charming, good mannered and well-behaved according to the conventions of the society you are moving in. It means you never use the wrong fork at an Imperial dinner party and that you know the precise angle of bow needed when confronting Mishiman nobility. This sub-skill is absolutely essential for getting on in aristocratic societies. It will often be tested if you are impersonating an aristocrat in these societies.

Each corporate nobility—Mishiman, Bauhaus and Imperial—has different social codes, so these are in fact three

separate versions of this sub-skill (Mishiman Etiquette, Bauhaus Etiquette and Imperial Etiquette). Diplomats and Cartel officials are expected to master at least two of them.

STREETWISE

BASIC CAPABILITY: PER

This sub-skill enables you to behave in a cool manner on the street, spot scams and hustles and generally talk to criminals and lowlives without offending them.

FASHION AWARENESS

BASIC CAPABILITY: INT

You know all about the brands, costs, stores and designers of clothing. You know where to buy the coolest clothes and accessories at the lowest prices. With a Fashion Awareness roll, you can judge where a person bought his clothes, how much he paid for them and roughly what his status is. You will also know how to dress sharply and make a good impression yourself.

CONNING SUB-SKILLS

CONNING

BASIC CAPABILITY: PER

Conning is the ability to work confidence tricks, scams and to fast-talk people. It can be used to try to bamboozle people into doing what you want.

DISGUISE

BASIC CAPABILITY: (INT+PER)/2

This sub-skill enables you to impersonate someone else. You know how to use make-up and costume and how to change your voice to make it sound different.

SLEIGHT OF HAND SUB-SKILLS

SLEIGHT OF HAND

BASIC CAPABILITY: COR

Sleight of Hand is the ability to make small objects vanish up your sleeve, pull coins from behind people's ears and perform all sorts of feats of minor stage magic, including card tricks.

This is the ability to pick mechanical locks, disarm traps, hot-wire cars, etc. This is especially useful for the would-be thief.

PICK POCKETS

BASIC CAPABILITY: (COR+PER)/2

This enables you to pick pockets without being noticed. You can remove wallets, watches and other items of value from their unsuspecting owners.

LOCKPICKING

BASIC CAPABILITY: INT

NEW SKILLS

These are new skills for use in the *Mutant Chronicles RPG*. They can be chosen by expending skill picks during character

creation or by expending hero points between adventures.

TECHNICAL

NOTE: In «The Brotherhood» sourcebook, the «Knowledge of...» skills were erroneously placed in the Communication field of expertise. For your convenience, we repeat the correct information here.

KNOWLEDGE OF THE DARK LEGION

BASIC CAPABILITY: INT

You have access to the limited knowledge that humanity possesses concerning the Dark Legion and its methods. You know the various types of creature that serve the Dark Apostles, and you know about the Apostles' methods, aims and goals.

There are five separate versions of this skill. These involve knowledge of each of the Dark Apostles and their servants. If you use the sub-skill rules, then each version of the this skill is a sub-skill of Knowledge of the Dark Legion.

KNOWLEDGE OF THE BROTHERHOOD

BASIC CAPABILITY: INT

With this skill, you will be familiar with the Brotherhood, its structure, its methods and the various Directorates. You will know a fair amount concerning the various leaders and the Brotherhood's internal politics.

There are four separate versions of this skill, one for each of the Brotherhood's directorates. If you use the sub-skill rules, then each version of the this skill is a sub-skill of Knowledge of the Brotherhood.

KNOWLEDGE OF THE MEGACORPORATIONS

BASIC CAPABILITY: INT

You are well informed concerning the goals, structures and

internal politics of the chosen megacorporation. You can recognize the rank and type of its troops from their uniforms and insignia. You can make educated guesses about the megacorporations' goals and aims.

There are six separate versions of this skill, one for each of the Megacorporations, plus Knowledge of the Cartel. If you use the sub-skill rules, then each version of this skill is a sub-skill of Knowledge of the Megacorporations.

SECURITY SYSTEMS

BASIC CAPABILITY: INT

You know how to set up and defeat various types of security systems, whether these be electronic, animal or human based or some combination of all three. It will enable you to get in and out of protected buildings and areas without being noticed. You can specialize in either electronic, human or animal security systems, and in this case, these become sub-skills.

