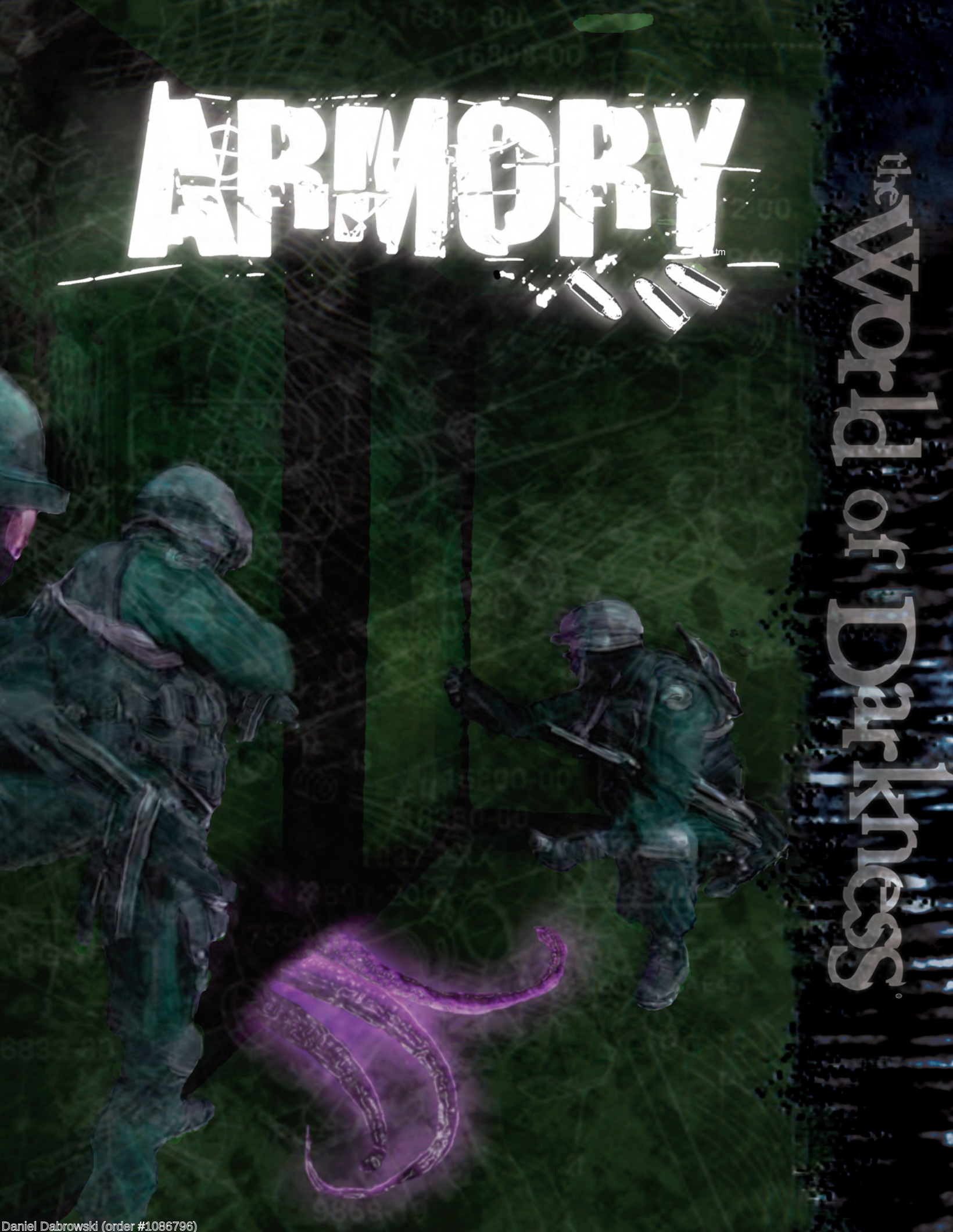

Nothing out there
is friendly.

Nothing.

I mean it.

It's the golden rule, my man, the golden rule.

"Thou shalt SHOOT
the CRAZIES in the HEART
BEFORE they
come bite the
heart out of YOU."

It's hard times, man.

Hard times.

Better be prepared.

Hafta be

Now gimme that duct tape
and those tinsnips.

— Larry Crenshaw,
monster-hunter

This book includes:

- A broad and detailed listing of every weapon, vehicle or piece of equipment a character might need in the World of Darkness
- Optional rules and new Merits that reflect combat styles suitable for the weapons contained within
- A hardware companion to Vampire, Werewolf and Mage chronicles

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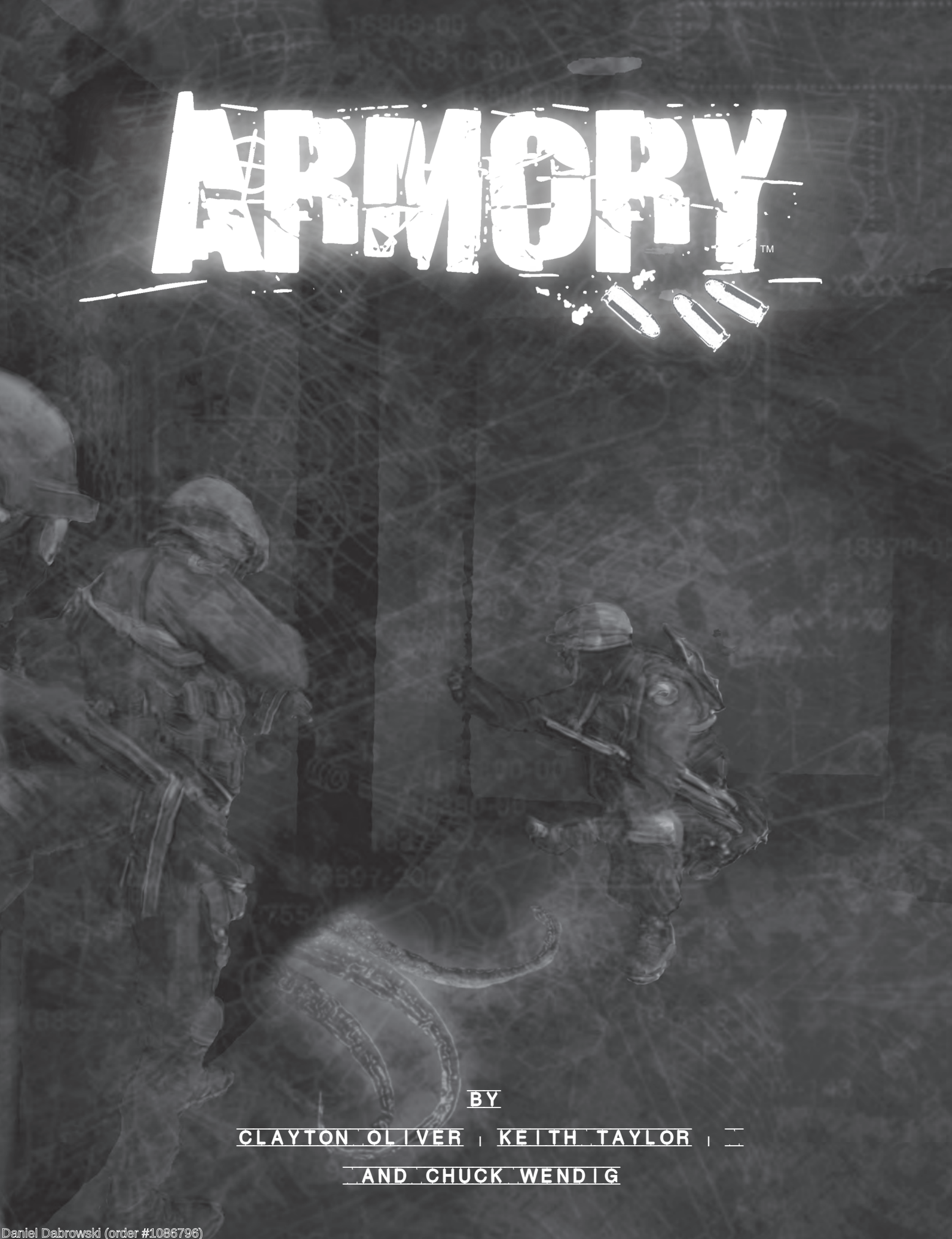
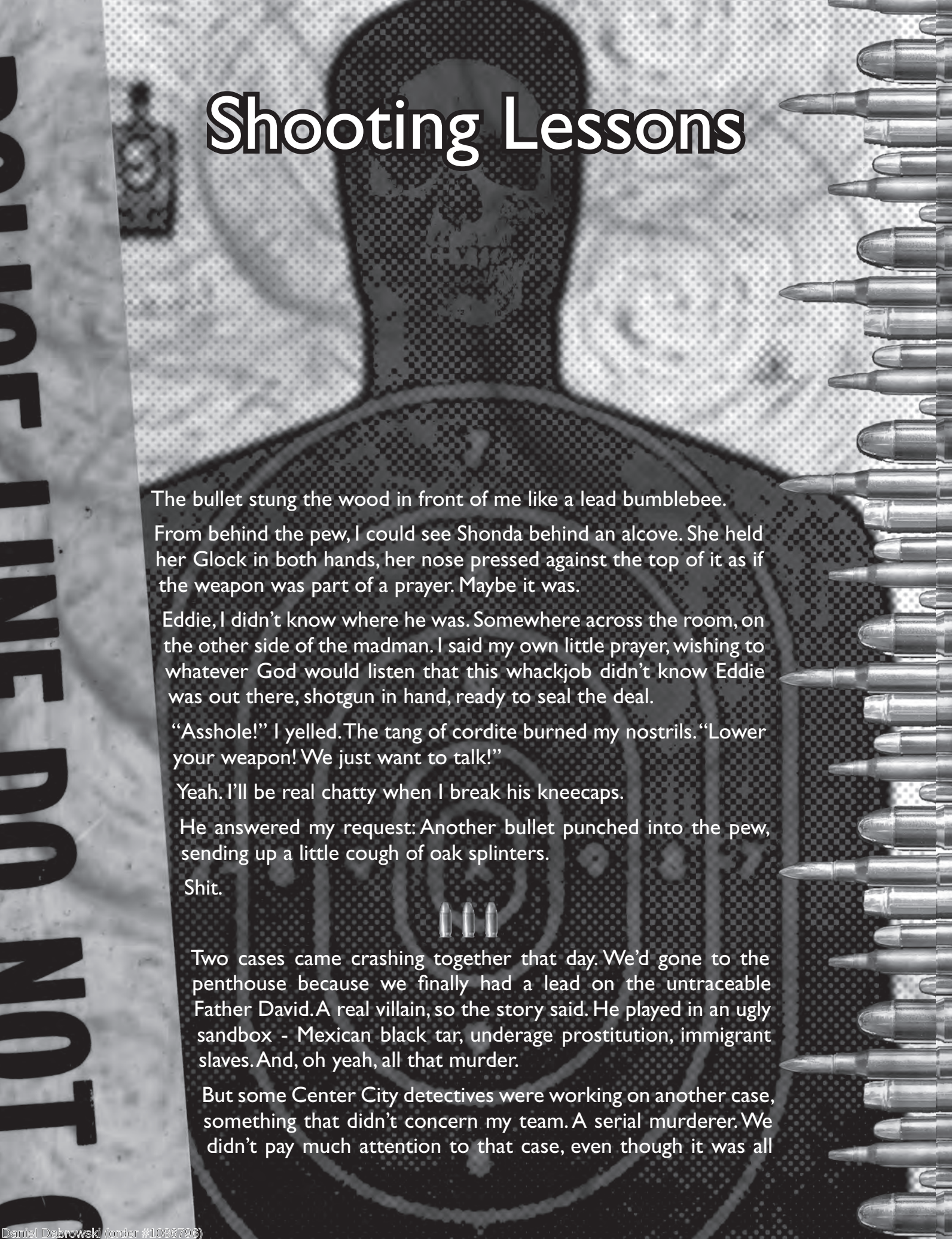


