

# THE SHADOWRUN SUPPLEMENTAL

ISSUE #14

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# THE SHADOWRUN SUPPLEMENTAL

## ISSUE #14

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### THE SHADOWRUN SUPPLEMENTAL # 14: SEPTEMBER 2001

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# Editorial Verbiage

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Monthly. That word strikes fear into my heart like almost no other does at the moment.

## The Past

Let's go back in history a bit. For some strange reason—actually, it was because I wanted to fill what was at the time a wide open niche—I decided to start The Shadowrun Supplemental in early 1997. I was still in school and had tons of free time. Six issues came out within the first 11 months, and the magazine rocked along until the summer of 1998.

Crazy stuff happened in 1998. I graduated. I got a job. Shadowrun Third Edition came out. In early—1999—twenty-three months after issue #1 came out, issue #9 came out. Not quite bi-monthly like the original plan, but still doing pretty well, in my estimation. Twenty-four months after issue #9, in early 2001, issue #13 was released. Not so good. Matter of fact, pretty damned lousy, in my opinion.

There comes a time when you have to make changes to stay alive. Obviously, while publishing on an irregular schedule is quite easy on the Internet, it's not always the best way to go. Mainly, it's no good for the readers—you don't know when an issue is coming out, so you can't schedule your visits to the web-page. You have to rely on word-of-mouth—press releases, message board postings, or something like that when a new issue comes out. The irregular schedule is also bad for me as an editor—it means less motivation to work on the magazine, fewer submissions from readers, and it makes it easier to push the release date back.

## The Future

So, starting with this issue—#14—The Shadowrun Supplemental officially moves from a quarterly schedule to a monthly one. We won't be producing 12 issues a year, though—we'll be releasing 10 issues. August is a designated "month off", due to the convention season, and we'll also take one other month off during the year, which we'll schedule as necessary to work around our real life.

We're also shifting formats a little bit, and working more to emulate other popular online magazines in form and presentation. The HTML (web based) version will no longer be the bastard stepchild, but will actually be released before or at the same time as the PDF version.

What does this mean for you people, the readers? Well, first of all—and most importantly—it means that you'll be getting issues on a more regular and frequent basis! We'll be able to cover news in the Shadowrun world, along with product releases and plot flow, in a much more timely manner than in the past. Second, it means that those of you who submit items will get a quicker response from the editors and will see your article in an issue much sooner. I won't deny that the new schedule means that we **need** more submissions from readers, so please, if you have stuff lying around that you think may fit in the magazine, or if you feel inspired to write, please take a look at the Submission Guidelines.

The other main concern is that each issue will probably be a little smaller. For the next few issues we'll be aiming to provide two Feature Articles, plus two of our Regular Columns, reviews as appropriate in SwiftOne Speaks, and of course an Editorial Verbiage from myself. There will also be some columns that will appear on an irregular basis, and we'll be accepting submissions for them. The details on two new columns are included below. A full list of the columns is available at <http://tss.dumpshock.com/issue.html>

## The Staff

When I say 'we', I mean it. Because possibly the most exciting part of this revamp for me is that I'm bringing aboard a new staff member to assist me, and perhaps one more in the near future. Stepping up to the task of Assistant Editor is Elissa Carey, freelance author (Corporate Punishment, Target: Matrix, Year of the Comet, and more on the way). She's from Delaware ("Or imagine being whisked away to... Delaware. 'Hi, I'm in Delaware'"). She's responsible for helping me pick out articles and doing the nitty-gritty text editing. You can reach us via email at [tss@dumpshock.com](mailto:tss@dumpshock.com).

## Have Your Say

Just as important as the people who create are the people who consume—so please, let us know what you think of The Shadowrun Supplemental. There's a small survey to fill out available at [http://tss.dumpshock.com/feedback\\_14.html](http://tss.dumpshock.com/feedback_14.html), and you can always email the editorial team at [tss@dumpshock.com](mailto:tss@dumpshock.com). Your feedback is always appreciated!

## New Columns

### Tai's Magical Goodies

Originally a sub-section of The Cluttered Datastore, this is the home of magical items of all sorts, from spells to adept powers to totems to other magical items. Tai's Magical Goodies is open to submissions from anyone.

### Datasteal

A new column for reviewing non-Shadowrun gaming material, for the purpose of showing how it can relate to Shadowrun and be used in a Shadowrun campaign. An example review could cover the GURPS supplement GURPS Bio-Tech - including a basic summary, how well it meshes with current Shadowrun technology, and how much could be converted to Shadowrun. Like most reviews, it should conclude with a final opinion - is this book a worthwhile purchase to use primarily as a Shadowrun resource?

## Submission Guidelines

Our submission guidelines are also available on the web at <http://tss.dumpshock.com/guidelines.html>

### General Guidelines

The following guidelines apply for both written and artistic submissions. All submissions and submission inquiries should be sent by email to [tss@dumpshock.com](mailto:tss@dumpshock.com)

1. All submissions should relate to Shadowrun in some way. Submissions that fit more generally in the 'cyberpunk' genre may also be accepted, but submissions that are oriented toward other cyberpunk genre roleplaying games are probably better submitted to a magazine or website devoted to them. We prefer that submissions are 'original' to The Shadowrun Supplemental - that is, that they haven't seen widespread distribution on another website already. We're flexible, though - if an article has been posted to a message board or mailing list so you can gather feedback on it, that's generally fine. When in doubt, ask us!

2. You must be the legal owner of the work to submit something, and you remain responsible for your work.

3. You retain all copyright to your material, but grant The Shadowrun Supplemental the right to edit your work before publication, and perpetual online rights to publish your work online and to edit/update it as necessary. You may republish any such material online, but we appreciate it if you give credit and provide a link to The Shadowrun Supplemental as the original place of publication.

4. All submissions should include the author's email address and real name. Neither of them need to be published, but we need to have them. If you wish to

have your email address suppressed or your work credited to a handle, include that information in your email message.

5. No payment or compensation is available (unfortunately) for authors or artists.

6. All authors and artists should receive an email within 7 days about the status of the article. If you do not receive a reply within 14 days please send a follow-up email to us.

### Written Submissions

1. All submissions should be sent by email - please put '[SUBMISSION] Name of Submission' in the subject line of your email. For example: '[SUBMISSION] Firearm Prices the Sensible Way'.

2. Submissions should be either included in the body of the email message, or attached as a .RTF, .DOC, or .TXT file. If you are unable to send a file in these formats, please email to ask for further instructions. If you have graphics that belong with the article - such as maps or character illustrations, please see the Art Submission guidelines.

3. Please keep formatting to your documents minimal - bold, italics, and simple tables are fine and is generally all that's necessary.

4. If possible, please follow our Style Sheet, available at <http://tss.dumpshock.com/style.html>

### Art Submissions

1. All submissions should be sent by email - please put '[ART SUBMISSION] Name of Submission' in the subject line of your email. For example: '[ART SUBMISSION] Restaurant Maps'.

2. All forms of artwork are acceptable - hand drawn, computer generated, computer modified photographs, etc.

3. Images should be in at least 300DPI format, 150 minimum. .TIF format is preferred, but .GIF, .JPG, and .BMP are all acceptable. Please email to ask about other formats.

4. All graphics must include the artist's signature or other defining mark.

### The Wantlist

Some semi-specific things that we would like to see submitted for future issues of The Shadowrun Supplemental include:

- **Places to Go, People to See** - We're eagerly looking for more NPCs and Locations to fill out this column.

- **Tai's Magical Goodies** - Our new/revived Magic column, home for spells, adept powers, totems, and other magical mayhem!

- **Organizations** - gangs, smugglers, initiatory groups, policlubs.

- **Adventures** - short adventures, especially focusing on **Year of the Comet** events.

## Introduction

Every GM needs to rely on some pre-created NPCs from time to time, but repeatedly pulling out the same old street sam can be downright embarrassing. So for gamemasters, and those looking for a new twist on the old standbys, we offer seven samurai archetypes for your enjoyment. Each archetype will be preceded by several topics:

### Concept

The basic idea behind the archetype.