SURVEILLANCE

BASIC CAPABILITY: INT

This is the ability to set up constant watch on a person, a building or some other thing without being noticed. It

includes the techniques of shadowing a person in a crowd.

SURVIVAL

BASIC CAPABILITY: INT

You have been trained in how to survive in dangerous and inhospitable terrain. You have been taught how to live off the land and find shelter from the elements. This skill is particularly used by the special forces who operate in the Martian Rust Deserts and in the jungles of Venus.

There are many different versions of this skill, including Jungle Survival, Desert Survival, Mountain Survival, Polar Survival, etc. Each one is a sub-skill of Survival.

MUSICAL INSTRUMENT

BASIC CAPABILITY: COR

You can play the musical instrument of your choice. This enables you to earn a living as a musician. Sometimes this will count as casual labor, sometimes as skilled labor, depending on where and for whom you are playing. If the worst comes to the worst, you can hustle crowns as a street performer. A successful skill roll will double your income from begging (see *Earning a Living*).

COMMUNICATION

JOURNALISM

BASIC CAPABILITY: COR

You know how to write fluently and well and in a style sui-

table for publication in newspapers and magazines. This skill is absolutely essential for a reporter. Without it, you won't eat.



CHEAP CLOTHING.

Paper thin fabric, shoddy stitching and a bad fit are all you can expect in this price range. Still, everybody needs to dress, and when you're spending only 200 crowns, you can't complain. Trenchcoats cost about 100 crowns. Shoes are about 100 crowns. Hats or caps are about 50 crowns. Social standing 1-3.

NOTES ON CLOTHING

In second hand shops, you can pick up stuff for about half regular price. Of course, they may not have anything in your size, and you will almost never find second hand tailor-made suits.

The Game Master should give the players a small bonus on their skill rolls for Dealing and Conning and similar skills if they are dressed well. Remember, these are worlds where often the only clue people will have concerning your wealth and status is the way you dress.

Conversely, the players should probably get big penalties if they are not dressed appropriately for their part. It is obviously going to be impossible to convince a roomful of high-powered corporate types that you are a successful dealer if you are wearing cheap rags instead of tailor-made clothes.





NEW EQUIPMENT

GUNS

You should note that all weapon weights are given in kilograms.

SHERMAN MODEL 7 ENFORCER

W	L	MC	TSS	GL	CB	TS
1.0	27	6	N	N	N	T
FUNC	RANGE	STR	RT	JF	DAM	COST
S	70/105	8	1	8	1T4	1,000



SHERMAN MODEL 7 ENFORCER

The Enforcer is one of the cheapest and most popular guns on the streets. It is famous for its reliability. Because of its low cost, it is the most commonly used sidearm of private cops, small time hoods and homeowners. You can find Enforcers almost everywhere.

LYON & ATKINSON MK IIIS ELIMINATOR

W	L	MC	TSS	GL	CB	TS
3.0	50	20	N	N	N	N
FUNC	RANGE	STR	RT	JF	DAM	COST
A	100/150	12	1	1	1T6+1	20,200

LYON & ATKINSON MK IIIS ELIMINATOR

The Eliminator was originally developed at the request of the Imperial Security Command. It was to be the classic assassination weapon: quiet, powerful and lethal. Despite some teething troubles, its reputation was soon well-established, and it became the weapon of choice for close-up gangland hits. Its small size makes it concealable, and its integral silencer and flash suppresser make it hard to detect in operation. Many of the parts are made of custom ceramics and plastics, so the gun doesn't show up on metal detectors or other security scans. A limited number of these weapons have found their way onto the street. The Freelancers who own them swear by them. If fired from a place of concealment, people trying to spot where the shots come from are at -3 to their Perception rolls.



CARS

UNIVERSAL MOTORS ROADKING

Produced by Capitol's Universal Motors division, this is one of the most common automobiles on the road. It is favored by taxi drivers because it is roomy and reliable and spare parts are cheap. It is capable of holding 6 passengers in comfort. There are several models, each with a progressively

more powerful engine and correspondingly higher price tag. Freelancers prefer the Model X, which is the fastest.