Shooting Lessons



The bullet stung the wood in front of me like a lead bumblebee.

From behind the pew, I could see Shonda behind an alcove. She held her Glock in both hands, her nose pressed against the top of it as if the weapon was part of a prayer. Maybe it was.

Eddie, I didn't know where he was. Somewhere across the room, on the other side of the madman. I said my own little prayer, wishing to whatever God would listen that this whackjob didn't know Eddie was out there, shotgun in hand, ready to seal the deal.

"Asshole!" I yelled. The tang of cordite burned my nostrils. "Lower your weapon! We just want to talk!"

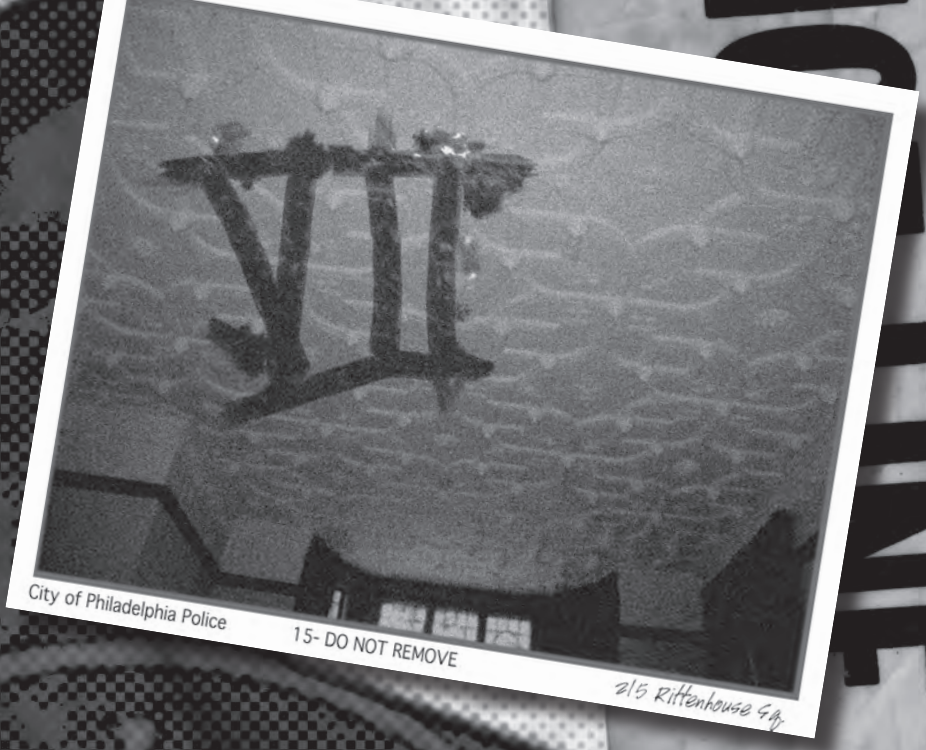
Yeah. I'll be real chatty when I break his kneecaps.

He answered my request: Another bullet punched into the pew, sending up a little cough of oak splinters.

Shit.

Two cases came crashing together that day. We'd gone to the penthouse because we finally had a lead on the untraceable Father David. A real villain, so the story said. He played in an ugly sandbox - Mexican black tar, underage prostitution, immigrant slaves. And, oh yeah, all that murder.

But some Center City detectives were working on another case, something that didn't concern my team. A serial murderer. We didn't pay much attention to that case, even though it was all



over the news. We had our thing, they had theirs and never the two shall meet.

Except they met.

We got there, not knowing what to expect, but we were damn sure ready for anything. Shonda even brought along the Knock-Knock, just in case we had to batter the door down. But we didn't need any kind of tactical entry, because the door was already open.

The place messed with my head. On one hand, it was a penthouse apartment, as cold and sterile as rubbing alcohol. But then there was the other part. The church. The main living room had been turned into some kind of creepy cathedral - four rows of oaken pews sitting before a black marble pulpit with a silver cross nailed to it.

In the bedroom, we found Father David. Or what was left of him.

The bed - once-white sheets with tight hospital corners - was soaked in blood. Flies buzzed around it. David's clothing was stretched out, laying cruciform. The white collar sat at the top. His body had been burned to greasy ash.

Above him, more flies collected on the ceiling. Painted in blood and other bits was the Roman numeral VII.

See, that's the thing about that serial murderer. They call him the Seven Killer because of this very thing. He kills his victims, burning over half of them with some kind of chemical that leaves them as little more than cinders, and then paints that big number somewhere near the bodies.

I was just about to put in a call to Homicide when the madman showed up.

"I'm just paying my respects!" the shooter screamed.

Right. Respects. As soon as he walked into the place and saw us coming out of that bedroom, he flipped shit like some kind of cornered junkie. Pulled out the gun and starting popping shots. Eddie was off in the kitchen or bathroom or something, making a phone call, and here this pale-faced jitterbug comes in and starts trying to murder us out of respect for his dead criminal friend?