### Rules

The rules used to create the archetype. This includes which system was used to create the archetype and lists any non-standard rules used. Some of these archetypes are not exactly by the book, but any rules transgressions are well-labeled. For example, by-the-book archetypes may not begin with any item with a rating greater than 6 or an availability greater than 8 (p. 60, Shadowrun 3rd Edition). Items that violate this rule will be marked with a \*. In Third Edition, bioware is more balanced than before, so is no longer explicitly prohibited by rules for starting characters; however, the previously mentioned rules for availability apply to bioware for archetypes, as do the rules for Essence Index (p. 77, Man & Machine). As many campaigns use house rules preventing bioware for starting characters, the archetypes presented here are not as bioware intensive as they could be.

### Alternates

Some archetypes list quick modifications that could be made.

### Cost

This describes the priorities chosen or the point distribution for the archetype.

All archetypes are given two free level one contacts (p. 61, Shadowrun, 3rd Edition). The archetypes described here include these two contacts in their contact count. All characters begin with 3d6 x 100¥ in cash. This is listed for each archetype's starting cash, plus 10% of any tech money left over (p. 63, Shadowrun, 3rd Edition).

All characters start with a number of points for language skill equal to their intelligence times 1.5, rounded down (p. 91, Shadowrun 3rd Edition).

Any vehicles are priced using the prices from Rigger 3, which features very different prices than earlier books.

# Seven Samurai

By Lester Ward

wordman@pobox.com

## 2060 Samurai

**Concept:** An update of the SR2 Street Samurai archetype, using the same priorities.

**Rules:** Standard priority system. Martial Arts rules from Cannon Companion.

**Alternates:** Can be made an ork or dwarf without the corresponding attribute changes affecting the cost of skills.

**Cost:** Attributes A, Tech B, Skills C, Magic D, Race E (human)

### Attributes

B	Q	S	C	I	W	R	ID	E	BI	EI
6 (8)	6 (7)	6 (7)	2	5	5	5 (9)	1 (3)	0.04	0	3.04

### Dice Pools

Combat: 8

### Active Skills

Bike: 2

Edged Weapons: 3

Etiquette (Street): 1 (3)

Kung Fu: 6

[kick attack, whirling, whirling-edged weapons]

Pistols: 6

SMG: 5

Stealth: 4

### Knowledge Skills

Chemistry: 3

Criminal Organizations: 3

Economics: 3

Gourmet Cooking: 5

Law: 3

Megacorporate Security: 4

Police Procedures: 4

### Language Skills

English: 5

Japanese: 2

## Cyberware

Cybereyes (alphaware)  
 [with lowlight, flare compensation, thermographic and rangefinder]  
 Datajack (alphaware)  
 Dermal Sheath: 1 (alphaware)  
 [+1 impact armor]  
 Muscle Replacement: 1 (alphaware)  
 Skillwires  
 [Max rating: 3, Max memory: 27Mp]  
 Smartlink II (alphaware)  
 Wired reflexes: 2  
 [with Reflex Trigger]

## Contacts

Choose (2) contacts

## Lifestyle

One month middle lifestyle prepaid

## Gear

Bug Scanner: 6  
 Colt Cobra TZ-110  
 [caseless, smartgun II, 3 clips]  
 Colt Manhunter  
 [caseless, smartgun II, 5 clips, silencer, concealable quick-draw holster]  
 Cougar Short Blade  
 Dart Pistol  
 [smartgun II, 4 clips narcoject, concealable quick draw holster]  
 Doc Wagon Contract: Basic Service  
 Franchi SPAS-22  
 [40 rounds stun, 40 rounds regular]  
 Harley Scorpion  
 [anti-theft 6]  
 Pocket Secretary  
 [broadcast encryption 2]  
 Secure Jacket  
 Skillsoft Jukebox  
 [4 ports, 108 Mp]  
 Activesoft: Car 3  
 Activesoft: Computer 3  
 Activesoft: Shotgun 3  
 Sword  
 Starting Cash: (3d6 x 100¥) + 14¥

## Bug Hunter

**Concept:** Specialist in seeking and destroying insect spirits.

**Rules:** Standard priority system. Martial Arts rules from Cannon Companion. Some non-official equipment (marked with †).

**Cost:** Skills A, Tech B, Attributes C, Race D (ork), Magic E

## Attributes

B	Q	S	C	I	W	R	ID	E	BI	EI
6 (8)	4	7	1	3	6	3 (7)	1 (3)	0.04	0	3.04

## Dice Pools

Combat: 6

## Active Skills

Athletics: 3  
 Bike: 2  
 Car: 2  
 Computers: 3  
 Edged Weapons: 6  
 Etiquette: 3  
 Karate: 5  
 Focus Will: 2  
 Full Offense: 2  
 Launch Weapons: 4  
 Pistol: 4  
 Stealth: 6  
 Thrown Weapons: 4

## Knowledge Skills

Biology: 3  
 Chemistry: 4  
 Classical Music: 2  
 Insect Spirits: 3  
 Simsense Starlets: 2

## Language Skills

English: 4

## Cyberware

Chemical Analyzer: 6 (alphaware)  
 Datajack (alphaware)  
 Dermal Sheath: 1  
 [+1 impact armor]  
 Display link (alphaware)  
 Filtration System: 4  
 [Blood]  
 Gas Spectrometer: 6 (alphaware)  
 Headware Memory  
 [60Mp]  
 Orientation system  
 Wired Reflexes: 2  
 [with Reflex trigger]

## Contacts

Choose (7) contacts

## Lifestyle

Two months low lifestyle prepaid

## Gear

Ares Viper  
 [6 clips, concealable quick draw holster]  
 Armtech Mgl-6  
 [6 "stink bomb" minigrenades†, 6 insecticide minigrenades†]  
 Binder: 6  
 [vs. insect spirit venom†, 10 doses]  
 Camouflage Armor Jacket  
 [urban, 5/3]  
 Chemical Analyzer Program: 6  
 [49Mp, in headware]  
 Climbing Gear  
 [harness, kit, gloves, 50m rope]  
 Combat Axe  
 Cougar Long Blade  
 Dart pistol  
 [4 clips insecticide dartst, 4 clips narcoject darts]  
 Doc Wagon Contract: Basic Service  
 Forearm Guards  
 [+1 impact armor vs. melee attacks]  
 Form Fitting Armor  
 [full suit, 4/1]  
 Hyundai Offroader  
 [anti-theft: 6]  
 Katana  
 Pocket secretary  
 Sony Abacus  
 12 Shuriken  
 [coated with insecticide†]  
 Starting Cash: (3d6 x 100¥) + 114¥

## Hardboy

**Concept:** An over-the-top, munchkinesque, non-subtle, heavy combat samurai. Not suitable for all campaigns.

**Rules:** Standard priority system. This archetype is a rule-bender, more suited for heavy opposition than as a player character. Some equipment beyond availability 8 (marked with \*). Starts with bioware. Note that not all weapons listed can be carried or mounted simultaneously.

**Alternates:** The articulated arm takes up all of the ECU from the cyber torso. If removed, these ECU could be replaced with Body plating. Removing the arm (and, therefore, the DNI, router and arm-mountable guns as well) frees 127,118¥ and 0.23 Essence. The torso and skull could then support 8 points of ablative plating (yielding a +3/+3 to armor when intact), an extra level of Muscle Augmentation and two extra levels of Muscle Toner, with 1,118¥ left over.