UM ROADKING MODEL A: Top Speed 95 mph; Cost 65,000 crowns.

UM ROADKING MODEL D: Top Speed 110 mph; Cost 74,000 crowns.

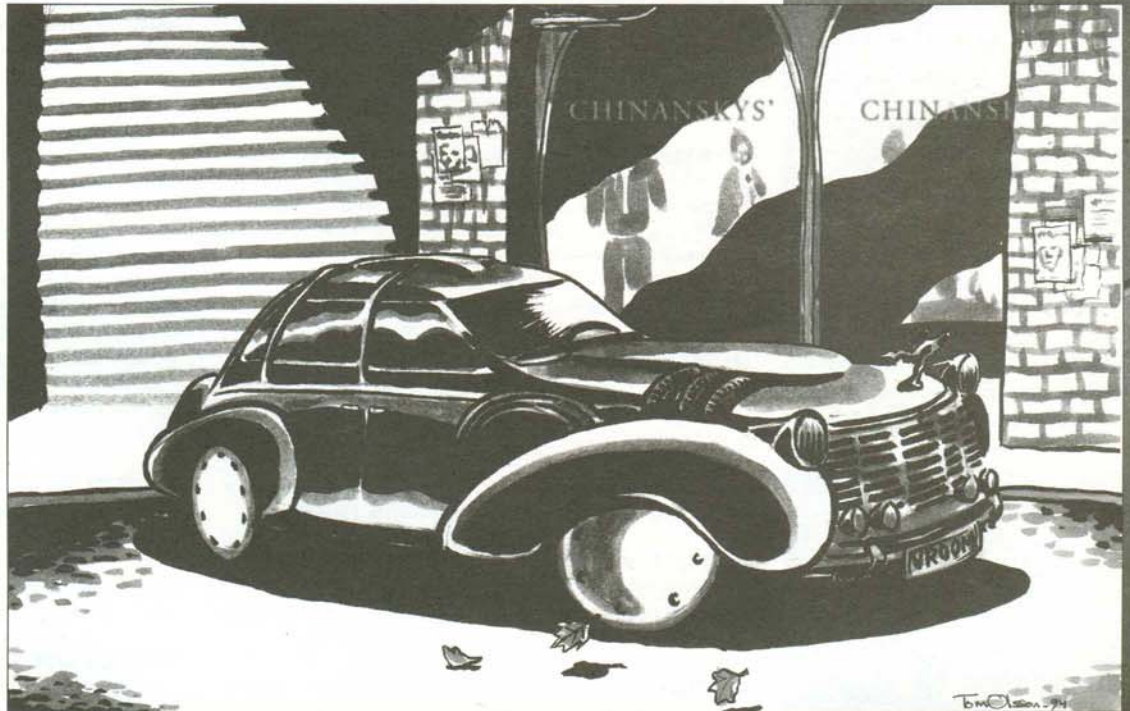
UM ROADKING MODEL X: Top Speed 135 mph; Cost 90,000 crowns.



ASTON HEALEY MG7

Each MG7 is hand-crafted by a team of experts. It is the most famous vehicle ever produced by Imperial Corporation. It is the last word in luxury. Its dashboard is hand-carved from rare Venusian hardwoods. Its steering wheel and gearstick are made from Martian Devil Python Ivory. Its seats are covered in hand-stitched tawny Sabercat hide. This vehicle is fast and cramped but exhilarating to drive. The handling is exceptional. A Freelancer is more likely to see it driven by a wealthy client than to own one himself. For those who can afford it, though, it is the ultimate status symbol.

TOP SPEED: 195 mph
COST: 545,000 crowns





EXPENSES

To simplify things, say that, on average, utilities such as electricity, gas, water and heat cost about 10% of an apartment's or office's rent per month. Phones cost about 1,000 crowns to be connected and 500 crowns per quarter to keep in service. To this, you can add the cost of any phone calls. For the sake of convenience, say that local calls are free and long distance calls cost a flat 100 crowns per 3 minutes.

Interplanetary calls are EXTREMELY expensive and fraught with technical difficulties, not the least being that you have to wait minutes to get a reply to your questions because the distances are so vast. As an example, the average time delay in a call between Luna and Mars is 8 minutes. Rather than complicate matters with arcane calculations, simply assume that all interplanetary calls cost a flat 10,000 crowns. As such, these calls are usually the prerogative of corporate executives.