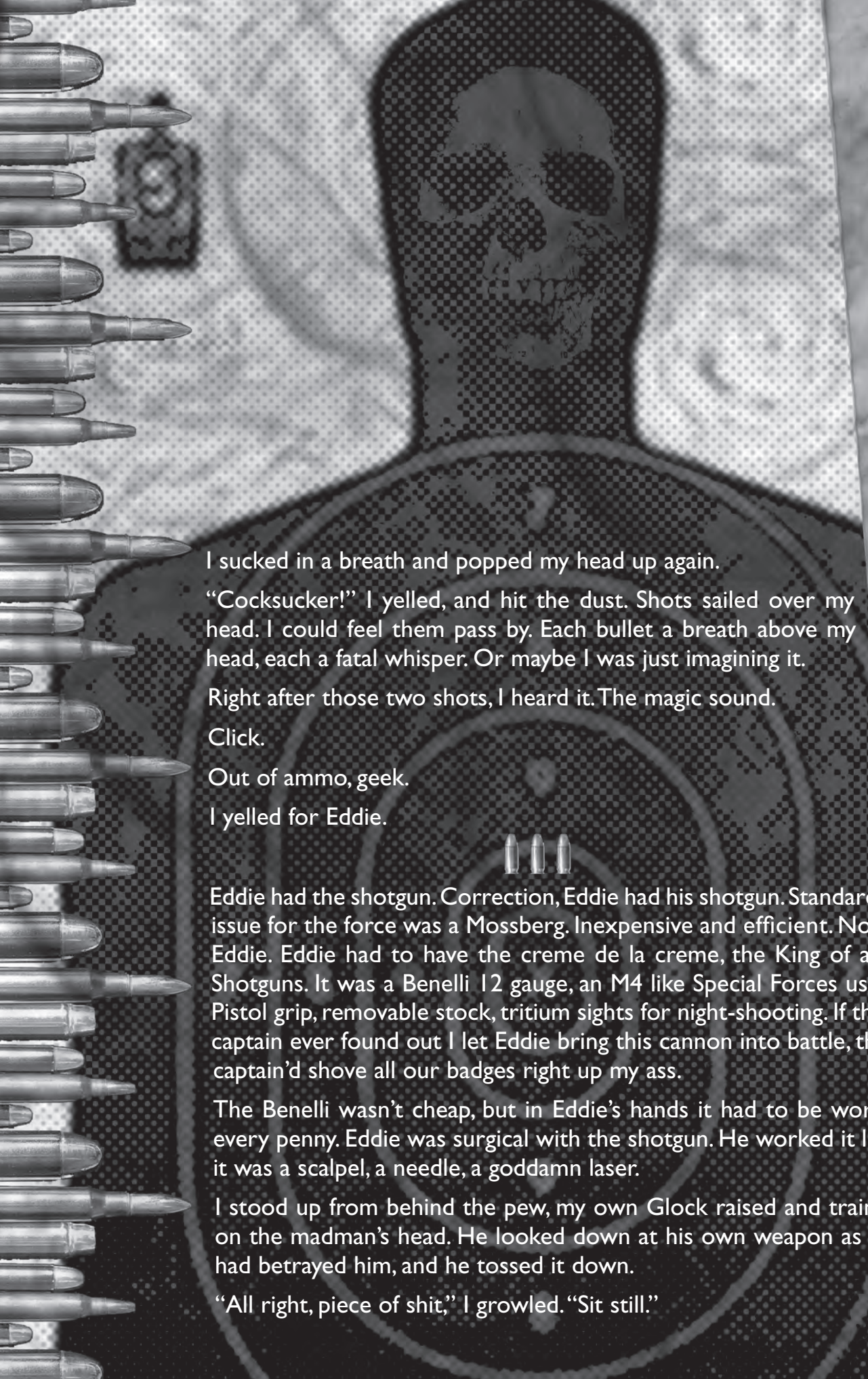
He was a tweaker, a meth-head. Had to be. The way he moved? Too fast, too erratic for somebody not out of his gourd.

"C'mon, buddy," Shonda called out past her Glock. "We're all friends here. We'll all put our guns down and - "

Pop, pop. Two more shots into the alcove wall. My ears rang. Shonda fired two back. I peeked around the pew and saw that the crankhead wasn't even there anymore. He was standing at the pulpit now, gun trembling. He caught me looking.

I hit the ground as three more bullets cracked the pergo flooring not far from my head.

What was that, about 10, 11 shots? Pissant was using a 9mm, from the looks of it. Hard to tell what, but these street flakes gravitate toward cheap Chinese or Polish knockoffs. Thirteen shots, maximum.



I sucked in a breath and popped my head up again.

"Cocksucker!" I yelled, and hit the dust. Shots sailed over my head. I could feel them pass by. Each bullet a breath above my head, each a fatal whisper. Or maybe I was just imagining it.

Right after those two shots, I heard it. The magic sound.

Click.

Out of ammo, geek.

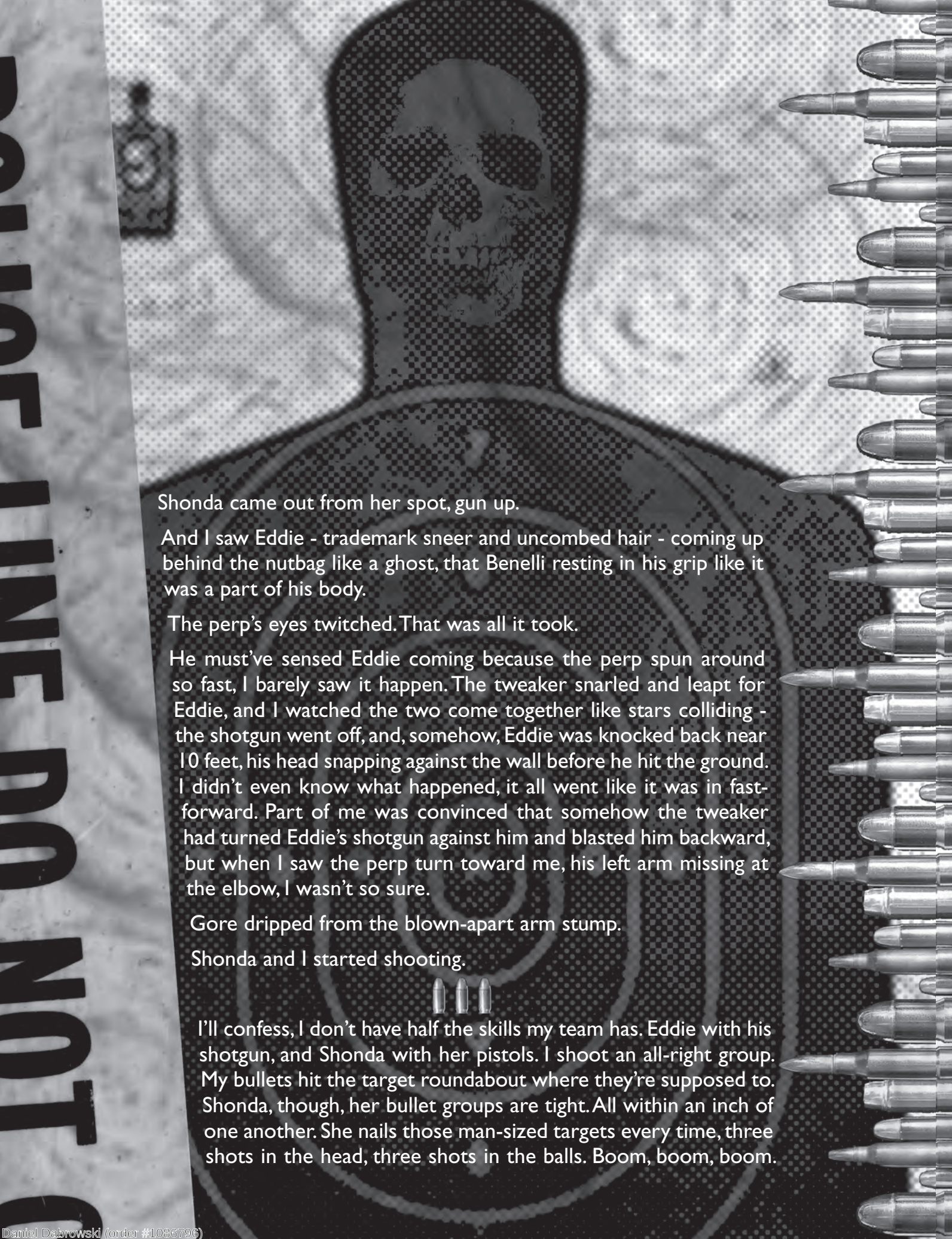
I yelled for Eddie.