**Cost:** Tech A, Attributes B, Skills C, Magic D, Race E (human)

## Attributes

B	Q	S	C	I	W	R	ID	E	BI	EI
4 (5)	6 (8)	5 (8)	1	3	5	4 (9)	1 (3)	0.71	2.0	3.71

## Dice Pools

Combat: 7

## Active Skills

Assault Rifles: 6  
 Brawling: 4  
 Car: 2  
 Edged Weapons: 5  
 Electronics: 3  
 Intimidation: 3  
 Launch Weapons: 3  
 Pistols: 6  
 Shotguns: 6

## Knowledge Skills

Champagne: 3  
 Criminal Organizations: 3  
 Cybertechnology: 3  
 Economics: 3  
 Lone Star Tactics: 3

## Language Skills

English: 4

## Cyberware

Cybereyes  
 [with low light, thermographic, flare compensation, rangefinder]  
 Cyberskull (alphaware)  
 [obvious, +3 bonus for Intimidation]  
 Cybertorso (alphaware)  
 [obvious, articulated arm\*]  
 DNI  
 [to articulated arm]  
 Router [ports to DNI, smartgun, eyes]  
 Smartgun II (alphaware)  
 Wired 2 (alphaware)  
 [with reflex trigger]

## Bioware

Muscle Augmentation: 3  
 Muscle Toner: 2

## Contacts

Choose (8) contacts  
 Choose (1) buddy

## Lifestyle

One month high lifestyle prepaid

## Gear

Ares Alpha Combat Gun  
[5 clips, mini-grenades: 8 smoke, 8 IPE offensive, 8 IPE defensive HE]

Ares HVAR\*  
[DNI adapted to articulated arm, caseless, smartgun II, 6 clips regular, 6 clips gel rounds]

Ares Predator III  
[caseless, smartgun II, 4 clips, concealable quick draw holster]

Ares Roadmaster  
[anti-theft: 6, runflat dual-purpose tires]

Combat Axe

Dart rifle  
[DNI adapted to articulated arm, smartgun II, 2 clips narcoject]

Doc Wagon Contract: Gold

Medkit

Mossberg CMDT  
[cyberchoke, smartgun II, 5 clips]

Pocket Secretary  
[broadcast encryption: 2]

Secure Jacket (5/3)

Stun Baton

Starting Cash: (3d6 x 100¥) + 7¥

## Pit Fighter

**Concept:** A highly augmented gladiator, geared toward hand-to-hand combat. Perhaps thought of best as a lethal professional wrestler or mixed martial artist.

**Rules:** Standard priority system. Martial Arts rules from Cannon Companion. Starts with bioware.

**Alternates:** Can be made an ork or dwarf without the corresponding attribute changes affecting the cost of skills.

**Cost:** Tech A, Attributes B, Skills C, Magic D, Race E (human)

## Attributes

<b>B</b>	<b>Q</b>	<b>S</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>I</b>	<b>W</b>	<b>R</b>	<b>ID</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>BI</b>	<b>EI</b>
6 (8)	5 (6)	6 (9)	4	3	3	4 (13)	1 (3)	0.84	3.7	3.84

## Dice Pools

Combat: 6

## Active Skills

Car:	3
Edged Weapons:	4
Etiquette (Entertainment):	2 (4)
Muay Thai:	6
[close combat, kick, kip-up]	
Negotiation:	3
Pistols:	3
Pole Arms / Staves:	6

## Knowledge Skills

Entertainment Politics:	3
Gambling:	3
History (Roman):	2 (4)
Medicine:	3
Yakuza Politics:	3

## Language Skills

English:	3
Japanese:	1

## Cyberware

Ceramic Bone Lacing	(alphaware)
[+2 impact armor, (Str+3) M unarmed]	
Cybereyes	
[with flare compensation, thermal, lowlight]	
Reaction Enhancer:	4
Wired Reflexes:	2 (alphaware)
[with reflex trigger]	

## Bioware

Muscle Augmentation:	2
Orthoskin:	3
[+2/+1 armor]	
Suprathyroid Gland	

## Contacts

Choose (4) contacts

## Lifestyle

Two months high lifestyle prepaid  
[suprathyroid increases lifestyle costs by 40%]

## Gear

Combat Axe

Doc Wagon Contract: Basic Service

Eurocar Westwind 2000 Turbo  
[anti-theft: 6 w/ shock, runflat tires, 4 electronics ports]

Forearm Guards  
[+1 impact vs. melee attacks]

Morrissey Alta  
[5 clips]

Pocket Secretary

Secure Ultra-Vest

Telescoping Staff

Starting Cash: (3d6 x 100¥) + 77¥



## Quick Troll

**Concept:** A very fast, and somewhat stylish, troll.

**Rules:** Point-based design system from Companion. Martial Arts from Cannon Companion.

**Cost:** Points spent on attributes (52), skills (33), metahumanity (10, troll) and tech (25).

### Attributes

<b>B</b>	<b>Q</b>	<b>S</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>I</b>	<b>W</b>	<b>R</b>	<b>ID</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>BI</b>	<b>EI</b>
8 (11)	4	9	1	2	5	3 (12)	1 (3)	0.1	0	3.1

### Dice Pools

Combat: 5

### Active Skills

Aikido: 6  
[sweep, throw, whirling]

Assault Rifle: 6

Bike: 2

Etiquette (Street): 1 (3)

Pistol: 6

### Knowledge Skills

Criminal Organizations: 2

Cuisine: 2

Fashion: 2

Law: 2

Security Procedures: 2

### Language Skills

English: 3

### Cyberware

Dermal Sheathing: 1

Reaction Enhancer: 5

Smartgun II

Wired Reflexes: 2

[with reflex trigger]

### Contacts

Choose (6) contacts

### Lifestyle

Three months high lifestyle prepaid

### Gear

Browning ultra-power  
[caseless, smart II, 5 clips]

Forged identity: 6

Form-fit body armor  
[full suit (4/1)]

Honda Viking  
[anti-theft: 6]

Pocket secretary  
Trés chic clothing

Samopal vz 88V  
[caseless, smart II, 5 clips]

Starting Cash: (3d6 x 100¥) + 42¥

## Stealth Samurai

**Concept:** A samurai with difficult-to-detect-augmentation, geared towards corporate infiltration missions.

**Rules:** Standard priority system. Martial Arts from Cannon Companion. Starts with bioware.

**Alternates:** Can be made an ork or dwarf by reducing the Etiquette skill by one. If such a change is made, the Cat's Eyes system may also be eliminated in favor of three extra contacts.

**Cost:** Tech A, Attributes B, Skills C, Magic D, Race E (human)

### Attributes

<b>B</b>	<b>Q</b>	<b>S</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>I</b>	<b>W</b>	<b>R</b>	<b>ID</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>BI</b>	<b>EI</b>
6	4	3	5	3 (5)	3	4	1 (3)	6.0	8.3	9.0

### Dice Pools

Combat: 6

Task: 1

### Active Skills

Computers: 3

Electronics: 3

Etiquette: 3

Pistols: 5

Stealth: 5

Tae Kwon Do: 6

[kick, multi-strike, sweep]

### Knowledge Skills

Corporate Finances: 3

Megacorporate Politics: 3

Pop Culture: 3

Security Procedures: 3

### Language Skills

English: 6

Read/Write: 4

### Bioware

Cat's Eyes

Cerebral Booster: 2

Damage Compensator: 2

Enhanced Articulation

Mnemonic Enhancer: 3

Nephritic Screen

[+1 Body and -1 Power vs. toxins and pathogens]

Orthoskin: 3

[+2 ballistic/+1 impact]

Synaptic Accelerator: 2

Toxin Extractor: 3

[-3 Power vs. toxins]

Tracheal Filter: 3

[-3 Power vs. gas]

Trauma Damper

## Contacts

Choose (6) contacts

## Lifestyle

Two months mid lifestyle prepaid

## Gear

Dart Pistol  
 [5 clips narcoject, concealable quick draw holster]  
 Ford Americar  
 Form Fitting Armor  
 [full suit (4/1)]  
 Keypad Sequencer  
 Microtronics Kit  
 Pocket Secretary  
 Starting Cash: (3d6 x 100¥) + 7¥

## Sub Samurai

**Concept:** An elf samurai, built for underwater action.

**Rules:** Standard priority system. Martial Arts from Cannon Companion.

**Cost:** Skills B, Tech B, Race C (elf), Attributes D, Magic E

## Attributes

<b>B</b>	<b>Q</b>	<b>S</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>I</b>	<b>W</b>	<b>R</b>	<b>ID</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>BI</b>	<b>EI</b>
5 (6)	4	4	4	4	3	4 (6)	1 (2)	0.01	0	3.01