It is far cheaper to send a telegram. These cost 50 crowns per sentence, although you will have to deal with the fact that the telegraph clerk may punctuate your message as he sees fit. It will be sent within three hours, but has to be picked up by the receiver at his local telegraph store (alternatively delivered to his home address within 24 hours; 250 crowns extra).

You can, of course, get hooked into any service illegally if you know the right people. This will cut your costs by 50%. There is also a small chance that you will be caught. The GM should use this as a hook for a scenario rather than roll a percentage chance every month.

COST OF LIVING

Obviously the cost of living varies depending on your lifestyle. Beggars on the streets of Luna can survive on just a few crowns a day, although whether their lives are worth living is open to debate. At the other end of the scale, Luna's corporate aristocracy can throw away ten thousand crowns on a single evening's pleasure.

Before looking at costs, there are a few things worth examining about finance in the worlds of *Mutant Chronicles*.

The first is that for the ordinary man in the street, credit does not exist. The thinking machines that made possible great networks of consumer credit vanished when the old civilization collapsed. The banks and finance houses exist for the benefit of the megacorporations and large businesses, not for the common man. Most people do not even have a personal bank account.

EARNING A LIVING

For most of the folk of the megacities, life is a constant struggle to find work and survive. Jobs are hard to come by, and casual labor is all too common. Being an employee is never going to make you rich or even independent. The system doesn't work that way. Here is what you can expect to make in any given job. Obviously not every occupation can be covered. If you want to try another type of work, compare it to the nearest similar type on this list.

BEGGING. You hit the streets and panhandle. If you're lucky, you'll earn 1d20 crowns per day

CASUAL LABOR. You eke out a precarious living by casual labor, hanging out around the great street markets and transport terminals and hoping that you will be called on to carry goods or clean up. Alternatively you can work as a taxi-driver or rickshaw puller for one of the agencies. You earn 100 crowns a day if you can find work. There is a 50% chance of that if times are good. Less if they are not.

DOMESTIC. You work as a cleaner or servant in a house, hotel or great public building. You earn about 750 crowns per week.

SKILLED LABORER. You work in a factory or garage, performing manual work that demands some prior knowledge. You earn about 1,000 crowns per week.

OFFICE WORKER. You work as a secretary or a clerk in an office. Your job requires at least basic literacy and numeracy and possibly the ability to type. You can expect to earn about 1,200 crowns per week.

MANAGER. You are one of the lucky few who are employed in a large business to oversee a group of underlings. Your salary is paid monthly, and at a low level, you can expect to be paid 8,000 crowns per month. If you work for a large company, you can expect to earn a lot more eventually. If

This is a cash economy, and what people want, they have to buy in hard currency. People can save all their life for a car or a television. Jewelry is a real status symbol because it represents tangible, portable wealth of the sort not everyone possesses. All this means is that, for the man in the street, consumer goods are rare and precious things. It also means that most people spend their money as fast as they can earn it. Crime is rampant, and what is the good of saving if you can be robbed?

People spend their money in the dance halls and movie-dromes and gambling palaces. The forces of the Dark are reaching out for humanity. Life is short, and no one knows what the future holds. These are times of feverish gaiety. Humanity is on the edge.

you work for a megacorporation, the sky's the limit. Lawyers and accountants who work for somebody else can expect to earn about twice this.

COP. As an ordinary beat cop for a Freelance outfit, you can expect to make about 1,200 crowns per week. This rises by about 500 crowns per week with every rank gained. Officers can expect to earn twice this and are paid monthly. If you are corrupt, you can earn many times this, but getting caught will be nasty. Pay is on a similar scale in the military, except that your earnings are quadrupled if you are at war.

If you work for a megacorporation, your pay will be about 20% higher.

PRIVATE DETECTIVE. You work for 2,500 crowns per investigator on the case per day, plus expenses. It sounds good, but first of all you've got to find clients willing to pay. The relatively few days you work have got to cover all the days you don't. Of course if you make the big time and go far up market, you can charge what the market will bear.