Eddie had the shotgun. Correction, Eddie had his shotgun. Standard issue for the force was a Mossberg. Inexpensive and efficient. Not Eddie. Eddie had to have the creme de la creme, the King of all Shotguns. It was a Benelli 12 gauge, an M4 like Special Forces use. Pistol grip, removable stock, tritium sights for night-shooting. If the captain ever found out I let Eddie bring this cannon into battle, the captain'd shove all our badges right up my ass.

The Benelli wasn't cheap, but in Eddie's hands it had to be worth every penny. Eddie was surgical with the shotgun. He worked it like it was a scalpel, a needle, a goddamn laser.

I stood up from behind the pew, my own Glock raised and trained on the madman's head. He looked down at his own weapon as if it had betrayed him, and he tossed it down.

"All right, piece of shit," I growled. "Sit still."



Shonda came out from her spot, gun up.

And I saw Eddie - trademark sneer and uncombed hair - coming up behind the nutbag like a ghost, that Benelli resting in his grip like it was a part of his body.

The perp's eyes twitched. That was all it took.

He must've sensed Eddie coming because the perp spun around so fast, I barely saw it happen. The tweaker snarled and leapt for Eddie, and I watched the two come together like stars colliding - the shotgun went off, and, somehow, Eddie was knocked back near 10 feet, his head snapping against the wall before he hit the ground. I didn't even know what happened, it all went like it was in fast-forward. Part of me was convinced that somehow the tweaker had turned Eddie's shotgun against him and blasted him backward, but when I saw the perp turn toward me, his left arm missing at the elbow, I wasn't so sure.

Gore dripped from the blown-apart arm stump.

Shonda and I started shooting.

I'll confess, I don't have half the skills my team has. Eddie with his shotgun, and Shonda with her pistols. I shoot an all-right group. My bullets hit the target roundabout where they're supposed to. Shonda, though, her bullet groups are tight. All within an inch of one another. She nails those man-sized targets every time, three shots in the head, three shots in the balls. Boom, boom, boom.

Chick is so good, she goes to competitions. Air rifle only - you know, pellets and BBs - but she brings home the trophy five times out of 10.

The two of them should've been SWAT. I know it. They probably know it, too. But I pulled strings to have them work with me. We see some crazy shit on the streets, and I need this kind of backup to keep my life. I'll confess to being a little selfish, too.

My shots didn't hit anything but pulpit and wall. The twitchy perp took off running toward Shonda. I kept firing, missing.

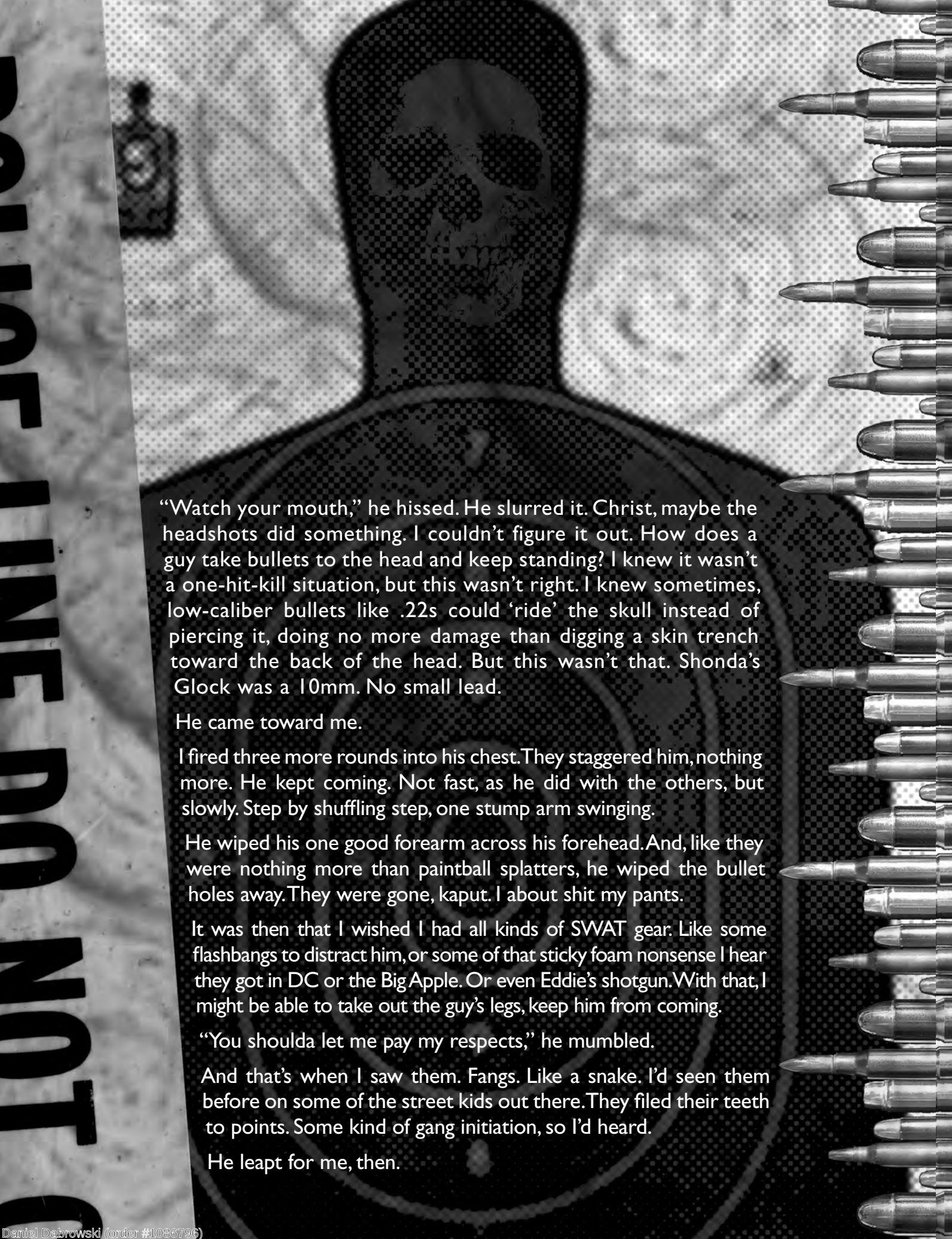
Shonda, though, true to form, did the trick. Bullets tugged at his chest, and two of them snapped his head back as he ran.

But he kept running.

This wasn't meth. It couldn't be. He wasn't just geeking out, and this wasn't some kind of psycho withdrawal, either. This was PCP. Or maybe he was hungry for some new shit I hadn't heard of yet.

He threw Shonda - one-armed - at the pews as if she were a CPR dummy. Her gun went spinning, and her shoulder hit the wood and I heard bones break. I wanted to fire off a few more shots, but I was afraid I'd hit her. And then, when he turned toward me, I saw those two bullet holes in his forehead. He shook his head like a dog with an ear infection, but he wasn't going down.

"Jesus," I said.



"Watch your mouth," he hissed. He slurred it. Christ, maybe the headshots did something. I couldn't figure it out. How does a guy take bullets to the head and keep standing? I knew it wasn't a one-hit-kill situation, but this wasn't right. I knew sometimes, low-caliber bullets like .22s could 'ride' the skull instead of piercing it, doing no more damage than digging a skin trench toward the back of the head. But this wasn't that. Shonda's Glock was a 10mm. No small lead.

He came toward me.

I fired three more rounds into his chest. They staggered him, nothing more. He kept coming. Not fast, as he did with the others, but slowly. Step by shuffling step, one stump arm swinging.