## Dice Pools

Combat: 5

## Active Skills

Kung Fu: 4  
 [blind fighting, multi-strike]  
 Negotiation: 4  
 Etiquette: 3  
 Pistols: 4  
 Edged Weapons: 4  
 Car: 4  
 SMGs: 6  
 Stealth: 4  
 Demolitions: 4  
 Computer: 3  
 Diving: 4

## Knowledge Skills

Philosophy: 4  
 Literature: 3  
 Megacorporate Politics: 4  
 Investing: 4  
 Gang Identification: 2  
 Magic Background: 2

## Language Skills

English: 6  
 Read/Write: 6

## Cyberware

Air Filters: 6  
 Balance Augmenter  
 Cyberears  
 [high-frequency, amplification, damper]  
 Cyberfins  
 Datajack (alphaware)  
 Internal Air Tank (alphaware)  
 [tracheal vent]  
 Kevlar Bone Lacing (alphaware)  
 [+1 ballistic]  
 OXSYS Cybergill  
 Smartlink II (alphaware)  
 Wired Reflexes: 1  
 [stepped reflex trigger]

## Contacts

Choose (4) contacts

## Lifestyle

Two months high lifestyle prepaid

## Gear

Ares Predator III  
 [caseless variant, concealable quick draw holster,  
 4 clips, silencer]  
 Bug Scanner: 6  
 Cougar Fineblade Knife, Long Blade  
 Doc Wagon  
 Eurocar Westwind 2000  
 [anti-theft-6, runflat tires]  
 Forged Credstick: 5  
 Ingram Warrior-10  
 [caseless, smartgun II, gas vent 4, concealable  
 quick draw holster, 5 clips]  
 Pocket Secretary  
 Secure Long Coat  
 6 Stim Patches: 6  
 2 Trauma Patches  
 Starting Cash: (3d6 x 100¥) + 3777¥



## Firearms Prices the Sensible Way

by Eleanor Holmes  
[ [jestyr@dumpshock.com](mailto:jestyr@dumpshock.com) ]

The Firearms Design system in the Cannon Companion rulebook was in many ways a welcome addition to the game system, and in many ways a letdown. It's great that there's now an official way of creating new guns for use in a Shadowrun game; that new diversity is a good thing, and we've wanted it for years.

What was disappointing about that rule set is the fact that it really only caters to one-off firearms construction. It is intended to simulate the actions of a gunsmith PC or NPC creating a new gun from scratch. If you're trying to expand the range of mass-market guns in the Shadowrun world, it falls down badly.

The main reason that it's not useable for this purpose is the seemingly exorbitant cost of relatively simple guns designed under this system. For example, replicating the Ceska vz/120, a light pistol, will cost 635¥ under the Firearms Design system, where the Ceska only costs 500¥. This is one of the least extreme examples; on the other end of the scale, replicating the Ruger Super Warhawk (a 300¥ gun) costs 1010¥ according to this system.

This is easily explained by assuming that the Firearm Design system is intended to indicate the cost of building a gun from scratch, by someone without the resources of a munitions factory. It doesn't include the discount inherent in mass-market firearm manufacturing, so it's impossible to replicate canon guns for anywhere near the same price.

The Firearms Design system is still a very good system for limiting what absolutely is and isn't possible when it comes to firearms design. It is still a good system for gamemasters (and even players) who wish to design new guns for their game world — those that are being built and sold by armaments corporations, not made from scratch by an individual gunsmith. The only thing that needs to be changed when it comes to weapons generated under this system is the price.

### The Bulk Production Modifier

This is a factor applied to the final cost of the gun, after the markup from DP to nuyen price. It only applies to guns that are manufactured and sold on a mass-market basis within the gamemaster's game world. Each type of firearm has a different Bulk Production Modifier, reflecting the fact that different classes of guns are constructed for different reasons and promoted to different markets.

The table below shows the Bulk Production Modifier for each type of firearm.

#### Bulk Production Modifiers

Firearm Type	Bulk Production Modifier
Hold-Out Pistol	1.08
Light Pistol	0.79
Machine Pistol	0.63
Heavy Pistol	0.46
Submachine Gun	0.41
Shotgun	0.50
Sport Rifle	0.47
Assault Rifle	0.56
Sniper Rifle	0.64
Machine Gun	0.54

## Pricing Your Merchandise

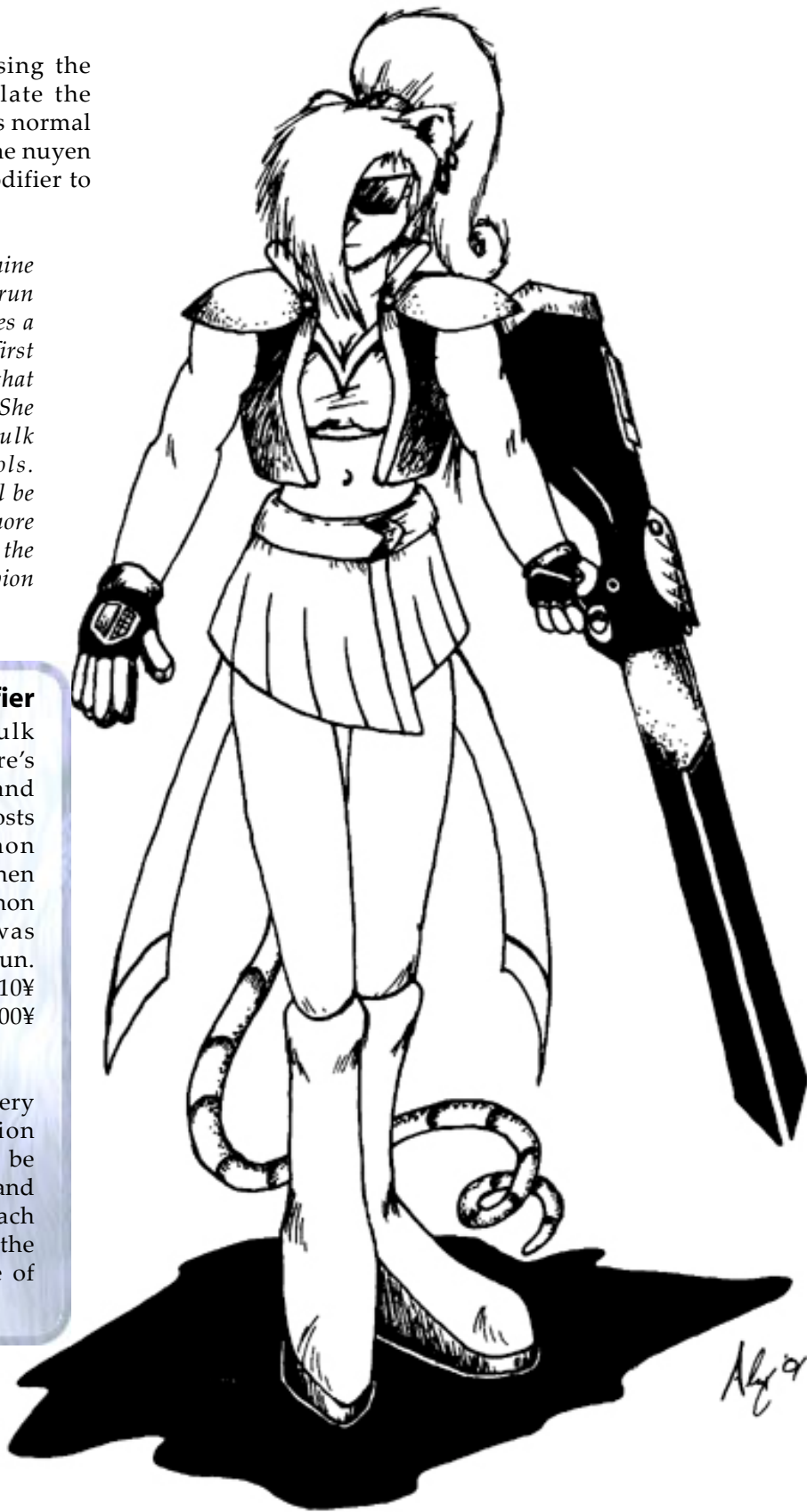
When you have designed a weapon using the Cannon Companion design system, calculate the Design Point cost and apply the 5x markup as normal to calculate a price in nuyen. Then multiply the nuyen price by the appropriate Bulk Production Modifier to get a final sale price for a mass-market gun.