If you are looking for work in the shadowy world of street crime, you can expect to earn about as much as muscle or an assassin. Remember nobody gets rich, working for someone else.

MUSCLE. You do casual enforcement work, collecting debts, hanging around with some mid-level mobster and looking tough. You collect 200 crowns a day for just being there, maybe double that if you have to get involved in some rough stuff. In debt collection, you get a small percentage of what you recover.

ASSASSIN. You charge what the market will bear. This depends on the relative status and protection of the target. This might run to about 1,000 crowns for some low-life punk with no friends to well over 100,000 for someone difficult and dangerous to kill.

ONE FINAL NOTE

Times are hard and uncertain. People become unemployed many times in their lives. There is no social security, and there are no pension schemes. If you get laid off, expect a

week's money if you are on a wage or a month's salary if you are paid monthly. That's it. You're on your own. It would be nice if you had some money saved. Otherwise it's time to trot down to the nearest Brotherhood soup kitchen.

ACCOMMODATION

You can live in a plush luxury hotel, or you can live in a flea-ridden dive. They are both going to cost you money. Accommodation comes in many shapes and forms.

HOTELS

These can range from palaces where your every whim is catered for by a legion of staff to flea-infested dives where the night clerk doubles up as a point man for the local muggers. Needless to say, security gets better the more you pay.

LUXURY HOTELS. These are places like the Capitol Eagle or the Imperial Grand. Here is where the super-rich elite stay when they are away from their apartments. These hotels usually have regiments of staff ready to pamper their guests, and a whole host of discrete personal services are available for the discerning guest. Security is usually top-notch but very understated. A room costs 2,000 crowns a night, minimum, rising to about 20,000 for the best. Suites cost from 5,000 crowns to 50,000 (for the Luna City Capitol Eagle presidential penthouse suite), and these are the last word in luxury and service.

GOOD HOTEL. These are good, often great, hotels without the cachet or the reputation of the Luxury Hotels. They are extremely comfortable places. Costs range from 4-800 crowns per night.

ORDINARY HOTEL. These are places used by business travelers and people seeking comfortable secure lodging. They are usually medium-sized establishments. A room costs 200 crowns per night.

CHEAP HOTEL. These are little better than flophouses for the indigent. Residents sleep in huge, shared dormitories. Petty theft and brawling is common. A bed costs 20-50 crowns per night.

APARTMENTS

For folk who are not constantly in transit, it makes more sense to rent an apartment. Usually these are rented by the month, and a landlord may ask for between 1 and 4 months rent as a deposit. Most rented apartments come with furniture and fittings.

LUXURIOUS APARTMENTS. You will find these in the best districts of the city, usually overlooking the spots where the rich and powerful work and gather. In some cities, they may be located in mansions. In Luna, they are in skyscrapers. The higher you go, the better your view and the higher the rent. These apartments are luxurious, with marble baths and thick carpets. Private security firms watch over the buildings. The costs start at 10,000 crowns per month and rise steeply.

If you start adventuring with Social standing 9 or 10, you live here.

GOOD APARTMENTS. These are to be found in the better neighborhoods. They will be nicely furnished and relatively spacious. Security most likely consists of a doorman or concierge keeping an eye on visitors. Neighbors keep an eye out for each other. It costs about 5,000 crowns per month for a 2 room apartment. Add about 500 crowns per additional room.

If you live here, your neighbours will probably have a Social standing of 7 or 8.

AVERAGE APARTMENTS. Average apartments can be found anywhere. They are where most people with reasonably paying work live. It costs about 2,000 crowns for a 2 room apartment. Add about 300 per extra room.

Equals Social standing 4, 5 and 6.

POOR APARTMENTS. Poor apartments can be found in run down and dangerous areas. They are usually one room with a bed and kitchen in the same space. They cost from 1,000 crowns a month to rent.

If you start adventuring with Social standing 2 or 3, this is your home.

COMMERCIAL. You can assume that office space and retail stores go for roughly double the cost of a comparable apartment.