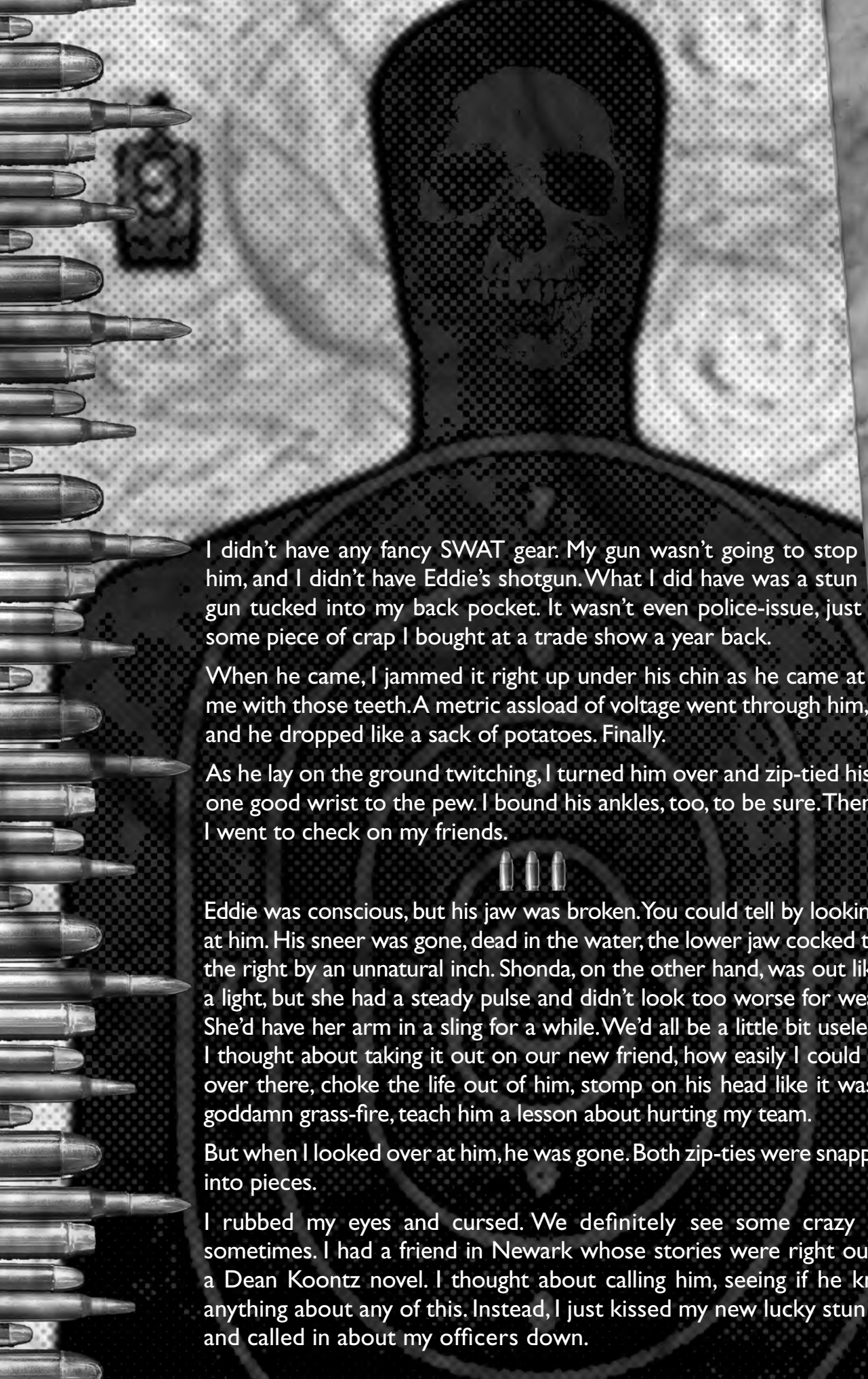
He wiped his one good forearm across his forehead. And, like they were nothing more than paintball splatters, he wiped the bullet holes away. They were gone, kaput. I about shit my pants.

It was then that I wished I had all kinds of SWAT gear. Like some flashbangs to distract him, or some of that sticky foam nonsense I hear they got in DC or the Big Apple. Or even Eddie's shotgun. With that, I might be able to take out the guy's legs, keep him from coming.

"You shoulda let me pay my respects," he mumbled.

And that's when I saw them. Fangs. Like a snake. I'd seen them before on some of the street kids out there. They filed their teeth to points. Some kind of gang initiation, so I'd heard.

He leapt for me, then.



I didn't have any fancy SWAT gear. My gun wasn't going to stop him, and I didn't have Eddie's shotgun. What I did have was a stun gun tucked into my back pocket. It wasn't even police-issue, just some piece of crap I bought at a trade show a year back.

When he came, I jammed it right up under his chin as he came at me with those teeth. A metric assload of voltage went through him, and he dropped like a sack of potatoes. Finally.

As he lay on the ground twitching, I turned him over and zip-tied his one good wrist to the pew. I bound his ankles, too, to be sure. Then I went to check on my friends.

Eddie was conscious, but his jaw was broken. You could tell by looking at him. His sneer was gone, dead in the water, the lower jaw cocked to the right by an unnatural inch. Shonda, on the other hand, was out like a light, but she had a steady pulse and didn't look too worse for wear. She'd have her arm in a sling for a while. We'd all be a little bit useless. I thought about taking it out on our new friend, how easily I could go over there, choke the life out of him, stomp on his head like it was a goddamn grass-fire, teach him a lesson about hurting my team.

But when I looked over at him, he was gone. Both zip-ties were snapped into pieces.

I rubbed my eyes and cursed. We definitely see some crazy shit sometimes. I had a friend in Newark whose stories were right out of a Dean Koontz novel. I thought about calling him, seeing if he knew anything about any of this. Instead, I just kissed my new lucky stun gun and called in about my officers down.

Credits

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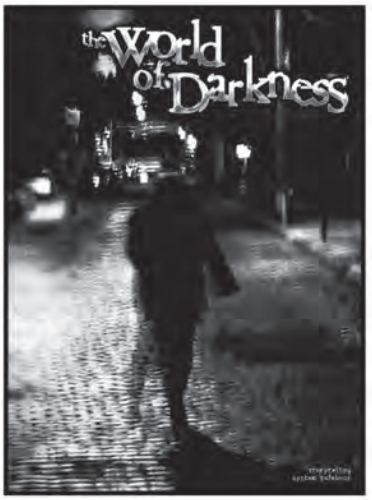

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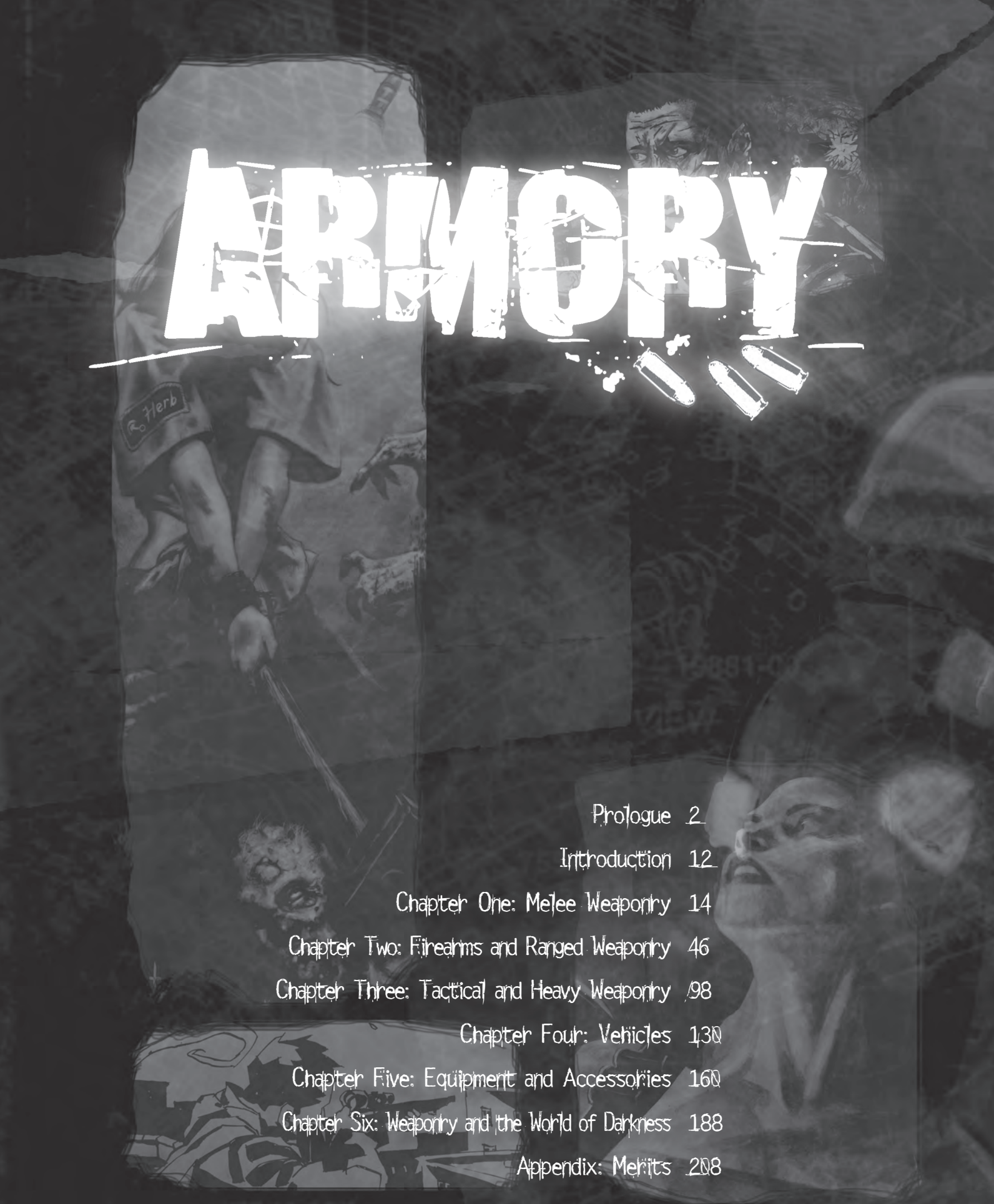


Introduction

"He who dies with the most toy—."
—torn bumper sticker

Enemies lurk in the shadows. Killers hide in the closet, under the bed. Foes wait beneath pale streetlights, hungry for blood on their knuckles, claws and teeth. It's certainly possible for a character to survive and dominate her opponents with nothing more than her own bare hands and bared teeth. A commitment to such hostile asceticism speaks to a kind of purity. Unfortunately, her enemy might be armed with tooth, claw *and* a .308 sniper rifle with an infrared scope.