*Sarah designs the SCK Perforator, a new machine pistol that's just hit the market in her Shadowrun game. The final DP value is 300, which gives a sale price of 1,500¥. Sure, the prototypes and first limited release Perforators might have cost that much, but soon it'll be just another gun. She multiplies the 1500¥ by 0.63, the Bulk Production Modifier for machine pistols. Characters in Sarah's Shadowrun game will be able to pick up a Perforator for 950¥ - much more reasonable than 1500¥, and comparable with the Ares Crusader (950¥), the Ceska Black Scorpion (850¥) or the Steyr TMP (900¥).*

### Building the Bulk Production Modifier

If you're interested in how the Bulk Production Modifier was derived, here's how I did it: I took a canon SR gun and worked out how much an identical gun costs when designed using the Cannon Companion firearm design system. I then worked out what percentage of the Cannon Companion price ("design price") was actually used for the price of the canon gun. For example, a Ruger Super Warhawk, 1010¥ by Cannon Companion rules, is sold for 300¥ - 29.7% of the design price.

I calculated a percentage like this for every gun from SR3 and Cannon Companion (excluding those guns which could not be replicated by Cannon Companion rules), and averaged out all the percentages for each type of gun. This average percentage is the Bulk Production Modifier for that type of gun.



# Damage Control

By Steven "Bull" Ratkovich  
[ [bull@dumpshock.com](mailto:bull@dumpshock.com) ]

Welcome back, intrepid gamemasters. How goes the good fight against the barbarian hordes that are your players? Hold strong, my friends and colleagues. You are the gamemaster, and with a little help, you can rein in those power gamers, clip the wings on the rules lawyers, and put the munchkins back in their place.

One of the areas that almost all GMs find frustrating is the use of Edges and Flaws, mostly flaws. Good players will take few flaws, if any, and will take flaws that they can play with and that will help put the character into their player character. Still, many players simply look at flaws as nothing more than a source of points, something you take to balance out taking some edges or to tweak a couple extra points out so that they can get an extra couple skill points or raise that Willpower up to 6.

So, for all you beleaguered gamemasters out there wondering what to do when someone shows up with a twinked out character and a page full of flaws, this is not a problem! You have several options.

The first option is simple. If this is a first game session, you always have the option of making sure all characters pass your approval. Look it over, and ask the player to make changes or to start over. As the GM, it's up to you to create the story and game that these characters will be living in, and you need to have characters you are comfortable working with to tell that story. Most of the time a few tweaks and changes will work just fine, but occasionally, you just need to have the player go back to the drawing board.

If you're more than a couple game sessions in, however, this isn't really an option. So now you have to deal with the character and, for the purpose of this article, all his flaws. If this is the case, do not lose hope. With a little creativity and a small sadistic streak, you can ensure that players are earning the build points that flaws grant them. They're called flaws for a reason – they should hinder the character in his or her daily life and when the pressure is on during a shadowrun.

## Aptitude/Incompetence

As written, every Aptitude and Incompetence may be only taken for a skill that a character has. Player attempts to make an Aptitude more general – such as "Ranged Weapons" should be denied. If Incompetence: Rifle hardly affects a character because he never uses the FN-HAR he owns (and he never trains with it, trying to improve...), perhaps Incompetence: Firearms should be used instead. Also, be careful how many Incompetence flaws you allow – why would a character have many skills in areas that he's by nature not competent in?

## Computer Illiterate

"A 3 point flaw? Heck, my character will never use a computer." Wrong! Everything from the phone system to a car's Autonav is computer controlled. Computers aren't just a part of everyday life in Shadowrun; they're a part of darned near everything you do. Chances are a computer illiterate character isn't even going to be able to work the electronic menu at McHugh's. In this high tech world, it sucks to be this character. "Hey NightShade, can you order me a McSoy Meal? I can't get this stupid machine to work."

## Physical Flaws

### Allergy

Everyone loves an Allergy. Need a couple more points to scratch out that Strength 6 you're trying to munch up? Take an allergy! Grab something rare and stupid so the GM can't screw you! First off, remember this: There's a difference between Common, Uncommon, and Unworkable. Saying "I'm allergic to Platinum" isn't going to cut it with me, unless of course, you're planning on getting loaded with cyber. In which case, I'll point out that platinum is a good conductor, and anything beyond standard cyber is going to use it in the wiring. Just use your head, and make sure the player is ready for the consequences of his allergies.

### Bio-Rejection

Mages love this one. Non-mages, of course, rarely take it. Even at 5 points, this flaw isn't worth it to them. Mages, on the other hand, usually plan on never implanting cyberware. Sure, they'll occasionally contemplate a point of magic loss for some fancy new eyes with all the options, but rarely do they go more extreme. Simply put, do you know how much more vat grown clonal replacements cost over cyber? Or the time it takes to get said replacement parts? Have fun with this one and the mage will regret ever wanting two extra points. The same applies to Sensitive system.

Controlled Flaws

## Blind

Be sure to enforce the “Cybereyes cannot correct this” rule, no matter how much a player may argue about it. And remember your target modifier penalties to astrally perceiving mages, plus the fact that this makes them astrally active. I had a player who once tried play a blind mage who perceived at all times. He quickly got the hint after I started having him make tests for mundane actions. Sadly, the character died later that game session due to a major blunder on the player’s part.

## Borrowed Time

Really, this one is almost self-explanatory. However, occasionally you’ll run into a power gamer who decides to play the “expendable” character. They do it all the time anyway, but this just gives them more justification, as they figure they’ll get themselves killed before this flaw can ever kick in. If you suspect this is the case, feel free to have them run out of time all that much sooner. Help them along. Why stand in their way if they want the character to die?

## Color Blind

Ok, this one is a very minor flaw, worth a measly 1 point. However, it’s amazing how many shadowrunners are color blind these days. If they’re a decker or a rigger, this one is easy to have fun with. Ever try to work on electronics when you can’t differentiate the colors of your wires? For others, this one takes a bit more work to utilize against the player, but it’s still easy enough to do. “You’ll know Mr. Johnson. He’ll be wearing a blue suit and a red tie.”

## Deaf

Like blind, this one should be an obvious flaw. Don’t let players weasel out of it, make sure they get the correct (-1) bonus if they’re a rigger or decker and it doesn’t affect them while rigging or decking. And remember a couple things. For one, the -4 to tests when hearing is a factor only applies to tests where hearing is only one of several factors. If sound is the only factor involved, they automatically fail. And secondly, -4 could be used as a minimum modifier – the more the test requires hearing, such as a surprise test in pitch-dark – the higher the modifier.

## Infirm

This is a favorite of deckers and some riggers, as well as some mages and the aforementioned “short lifespan” munchkins. This flaw can be devastating, but if the player never plans to raise the character’s attributes above a certain point, they’re getting free points. Infirm does not decrease your attributes, merely the attribute maximum. It doesn’t even reduce your racial modified limit, unless of course it brings the max below this point. This means unless the PC buys high ranks in it to start, it’s not going to affect a starting character at all and only hinders him over a lengthy period of time. Think long and hard about the player’s intention before allowing this flaw.

## Night Blindness

If this flaw is being abused, modify it so that it also overrides any natural vision modifiers, so an ork with this does not have night vision, but instead is even worse off at night than the average human. This is a fun one when crawling around a sewer or making a run at night (And really, how often do you run during the day?).

## Parapalegic / Quadrapalegic

These flaws are obviously devastating to any combat- or movement-oriented character. For a decker, rigger, or even occasionally a mage it’s much less so. Be careful of players who never want to leave home and/or their vehicle of choice. Remember that they can always be traced, and they’ll probably need a bodyguard at all times. If this is more a character quirk than a true flaw that hinders the player and group, then don’t allow points for it. But if they get points, use it against them. No matter how many precautions the characters take, they’ll never be as safe as someone who has one last resort: running away.