TAXES

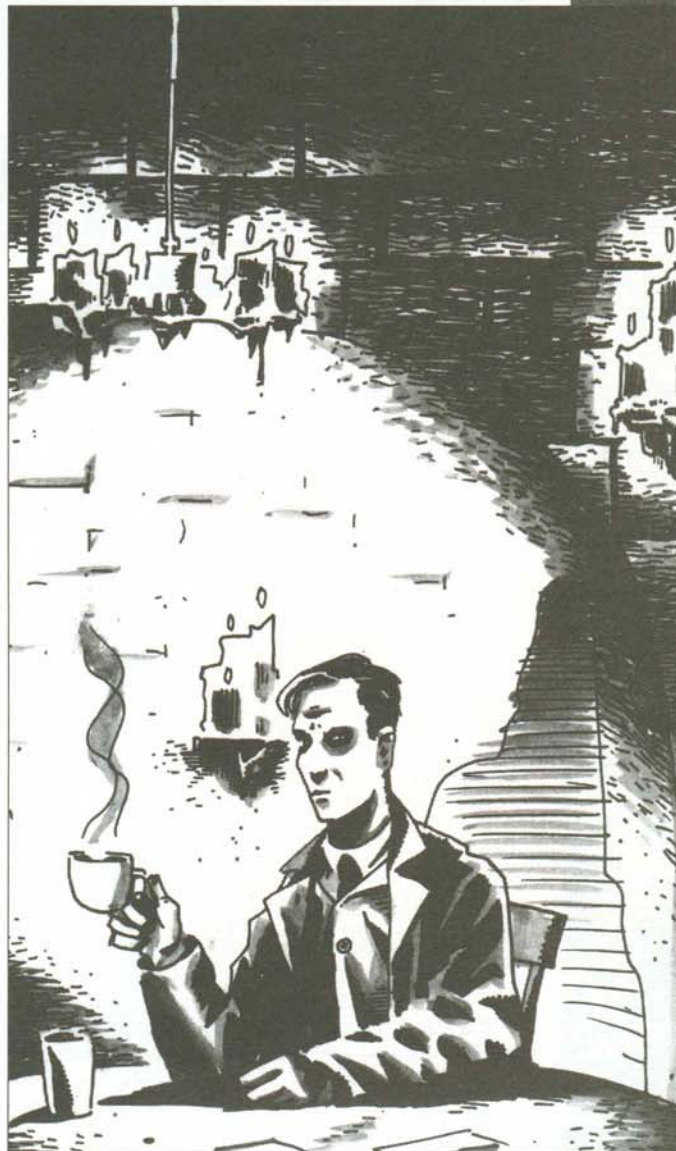
Yes, indeed, nothing is sure except death and taxes. There are local income taxes to provide policing, street lighting and road maintenance. These come to about 5% of monthly income. In addition, most people pay the Brotherhood a tithe of 10%. This is voluntary, but non-payment is bad for the soul and may bring you to the attention of the Inquisition.

BRIBERY

Remember, for a bribe to be effective you must make it worth someone's while to take it. If you simply want to oil the wheels of business or get some information from people, then a week's wages or less will do it. If you want them to do something obviously illegal that might cost them their job, you're going to need at least a month's salary and probably many times that. Nobody, except the very greedy and very stupid, is going to take a bribe if he or she is certain to get caught. And corrupt though the times are, there are some people who are simply too honest to be bribed. You'd do well to remember that.

MAIL

Ordinary packages and letters are very slow and likely to go astray. The cost is 1% of the cost given above for Interplanetary travel per kilo the package weighs. The time taken to deliver it should be multiplied by 1d6. The chance of your



TRANSPORT

Getting around will eat into your budget. In the worlds of *Mutant Chronicles*, there are many different ways of moving about. The cheapest is probably the Underground, but there are many other ways.

In Luna, when you're traveling on the Underground, roll 1d6 to see how many changes your journey will need. When traveling by any other means of transport, roll 1d100 to check for distance in miles. Don't worry. It will all average out in the end.

The costs given below are for standard class on any means of transport. Luxury class will cost about double. Third class will cost about half. There is no third class on zeppelins.

TAXIS. These can either be automobiles or human-propelled rickshaws. Either way, costs will set you back about 5 crowns per mile on top of a 10-crown flat fee.

SHIPS. Where there is water, there will be ships. Travel costs are about the same as on the trains.