People can say equipment gives characters an edge against the night, but it would be a lie. The truth is, equipment levels the playing field — barely. Equipment doesn't provide characters with an edge — equipment merely ensures that opponents have less of one than they'd otherwise have. This is the World of Darkness, and the threats lurking in the uncertain distance are often larger than they seem. Best be prepared.

Theme: Preparedness

No character can prepare fully for the dangers the World of Darkness will throw at him, but a smart and resourceful one can make a brave attempt. Herein are presented a wide variety of equipment, useful in all sorts of situations, from a desperate brawl in a tool shed to an escape from an archeological expedition's collapsed excavation tunnel.

Mood: Passion and Dispassion

The only thing that matches the dispassion with which experts can discuss the relative firing velocities of different models of firearms is the passion and violence with which one human being can use those same firearms to end the life of another. Although this book often speaks in reserved prose and mechanical systems, this book also attempts to portray the human faces behind the tools and traits.

How To Use This Book

The contents of this book are aids for improvisation and cleverness, not substitutes for them. No matter how many swords and guns a character carries, no matter how much he reinforces and bulletproofs his high-performance car, no matter how much body armor he wears or how many surveillance gadgets he uses to gather reconnaissance on his enemies, he will still fail if he doesn't keep his wits about him at all times and doesn't remember that the gear he uses is fallible. Even the way the Storytelling System represents equipment bears out this reminder — characters add Equipment bonuses to dice pools derived from their traits. Their gear doesn't act on its own.

Items that don't enhance the playing experience, mechanics that slow down the game and equipment that's more hassle than help should be discarded. Players and Storytellers, work together to determine how much of the contents of this book you'll use, and don't let your games get bogged down in superfluous technical minutiae.

He who dies with the most toys is still dead.

Chapter One: Melee Weaponry provides rules for a vast array of weapons designed to be used up close and personal, from knives, swords, axes and staves to razor blades and strangle wires and tools such as claw hammers, nail guns

and blowtorches. The chapter concludes with rules for characters making their own improvised weaponry in an emergency, such as a shiv or a homemade sap.

Chapter Two: Firearms and Ranged Weaponry takes a look at weapons designed for a more impersonal sort of encounter. Pistols, rifles, SMGs and shotguns are found here, as are machine guns, archaic firearms, bows, crossbows and even flare guns. The chapter concludes with rules for suppressive fire.

Chapter Three: Tactical and Heavy Weaponry takes a step up from the contents of Chapters One and Two, and examines explosive weapons, using new rules for explosives that integrate them more fully with the Storytelling System's combat mechanics. This chapter also covers NBC weaponry: those weapons of nuclear, biological and chemical nature.

Chapter Four: Vehicles provides a more in-depth look at vehicles, including everything from skateboards and bikes to SUVs and limousines to tanks and helicopters, all designed for use with the Storytelling System's chase system to encourage troupes to take advantage of the dramatic potential for vehicle-based conflicts in their games. The chapter concludes with a look at how vehicles can be used to enhance horror stories.

Chapter Five: Equipment and Accessories covers everything from night vision goggles and pistol suppressors to ghost-hunting equipment, body armor and personal shields; the chapter closes with a look at security systems (both expensive and improvised) and traps.

Chapter Six: Weaponry and the World of Darkness is an in-depth look at real-world weapons law, which focuses on the United States but also touches on the state of gun laws across the world. This chapter also presents a system for the black-market purchase of illegal arms.

Appendix: Merits provides a variety of new Merits, including eight new Fighting Styles, for players who want their characters to get the most out of the equipment contained in this book's other chapters.

Useful Sources

Horror stories actually centering around equipment and weaponry are few and far between (though vehicles get enough coverage for all the categories in this book combined), but plenty of stories about the unnatural give equipment a strong supporting role.

Books

Stephen King's *Christine* is the archetypal story about a vehicle gone bad — here, the car is not equipment but a monster in its own right. Another Stephen King book, *From a Buick 8*, presents another sort of haunted car entirely.

John Steakley's *Vampire$* is all about the equipment, centering around a team of vampire-hunters sponsored by the Vatican. The movie adaptation, *John Carpenter's Vampires*, focuses a bit less on the tech but still has inspired uses for winches.

Movies

Any monster-movie buff knows that *Aliens* shows great use of weapons of all sorts, but the movie also features creatures that are barely phased by gunfire and use tactics and superior environmental adaptation to overcome the "edge" the protagonists believe their equipment grants them. Storytellers, study this one.

All Quiet on the Western Front, to examine a completely different sort of movie, has a great scene showing the devastation wrought by the chemical agent mustard gas.

Duel, one of Steven Spielberg's early works, is another vehicle-as-monster story, albeit with significantly fewer supernatural overtones than *Christine*. *Duel* comes with recommendations of the highest order, if you can track a copy down.

Bill Paxton's *Frailty* features a hatchet that may or may not be supernatural and a setting that seems eerily close to the World of Darkness.

John Carpenter's *The Thing* has great use of flamethrowers.

Games

The various entries in the *Resident Evil* series of video games showcase a wide variety of guns and heavy weaponry devices and their use against various menaces of arguably supernatural origin. Though "zombie apocalypse" may not be quite the genre the World of Darkness is shooting for, there's nothing that says your games have to toe the party line. Quite the opposite, in fact!

Speaking of opposites, the *Silent Hill* series is almost the polar opposite of *Resident Evil*, focusing more on individual moral conflicts and low-tech solutions to horrible situations. The signature weapon of the characters in the first two installments is a board with a nail in it, backed up by various bent iron pipes and old hunting rifles. In addition, with the series' misguided cult controlling a populace through drug addiction and a seemingly abandoned town that draws in those who've succumbed to moral decay, the setting and backstory of the games could fit near-perfectly into the World of Darkness. *Silent Hill 2* is especially recommended.

Half-Life, its various expansions and its sequel, though less thematically synchronous with the World of Darkness than *Silent Hill*, is another example of a well-made horror game in which the intelligent use of equipment is paramount to survival.

A Note on Cost

The Costs of the items in this book have been calculated roughly according to the following principle: an item has a given Cost if a character with the Resources Merit at that level could purchase the item with no more than half his monthly disposable income. To attach approximate numbers to this, Cost • is anything up to $250, Cost •• is up to $500, Cost ••• is up to $1,000, Cost •••• is up to $5,000 and Cost ••••• is up to $25,000 and beyond. The price tags of vehicles have been divided by 60 to account for five-year monthly payment plans. This system can help you determine what Cost to assign a real-world item when giving it traits in the Storytelling System, as well as a rough idea of just how many items of Cost •• a character with Resources 3 can afford in a single month, should you wish to deal with item acquisition on such an in-depth level.

The ape overextended himself, putting every inch of fat and muscle into the lunge. It was a mistake, and Tobias had expected it. His response was fast and simple, as intuitive as a breath (or as a breath once was, when he was still alive). He rotated his hand at the wrist. The effortless whirl of the rapier allowed the blade to slice deeply into the ogre's hand. The thug's own weapon — a clumsy hunting knife, darkened with blood and rust — clattered to the catwalk.

Below them, a train passed with a roar. When it had gone, its growl fading with a Doppler effect, Tobias pressed the tip of the rapier to the fool's throat. The vampire kicked his opponent's knife into darkness, to the tracks 30 feet below.

"I didn't want this," the fat ghoul whined.
Tobias smelled the ogre's sweat and urine.

Tobias shook his head sadly.

"Tell Utrecht that he does not send a child to play grown-up games. Tell him that if he wants to end this squabble, he will meet me at the Plaza of the Sun at midnight in one week. I will have a weapon for him, a nicely balanced spada di lato. The sword that once belonged to his bitch, Martina. He wants 3rd Avenue, he'll have to take it from me. Tell him we'll fight. The first to lose a hand loses the duel."