## Weak Immune System

How often do players really need to make resistance to pathogens or poisons tests? Unless you’re a sadistic GM like me, probably very rarely. This is a minor flaw, only worth -1, so you don’t need to play this one up too badly. Occasionally use a poison or a disease, but more importantly, remember the common diseases. Characters with this flaw have a higher chance of getting the flu or common cold; cuts and scrapes will get infected easier. They may need a basic medkit to treat those scratches and scrapes immediately. And remember, nothing ruins a good silent sneak across a courtyard behind a guard’s back than having to sneeze halfway across.

## Mental Flaws

### Amnesia

If you can't figure out how to utilize this against the player, don't allow it. This one can be great fun for a player and GM who want to work together to develop the character, but can be a pain for a player who takes it 'cause he's too lazy to create a background. If the latter is the case, have fun. The character is yours to use and abuse as relatives, children, enemies, and all kinds of other plot hooks can come swarming out of the woodwork.

### Combat Paralysis

This is a big one among the "non-combat munch" types, especially those who don't play hyped up mages. What does it matter if you get a minimum result for the first round of initiative if your initiative is only 4+1D6 to begin with? Think long and hard about it, and remember that NPC teams will often follow the same old adage most PC teams adhere to: Geek the mage first.

### Compulsive

Even at low levels, the character is going to go out of their way to get sate their compulsion. Compulsive gamblers will stop off to drop some coins in the slots, even if they have very few coins to do so. They'll borrow money and sell personal belongings – other people's personal belongings, sometimes – and generally get themselves in bother due to their problems, oftentimes dragging other people down with them.

### Flashbacks

This is another one you can have a lot of fun with, especially with a willing player. Regardless though, this is a flaw and should be tied to what the player does. Flashbacks "when you see a dragon" aren't a good flashback for anyone, but "bullet flashbacks" from a stint in the Desert Wars are great for a merc/sammy type. Every time they get into combat this could trigger. Apply the flashbacks to the character's "job" and it becomes a true flaw.

### Impulsive

Characters like this will jump into any situation, regardless of the details. Left your pistol at home, and eight gangers just jumped you? No problem! Put them in situations where this will hamper them, and don't let them off easily. And again, if the character is designed to avoid this as a flaw, because he's got Willpower of six or more, then either throw it at him a lot, or don't allow it. For a good example of impulsive, watch the original Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles movie.

Raphael had this flaw in spades.

### Illiterate

This is yet another munch favorite, as at first glance it seems to have little effect on the character. Sure, you lose out on some knowledge skills, but what all do you really need to read? Look around you, my desperate GM. You need to read everything. Sure, things are going to be more iconic in the cyberpunk future of Shadowrun, but still, words are an important part of daily life. Throw signs at them, make them realize they're missing out on a lot. Hurt them with it. Maybe Mr. Johnson wants a book report?

### Oblivious

Huh, what was that? Did you say something? A great way to have fun with this flaw is to make a perception test for the player sometimes, and then tell only the rest of the group what's going on, leaving the player in the dark as to what's going on. This character is so focused on other things that he often misses what's going on around him. This is an obvious one, but could be a lot of fun in the hands of the right player.

### Pacifist / Total Pacifist

Don't allow your players to play pacifists unless you really think they can handle it. Pacifist (-2) means a character just doesn't like to kill if they can help it, but a Total Pacifist (-5) will not kill. Moreover, most total pacifists don't even like to injure or harm others unless absolutely necessary. Play this up and enforce it, and you'll see a reduction in the number of pacifistic Shadowrunners.

### Phobia

This one is similar to allergies. Everyone loves to get a few points off a phobia. After all, doesn't everyone have a phobia, a fear, of something? Whether it is spiders, the dark, heights, whatever, everyone has a phobia. But the thing to remember is most of us don't truly have any phobias. Spiders may startle us or creep us out, or we may have a brief flash of fear when the lights get turned out at night, but it's not a phobia. Phobias are true fears, and even a minor phobia will strongly distract a character, while a 4- or 5-point phobia will debilitate the character.

### Sensitive Neural Structure

This should not be allowed for any character that doesn't deck or rig regularly.

## Simsense Vertigo

Like Bio-Rejection, this is a flaw really aimed at Deckers or Riggers. If the character is not going to be dealing with simsense by choice, he should not have this flaw. If a player does slip it in under the radar and isn't a rigger, decker, and never uses simsense for anything, feel free to set them into situations where they'll need to use simsense: Meeting a Mr. J via the Matrix, maybe some BTL addiction, anything to get them hooking a Simsense player up to their noggin'. Take special note that Smartlinks qualify as simsense...

## Uneducated

More than just lacking training, this character lacks knowledge. This is partially represented by lower Knowledge Skills to start, but also this is a character that most likely never finished high school. He may be intelligent, but he simply never learned the fundamentals. He won't know much from high school, let alone college-level courses. Anything beyond basic math is going to be foreign to him. He's not going to know how government works, he won't know much about geography, and he'll never have read Shakespeare. If he knows the story of Romeo and Juliet, it's because he caught the Channel 347 Ancients/Spikes version of it where the troll girl and the elf boy fall in love and end up getting shot down in the street by both gangs. Play this up. This is another fun one for the right player, or simply free points for the wrong.

## Vindictive

This is another common flaw for the average Munch. Most shadowrunners are constantly angry and carry grudges, so Vindictive seems to fit them perfectly. However, this often goes beyond the "I'll get him back someday if I get the chance" type of grudge. This is 'That waiter messed up my bill and stiffed me two nuyen!' followed by threats with a knife. Vindictive characters are dangerous to themselves and others, and are going to get the team in trouble one of these days. He'll end up in jail if he's lucky, or at the bottom of the Seattle Sound if he's not.

## Social Flaws

### Dark Secret

What angst-ridden "my whole family was murdered and I hate the world" character would be complete without the requisite Dark Secret? If you can, work with your player to come up with a good Dark Secret, or simply make one up for the more unimaginative players out there. Regardless, this needs to be something that will turn the character's world upside down. This will turn his contacts against him, his friends against him, and even his own family or loved ones against him. There are millions of ideas, use your imagination, but it should be something worse than "I killed someone once".

### Day Job

Too often this is taken because of background rather than as an actual flaw. "Yeah, my decker works in a computer store," and then they assume this means they also can get free or cheap parts to build with, and if they lose the job, no biggie. There are a lot of strings that come attached to this flaw and its bonuses. These

characters have responsibilities – being at work, looking respectable, dealing with the public – and most importantly, they have a SIN (Or they're working under the table, which has its own set of problems).

### Hung Out to Dry

Not only does no one like to deal with this character, no one **will** deal with them. Word on something they've done has gotten out, and no one wants to be associated with them. They need to stay home while the team is at their meets, and hope they can trust their partners – if their partners still trust them.

There are some other Flaws out there, but the ones I left off are all fairly self-explanatory. You can have fun with them, and in general they're fairly nasty.

Well, that's it for this time. You are now armed and ready to deal with your over-flawed characters the next time you play! And remember, it's not a flaw unless they pay for it.





# A Little Learning...

By Eleanor Homes [ [jestyr@dumpshock.com](mailto:jestyr@dumpshock.com) ]

Greetings again, and welcome to a more physical edition of A Little Learning. This column has a pretty even mix of Active and Knowledge skills, so those whose characters would rather do than think shouldn't feel left out.

## Knowledge Skills

### Prison Operations

**Default:** Police Procedures, Law, Judicial Procedures  
**Specializations:** By corporation, by jurisdiction, by security level, by focus (inmate or staff)

The Prison Operations skill grants a character all appropriate knowledge related to the day-to-day functioning of a jail or prison. It covers everything from prisoner admissions through daily procedures to disciplinary action and prisoner release and transfer. This skill is possessed by inmates and staff alike, and can be used to predict the lifestyle, activities and even likely current whereabouts of a prisoner or staff member at any given time.