BUSES AND TRAMS. These cover many surface areas of the megacities. Costs usually work out at about 3 crowns per mile on local routes.

UNDERGROUND. Most people on Luna commute on the various Underground railway lines. This usually costs a flat 10 crowns per line used. If you switch lines it costs another 10 crowns.

TRAINS. The huge steam trains are the commonest way of traveling long distance in the worlds of *Mutant Chronicles*. Expect to pay about 10 crowns per 50 miles of a journey. A sleeper bunk will cost you about 200 crowns on top of that.

ZEPELINS. These giant passenger airships speed between the megacities. They are expensive but comfortable. You will pay about 1 Crown per mile of journey and travel at an average speed of 50 mph.

package going missing and not arriving at all is a hefty 10%.

Dispatches of courier mail between worlds are quick and reliable, but very expensive. Calculate that a package takes 10% of the prices for interplanetary travel per kilo of weight. This will be delivered on the time scale given above with only a 1% chance of your package failing to arrive.

ADVERTISING

You can pay 100 crowns per day, to get a small classified advert in the business section of your local edition of the Chronicle. You can pay about 30 crowns per day in other papers. Alternatively, you might want to pay ten times as much for a much larger ad.

Business cards cost about 30 crowns per hundred. No Freelancer can afford to be without some.



INTERPLANETARY TRAVEL

Interplanetary travel is a slow and expensive business, and if you go for the cheap options, you'll probably be bored to death. This means that as few people as possible travel from

world to world, most only when necessary. The megacorporations, the Cartel and the Brotherhood have their own spacecraft, and the information below goes for the regular passenger liners.

TRIP	TRAVEL TIME	COST
Mercury to Venus	1d6+3 days	4,990+150 crowns per day
Mercury to Luna	1d10+8 days	7,940+100 crowns per day
Venus to Luna	1d6+3 days	3,940+100 crowns per day
Luna to Earth	3d6+12 hours	3,990 crowns
Luna to Mars	1d10+6 days	5,490+100 crowns per day
Mars to Victoria	1d4+22 days	14,990+100 crowns per day
Victoria to Jupiter	2d10+15 days	*
Jupiter to Saturn	3d10+28 days	*
Saturn to Uranus	2d20+66 days	*
Uranus to Neptune	1d100+70 days	*
Neptune to Pluto	1d100+60 days	*
Pluto to Nero	1d10+3 days	*

* Cost arranged on a case by case basis.

For first class, triple the cost. This gives you a single or double cabin, all breakfasts, lunches and dinners included. You'll have access to all the modern conveniences onboard and free drinks till you land. A first class trip is the vacation of a lifetime for most average citizens, but the only reasonable mode of traveling for businessmen and officials.

The cost in the table is for second class. This includes a bed in a two-bed cabin and breakfast only (lunch is 50 crowns per day, dinner 100). You'll have access to most conveniences on board—such as stores, cinemas, pool tables, gyms, restaurants, rest rooms, libraries or whatever might

be at hand—for a smaller fee. All this depends on the quality of the craft, of course. Freelancing businessmen, soldiers on leave, journalists and guys like yourself are common here. Really, this is the only cheap alternative.

In third class, you'll share your cabin, shower and bathroom with 1d100 other passengers. No meals are included, and you'd better bring your own food, books and light, because if worse comes to worst, you won't be let out of the cargo bay until you land on your destination. On the other hand, price is only 30% of the one in the list.



**SO YOU WANT TO BE A
FREELANCER, HUH?**

**THE FIRST QUESTION YOU
SHOULD ASK YOURSELF IS
ARE YOU UP TO IT?**

**THE LIFE OF A FREELANCER
MAY LOOK GOOD WHEN YOU'RE
PUSHING PAPER ACROSS A DESK
IN THE OFFICE. IT DOESN'T LOOK
QUITE SO GOOD WHEN YOU'RE
LOOKING DOWN THE WRONG
END OF A BOLTER.**

**THIS IS A HARD, DIRTY
BUSINESS, AND IT CALLS FOR
HARD, VIOLENT MEN.**



Front: Big Bob, Mitch Hunter, Valerie Duval, Max Steiner, Mortificator Crenshaw and Inquisitor Nikodemus.

4004

Heartbreaker™