Tobias felt a smile tugging at the corners of his mouth. He hadn't smiled in long time.

"Now, can you remember all that, or must I carve it across your chest?"

Chapter One: Melee Weaponry

Swords slash, clubs bludgeon. A killer grapples with her prey in an oily, abandoned garage and draws a hunting knife across his throat. An enraged ex-employee walks into his old boss' office and beats him to death with a golf club. Two monsters, each older than the First World War, stand in an opulent ballroom while thrusting and parrying with pointed foils. In each case, a weapon makes the difference. It's kill or be killed, and if a melee weapon is what's needed for a character to walk away from a fight while his adversary lies in a puddle of his own fluids, so be it.

"Every tool is a weapon if you hold it right."
– Ani DiFranco, "IQ"

Who Uses These Things?

Melee weaponry seems a bit — outmoded. In this day and age, guns rule the day, and have for hundreds of years. Why run headlong at an opponent with a battle-ax when he's going to cut you in half with a .50 caliber machine gun? And so, the question persists, why use melee weaponry at all when somebody out there probably has something bigger and meaner?

First, remember that melee weapons don't necessarily mean swords and daggers. A gang might rough up a convenience store clerk with bats and crowbars, one whore might slash another's face with a switchblade and a father might hunt his frightened wife and child through an abandoned hotel with a fire ax.

Second, don't discount improvised weapons. The majority of found weapons are for close quarters combat. A burgled homeowner might bludgeon the intruder with a Tiffany lamp, and a serial killer might attack his victims with a hacksaw. When a character is caught in a sudden and unexpected fight for his life, he might not have a gun handy, but might have a brick or a steak knife within reach.

Third, consider that this is a game about terrible beasts, bloodsucking fiends and enchanted madmen. Vampires cannot be easily hurt by bullets, so they often resort to melee weapons to settle disputes. (Also, some Kindred are older than firearms, and still prefer to answer matters with iron and steel as opposed to hot lead. Vampires are creatures of antiquity, and even the younger fiends learn to eschew guns.) Werewolves shrug off bullet wounds as if they were flea bites, and while werewolves have the natural weapons of tooth and claw, the Uratha also make use of mystically endowed knives and swords. Mages, too, follow ancient traditions, and with old magic comes old things such as enchanted daggers or cursed swords.

Weapon Complications

Sometimes, weapons aren't up to par in combat for one reason or another. Perhaps a character searching for a weapon in an abandoned summer camp finds a machete stuck in a stump, but pulling the weapon out reveals a nicked or bent blade. Or maybe the character is searching a private weapon collection, but the sword he finds has lost its edge or the ancient native Lenni Lenape spear has a loose tip. The condition of the weapon may cause certain problems if used in battle. Below are a few suggestions on what might cause such issues.

Decorative Weapons

Not all melee weapons are truly meant to be used as weapons. That's not to say melee weapons not functional, at least in part, but only that their design and construction are geared more toward presentation than actual use in combat.

First, consider the source of the weapon. Some vendors do not sell combat-quality merchandise. A character who buys a katana at the mall is not likely to receive a true, weapons-grade katana. Someone who purchases an old broadsword, a commando boot knife or a manriki gusari at a flea market is in for a rude awakening once he tries to swing the weapon in close quarters. Weapons like these are either cheap knock-offs sold under false pretenses or purely as decorative weapons meant to be hung on walls or displayed in cases. They might appear attractive — beautiful, even — but that doesn't mean the steel can hold an edge or that the grip is appropriately anchored to the blade.

Also, some weapons are presentation weapons. Such items are ceremonial objects, meant to confer a sense of status or station to the wielder, but not meant to be used in real combat. Bearing swords, for instance, are double-sided swords with a rounded tip and barely any edge. They've been used in political and religious ceremonies for centuries, often held aloft to signify the power of the current ruler. Coronation weapons are similar. These items (generally swords) are ornate weapons meant to hang on the belt of a monarch to exemplify his wealth and authority. That doesn't mean such a blade is meant to be used in combat. Doing so would cause the blade to nick or dull, and would mar the elaborate craftsmanship of the object. Papal swords are similarly ornamental, worn by pontiffs or gifted to worthy individuals, but not balanced for combat.

Some secret societies also give out honorary presentation weapons. The Ku Klux Klan, the Masons, some fraternities and even Civil War re-enactment groups all might give out presentation swords to deserving members. Again, that doesn't imply these weapons are combat capable. Such weapons are examples of art and membership, not capable of cutting through flesh, bone or armor. Other such weapons are ritual in nature. An athamé is a "sacrificial dagger" of sorts, but is used to sanctify herbs and bless the four directions; the dagger is not used for cutting (such ritual weapons are almost universally dull-edged).

The problem is that many people don't know how to differentiate between "real" weapons and decorative ones. Most weapons look the same on the surface. A Storyteller might allow a player to make an Intelligence + Weaponry roll on behalf of his character to determine whether a weapon is truly going to be fully functional in terms of melee combat. If done in the heat of battle, this assessment takes a full turn.

When a decorative sword is used in combat, the user suffers a –1 penalty on all attack rolls involving this impractical weapon. Moreover, the weapon is hampered by a –1 modifier to its Durability (minimum Durability 1), as the materials used in making the weapon are almost always inferior (or at least not chosen with toughness in mind).

Historical Weaponry

A Storyteller might consider a number of the weapons listed in this chapter *historical*. For instance, few companies still produce weapons like halberds, bastard swords or other medieval weapons. And those companies that do produce such weapons generally make decorative models. (Note that "historical" is not "archaic." Archaic implies that a weapon is of older design, but the weapon itself may not actually *be* old. Historical means that the item is quite literally over two centuries in age.)

Historical weapons have an advantage over decorative ones. At the very least, historical weapons were once meant to serve as actual weapons. However, time is not always kind. Blades might break, hilts could crumble in one's hands and wood may splinter. This doesn't mean anything with regard to an average attack with such a weapon. Historical weapons won't (usually) fall apart after a certain number of hits. What the degradation of time does mean is that attacks targeted *against* the weapon are more likely to be successful. In this manner, historical weapons older than 200 years may suffer a –1 penalty to their Durability. Most historical weapons come with a higher cost, as well, due to their value in antiquity. Assume +1 cost for every 200 years of the item's age, to a maximum of •••••. It is the Storyteller's prerogative whether a historical item has suffered the degradation of time.

Story Seed: Family Heirlooms

A character inherits a weapon (or maybe an immense collection of weapons with only one or two items of real value) from a recently deceased relative. The terms of the will require that the character never to use the weapon "except in the direst of circumstances." Did the relative actually know something, or was he just nuts? And is that thing's hilt carved from human bone?

Item Degradation

When a weapon degrades in quality, not necessarily the same thing happens as happens to a historical weapon. Degradation in quality *can* be the same: a weapon can both be historical and suffer degradation. Even modern weapons can suffer degradation, though. This generally comes in the form of rust, though degradation can also mean that the screws anchoring a hilt or grip have loosened or that the blade has simply lost its edge. This kind of degradation can happen to a battle-ax sitting in a historian's dusty collection and a plumber's "cool commando knife" that he bought on the Internet and has been sitting in a drawer for five years. Humid environments, especially, will wreak havoc on metal or wooden weapons. Should a Storyteller decide that an item is suitably degraded, characters then suffer a –1 modifier to all attack rolls using that weapon (reflecting a dull edge, loose grip or other hampering characteristics). However, a Storyteller may let a player make a Wits + Crafts roll to have her character bring the weapon back to its original quality, thus negating the penalty.

Materials

Most melee weapons are steel, such as swords, knives and chains. Wood might be a part of a weapon's handle or

comprise the heads of some clubs or batons. Because these materials provide the default composition for the majority of mundane weapons, steel and wood aren't mentioned below in regard to any variation. What follows is a list of unusual materials from which some rare weapons are made.

Bone

Bone (and similarly ivory) is not used in weapon-making very often — and hasn't been for about the last 8,000 years. However, some native populations in the last few centuries still make weapons (knives, ax heads, clubs) from bone. Some Aboriginal artists from Australia craft clubs from old bones, and the Inuit make traditional ceremonial weapons from narwhale ivory. Of course, some lesser-known groups use bone when crafting weapons as well. A few cults adhering to strange, hidden faiths use such weapons as sacrificial tools, reportedly using these implements in ritual murders: bone knives to slit throats and remove parts, bone clubs to crush heads, bone spear-tips to puncture hearts. Once in a while, one of these weapons is left behind (either as a mistake or a taunt) by such grisly ritualists. In such cases, the bone, while bloody, is often painted or etched in designs that do not match with any extant or known civilization. For the authorities and the public, such clues remain puzzles.