### Judicial Procedures

**Default:** Police Procedures, Law, Prison Operations  
**Specializations:** By jurisdiction, by process (arraignment, bail, juries, etc.), by crime type

This skill grants a character knowledge of the workings of the justice system. Judicial Procedures covers the non-police side of law enforcement: courthouse operations, legal protocols, trials and hearings, and so forth. A character with this skill knows what to expect from arrests and arraignment, bail hearings, sentencing, and superficial jail procedures. Judicial Procedures gives the knowledge required to work in (or pose as a worker in) a courtroom, parole office, bail holding area, legal office, or similar fields.

### Vehicle Security

**Default:** Security Devices, any Vehicle systems knowledge skills  
**Specializations:** By manufacturer, by device type, by responsiveness (passive/active)

This skill covers the various security mechanisms installed to protect modern vehicles. It includes knowledge of door locks and controls, ignition security, alarm systems, anti-theft systems, and any other common defensive measures. It does not allow characters to circumvent electronic or key locks (which must be dealt with using the appropriate Active Skills) but may, at the GM's discretion, suggest avenues to bypass such locks if any exist.

## Active Skills

### Handyman (Reaction)

**Default:** Any appropriate B/R skills (at GM's discretion)  
**Specializations:** Carpentry, Plumbing, Mechanisms, etc.

Perhaps better described as "General Build/Repair", the Handyman Active Skill covers all those tool-using jobs not specifically included in another B/R skill. From repairing a doorframe to tiling a bathroom, this skill turns a character into a general Mr. Fixit and home handyman. Handyman should be used in consultation with the GM, to determine if any other B/R skills would be more appropriate. (For example, Electronics B/R may cover cabling or electrical wiring work, and hence a Handyman skill would not be applicable.) However, the character may default to their Handyman skill for any appropriate B/R skill that they do not possess, at the GM's discretion. Additionally, in cases of conflict between Handyman and a specific B/R skill, the GM may wish to allow the use of Handyman as a Complementary Skill on the specific B/R skill test.

### Lockpicking (Quickness)

**Default:** Legerdemain, Stealth  
**Specializations:** By lock manufacturer, by lock type (padlock, deadbolt, etc.)

Although far less common than it used to be in this era of maglocks and electronics, the gentle art of lockpicking should not be dismissed by anyone who wishes to go where they should not. Page 27 of Man & Machine gives some basic rules for lockpicking. A character must have both hands free to pick a lock, and will require appropriate tools. Use of a lockpick gun (whether cybernetic or external) grants the character a Complementary Skill equal to the rating of the gun; however, lockpick guns cannot be used on very old or coarse lock mechanisms. This skill also allows characters to manipulate safe and vault mechanisms if they have the appropriate tools and knowledge.

Gencon 1998 brought the world of Shadowrun players Third Edition. It promised cleaner, more consistent rules and a revitalization of the game with a focus on new players. The three years since have indeed brought us cleaner, more consistent rules. The revitalization is debatable: There was a focus on new players in the material, but precious little driving force in the game line. Metagame slowed to a crawl, and releasing the third editions of the core books took three years. FASA dropped out of the production business and sold Shadowrun to WizKids. WizKids in turn licensed out Shadowrun to FanPro, who had been publishing the German language version of Shadowrun. FanPro then hired Rob Boyle to head up FanPro LLC, based in Chicago.

This Gencon brought us Year of the Comet, which was written in the FASA days, but was processed by FanPro LLC before release. Similarly, the next few products expected to come out (**Target: Awakened Lands, Threats 2, Shadows of North America**) all had some to all of their writing done under FASA leadership. It will be 2002 before we see material that is FanPro LLC from start to finish.

In the meantime, we can judge the new leadership by their other efforts. I was always a vocal advocate of a stronger Internet presence for FASA. FanPro has already rolled out a new Shadowrun website ( <http://www.shadowrunrpg.com> ) and has made at least basic efforts to put out errata and product schedule information. (Disclaimer: TSS editor and founder Adam Jury has been tapped as the Shadowrun webmaster.) It remains to be seen if FanPro can better FASA's 6-8 month email response time, or if they can keep their updates timely.

## Advice for FanPro LLC

In the spirit of optimism, I am including a list of the top ten improvements that could be made based on my experiences with FASA. If you have suggestions or comments, send them to me at [swiftone@dumpshock.com](mailto:swiftone@dumpshock.com), and I may include them in a future article.

### 10. Produce New Material

Third Edition has been three years of redoing the old rules. I can't complain about the quality of the rules produced, but taking three years to get where we started is not the way to build a vigorous game line.

### 9. Release Online Materials

The online fan community has worked hard to deal with this issue, but that doesn't exempt the company from doing their part. Either officially recognize the efforts of the fans and house their material on your website, or produce your own. Character sheets, reference sheets, character generator programs, etc. Errata are particularly valuable. The new website looks good, but it should be the first step, not the last.

### 8. Don't Mix Materials

I complained heavily about a few Second Edition books that mixed adventures and metagame information. This forced GMs that wanted to keep up-to-date to purchase adventures they might not want. Year of the Comet does a good job of avoiding this problem; let's see more of it.

### 7. Produce Quickly

Nothing beats quality, but FASA was infamous for shipping books a year or more after their initial publicized shipping date. Third Edition in particular got products out the door with the speed of a moderately fast snail.

### 6. Emphasize Culture

The Sixth World is a different era, with different conventions and a wide variety of cultures. Make sure that GMs have enough material to know how to represent the different groups, enough material to know how common a mechanical lock is, and give players enough material to play the role of their character.

### 5. Improve the Books

Third Edition has addressed some of these concerns, but I want to see indexes, collections of relevant tables, and clear cross-referencing. (It can't be as hard to search for "XX" in a draft as it appeared to be for FASA.) Give me complete charts and tables so that I don't have to search through four books to create a character.

## Rigger 3



Sourcebook  
 Jon Szeto, Rich Tomasso  
**Size:** 205 pages  
**Price:** \$22.00  
**ISBN:** 1-55560-402-1  
**Rating:** 4 out of 5  
**Pros:** More useful to average game than Rigger 2  
**Cons:** Still much gearhead content, no index

Of all my reviews for *The Shadowrun Supplemental*, my review of **Rigger 2** received the most criticism. I proclaimed that Rigger 2 had brought the rigger into the realm of the playable character.

In retrospect, I have to admit I was wrong. Rigger 2 did provide rules for the rigger, but those rules didn't mesh with the non-rigging rules well. The basics of Rigger 2 were incorporated into the Third Edition rules, though toned down to cause less interference.

Reflecting on all of this, I was concerned that **Rigger 3** would again mire the vehicle rules in multiple tests for every action. I am pleased to announce that, by and large, this is not the case. Rigger 3 does have a lot of gearhead information, but it also does a good job of providing basic setting information for the average campaign.

The classics from Rigger 2 are included: Robots, security riggers, MIJI. The book begins, however, with a good look at the average streets of Seattle. Everything from the Grid to license plates is covered. This information, though simple, is incredibly valuable to GMs and players alike for getting a feel of how things work and what is possible.

Sections also exist mostly the rigger characters: Electronic Warfare, Drones, Security Riggers, Ships and Subs, Special Rules, Advanced Rules (read: Optional rules), Toys, and Customization. Most of this information is very similar to that given in Rigger 2 or **Cyberpirates**, with some of the vague areas better defined. It is refreshing to have a sequel written (at least in part) by the same author, particularly one who has been as available to the community as Mr. Szeto. This allows actual common questions and confusion to be addressed.

As a fan of submarine movies and books, I was disappointed in the Ships and Subs section. While the rules for sonar and torpedoes are covered, one would be hard pressed to run *Red October 2062* using the material in here alone. The long-sought (by some) ship and submarine construction rules are included.

Two additions I did find particularly pleasing were the optional "vehicles in standard initiative rules" and the "Similar Models" listings. The former allows for better meshing of riggers and the rest of the party, although it does toss aside most of the rigging rules.

The latter is included in the vehicle lists (which, pleasingly, are listed by vehicle type and not by manufacturer, unlike Rigger 2.) For example, the familiar BMW Blitzen is now functionally the same as the Yamaha Sprint, the Honda Banshee, and the Harley-Davidson Diablo. This one small addition allows for increased diversity and color to the setting without adding rules complexity.

The book includes no index, and is woefully short of vehicle illustrations, but even this is somewhat forgivable for the amount of material packed into the book.

Rigger 3 is a worthy successor to Rigger 2. The gearheads of the group should spend happy hours designing new vehicles or customizing existing ones, and everyone else will appreciate knowing how the Grid works and what to do when traffic cameras catch them fleeing the scene of a run. Even a group without a rigger should find Rigger 3 a worthwhile investment.

### 4. Learn From Mistakes

Can Thermographic Vision see an invisible character? Can you use magnification in a cybereye along with a Smartlink? These are questions that have existed since First edition, but aren't clearly answered in the rulebook. Be clear. Look at what FASA was criticized for and do better, listen to the comments you receive. Third Edition addressed a lot of **very** long standing issues from Second Edition, but it wasn't enough. *Shadowrun* hasn't had even a semi-official "Frequently Asked Questions" since the early days of First Edition.

### 3. Present a Unified Vision

*Shadowrun* has moved from its gritty cyberpunk roots to an anime-like comic genre. This isn't the feel I'd prefer, but whichever way it goes the line should be consistent. Reading **Target: Matrix** was like clicking through a Viewmaster of different genres.

## Year of the Comet



Sourcebook  
 Many Authors (17)  
**Size:** 160 pages  
**Price:** \$22.00  
**ISBN:** 3-89064-650-6

**Rating:** 4 out of 5  
**Pros:** World-spanning metagame info  
**Cons:** GM-only, World-spanning metagame info

*This review contains no "spoiler" information about Year of the Comet that is not included on the back cover, but it does contain information about previous Shadowrun products. If you are playing in a campaign that might use previous products as "new" events, or if you are trying to minimize your knowledge of this product, you should not read this review.*

Originally slated to make an appearance at Origins 2000, **Year of the Comet** (YOTC) has had a long path to travel before finally appearing in the hands of eager players. With the Shadowrun timeline now set at roughly realtime+60 years (it was 61 years during FASA's time) YOTC can now appear to be on time. Was it worth the wait?

Shadowrun has always been a game with a strong emphasis on metagame. Your characters may be trying to scrape by in their corner of the sprawl, but the world is a big and active place; events happen outside of the characters' control, and they have a very real chance of affecting the character. First Edition had the Universal Brotherhood. Second Edition had the concept of Horrors (from Earthdawn, but hinted at since First Edition), Bug City, the UCAS presidential election, the Mob war, Dunklezahn's will, the shake up amongst the megacorporations, the Voodoo War. Third Edition had the Arcology, but little else in the way of metaplot.

Year of the Comet is a return to the Second Edition style of metagame information. In the vein of **Blood in the Boardroom**, it is a timeline of events covering slightly more than a year (16 months). Unlike **Blood in the Boardroom**, it is not a series of "tracks" that include several adventures. It more resembles Portfolio of a Dragon as a description of the fallout of several events.

YOTC covers nine events that are all somewhat related to one central theme: Halley's comet is making the regular fly-by that it does every 76 years or so, but this time it's flying by an Earth that is Awakened, and it's doing so in the fiftieth anniversary of the Awakening. The global emotional response to these events can mean just about anything where magic is concerned.

The nine events covered include genetic changelings, the rise in power of some peculiar cults, the arrival of a new Great Dragon, the fallout of trouble in Japan, (continued, but eventful) rebellion in the Yucatan, and some new magical threats. The events are spaced out in time such that they can be integrated with a normal campaign, but their global scope means that in all but the most unusual campaigns many of the items will merely be blips on the news screamsheets.

Nothing in these events should unduly alter game balance. This is not a collection of rules, but a collection of events. The rules section consists of 23 pages, including a useful one-page timeline, a few pages of new critters, a page of short adventure ideas, and GM advice for using and running the events described in the rest of the book.

The book itself is all done as Shadowtalk-style in character discussion (aside from the rules section). Because the nine sections cover overlapping time periods, and some sections cover events that evolve over the 16 months, the first time through can be somewhat disorienting. In particular there is some evidence that the sections were rearranged in editing, because several of the earlier sections refer to the events of a later section. GMs would be well-advised to read the entirety before use, and to take notes. Without revealing the events, GMs of games in the following areas should pay particular interest to this book: Denver, Phillipines, Cal Free State, Japan, Aztlan. Some events cover the globe, so this is not an exhaustive list.

As a metagame book, players will find little to interest them (or perhaps, much that interests them but little for their characters to use). Reading any of the book will reveal major plot elements, and there are no spells or gear introduced. This book has less for the player than Portfolio of the Dragon did. Dunklezahn's will was public information that the characters could access; there is nothing for characters in YOTC.

Year of the Comet is a revival of the Shadowrun metagame, and a fairly interesting one. It is hurt not by the GM-only value (which is better than mix that hurts both groups), but by the number of events that won't be used in most campaigns. However, this harm is minor. Any Shadowrun GM reading this should walk away bubbling with ideas of elements to drop into their game.



## The Burning Time



Novel  
 Stephen Kenson  
**Size:** 277 pages  
**Price:** \$5.99  
**ISBN:** 0-451-45839-7

**Rating:** 3 out of 5  
**Pros:** Solid writing, good Year of the Comet event coverage  
**Cons:** Think Rocky 3: We've been here before

Stephen Kenson returns to the Shadowrun novels, giving us another account of the life and times of Talon and his team. They're in their home town of Boston, and they've got their own problems to deal with, while some of the Year of the Comet events complicate their lives further.

That summarizes the best and the worst of this novel. Unlike **Ragnarock** (the second Talon novel), **The Burning Time** is very much a sequel to **Crossroads** (the first Talon novel). With two previous books behind them, the characters are well-developed, and in familiar turf there is little that is new and interesting. Further character development does happen, but is more limited. So where **Crossroads** was a great introduction to the Boston Sprawl, with interesting characters, **The Burning Time** is just a revisit with none of the freshness that made the original so captivating.

Perhaps most disappointing was the back cover blurb and the first two chapters. There we deal with non-shadowrunners intersecting the shadows. In those chapters, though short, I was hooked to the writing and the characters. Thus, when they were relegated to minor parts and the focus turned to Talon and company, I was disappointed.

That disappointment aside, **The Burning Time** is an excellent view into how the public of the Sixth World will react to some of the events of Year of the Comet – far better than **Tails you Lose**, which also refers to Year of the Comet. (**Tails You Lose** refers to events that aren't fully covered in Year of the Comet, perhaps a side effect to being written long before Year of the Comet was finalized.) Players are advised to delay reading this novel until the GM takes them through the events that Year of the Comet lists up to New Year's Day, 2062.

**The Burning Time** is far better than many Shadowrun novels. The writing is average and the characters detailed, but the plot is weak and feels like **Crossroads** warmed over. If Mr. Kenson ever feels like taking the first two chapters and going in a totally different direction, I'd be the first to pay to see the results.

## 2. Advertise

Even before FASA closed their doors, I heard people speaking of Shadowrun as a dead line. Reward players for promoting the game at their local game shops, offer tournament prizes, be visible at the cons. Dedicate someone to being on newsgroups and mailing lists. Update the website often, and be vocal about upcoming events. FASA was a black box that would periodically spit out a product. Make introductory materials for players that are available as a free download, not as the expensive waste that is Shadowrun Quick Start. When you get online sales going, offer a kick-back banner program like most online-retailers. Advertise for playtesters, and mix it up a bit for each book to add the input of new players to that of those more experienced.

## 1. Respond

FASA was pitiful at responding to players. Emails could take 6-8 months to be answered, if ever. The answers to rule questions would often be evasive or contradictory. Calls for online support were ignored. Setup an email account to give Yes/No responses to questions, and staff it so that queries can be answered within three business days. Customer Service isn't just about fulfilling the customer's sense of entitlement, it's about generating customer loyalty.

Shadowrun is now under new leadership, and I'm looking forward to what lies ahead. The line has a very real chance to undergo the revitalization that was promised: The core rules are complete, and the new leadership has no bad practices to overcome. Let's see what we can get.