Regardless of who uses them, bone weapons provide some advantages and disadvantages. On the plus side, bone is tough. It's difficult to break, and should be considered to have a Durability on par with iron (i.e., Durability 3). On the other hand, bone is awkward to use. In cutting weapons, it doesn't hold an edge and cannot easily be sharpened. In blunt weapons, bone tends to be difficult to shape into effective damage-bringing configurations, and the hilts can be awkward. As such, bone weapons are at a constant –1 penalty to use.

Bronze

Bronze is an alloy (mostly copper and tin) that tends to be tougher than brass. Once upon a time, bronze was believed to be tougher than iron as well, until the world learned how to make *steeled* iron. Bronze has a brassy, golden sheen and was once used to make weapons (mostly edged, though some smiths made blunted bronze weapons). Mostly, bronze weapons are the domain of ancient history. The Bronze Age, about 5,000 years ago, saw a proliferation of such weapons from ancient Greece, China and Egypt. Many such creations were art as much as functional weapons: elaborately constructed daggers, scimitars with blades shaped like lightning, ax-heads etched with images of conquering armies. Today, some collectors consider such artifacts to be significant finds, and will pay a lot for them. A few such collectors believe that these weapons are powerful because most of them have long been entombed with a number of emperors, kings and pharaohs. Such proximity to the ghosts of primeval royalty has, if the tales are to be believed, imbued the bronzed weapons with some manner of unknown power. Though few people trust in such legends, they are not necessarily untrue.

Ultimately, bronze weapons are hard to find. Some vanity artisans still forge them, but rarely are the products made to be functional; historical bronze weapons are items of great antiquity, with a price tag acceptable only to those with the deepest pockets. Modern bronze weapons will have +1 to their Cost requirements (i.e., a knife that would normally be Cost •• will be Cost ••• if made of bronze). Historical bronze weaponry, however, is almost universally Cost ••••• (if not off the charts) due to the objects' rarity and historical value.

Bronze weapons hold a fine edge. Therefore, historical bronze weapons don't suffer a penalty to their Durability. However, bronze is also a softer metal. While still tough, steel weapons will slice bronze in twain. Bronze items are on par with aluminum, and should be considered to have a Durability 2.

Folded Steel

Few weapons are reinforced with folded steel. First, the process is difficult. Second, it's expensive, and seeing as how close-combat weaponry isn't really practical in this modern age, few choose to bump up the costs on something that will likely just be hung on a wall.

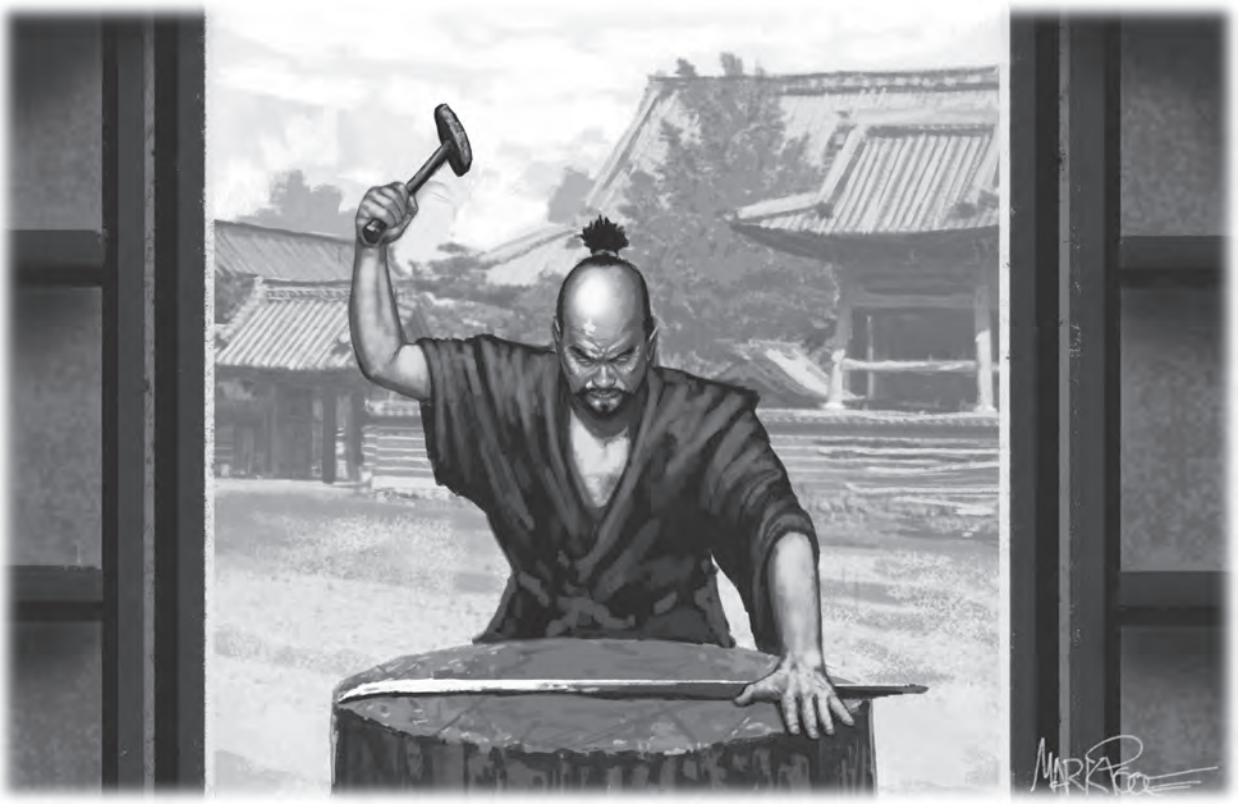
Normal bladed weapons are crafted with a single layer of steel. Folded steel (also called reinforced, or "Damascus" steel) involves pattern welding alternating layers of hard and soft steel. Doing so grants the blade a nearly preternatural toughness. (Attempting to recreate this effect on one's own requires a minimum of Crafts 3 and similarly requires the appropriate tools such as a forge, anvil, tong and other devices.)

Many Asian craftsmen still forge their weapons with this process. Japanese weapons, in particular, traditionally use the "folded steel" technique. Some masters of the craft are able to fold the steel 15 or 20 times, thus creating a blade with sharp, hard steel but a softer core (to grant it greater flexibility and to stop it from snapping in twain). Note that not all Asian weapons are made with this process. In fact, few are. Buying a katana off eBay does not guarantee that the item is of appropriate composition. Most such items are mass-produced knock-offs. Folded steel is generally not the domain of mass production, and requires delicate attention and training.

Depending on the quality of the steel and the number of folds, folded steel may count as layers of reinforcement. Per p. 135 of the **World of Darkness Rulebook**, each layer of reinforcement grants +1 Durability, to a maximum of +3 for masterpieces with 20 folds or more. A good rule of thumb is that each layer of reinforcement also adds +1 to the weapon's Cost, to a maximum of Cost •••••. Keep in mind that many such items are without Cost at all, meaning that mere Resources alone cannot purchase them.

True Damascus Steel?

Some believe that the art of crafting true Damascus steel has been lost. These naysayers believe that such particularly tough blades are more than just folded steel or high-carbon amalgams. Many people believe that genuine Damascus blades are made using diamond dust. Modern smiths find that diamond dust does little to the blade, as the diamond pieces simply dissolve into carbon and serve no special function. However, is it possible that diamond dust *was* a powerful addition to a blade's composition but only when crafted by a potent master? Does



diamond dust grant the blade additional Durability and an edge that can cut through bone as easily as an eyelash? If it's true, these weapons are not the domain of normal men. True Damascus steel is then the province of dark magic. The blades are said to be supernaturally crafted, forged in magical fire and cooled in blood. Some say that these weapons are not only magical, but nearly *alive*, gleaming with hunger like a wolf's eyes.

Obsidian

Obsidian is the result of hardened lava, generally flowing from a volcano, creating a type of glass that a number of native groups used in their weapons. When one applies light pressure to the stone, it chips away and fragments into a very sharp edge. Generally, indigenous peoples craft the stone into knives or swords (using other natural items like antlers, horns or wood for handles). Some use them as arrow-tips, as well. The stone is generally a deep shade of black, though some obsidian is red or brown, depending on what other materials (like hematite or oxides) were present when the lava hardened.

Obsidian is light and features a dire edge. Any weapon made of obsidian grants the wielder a +2 to attack. Like glass, obsidian can slice through soft materials (like flesh) as if they were little more than air. Unfortunately, obsidian is also notoriously brittle. This is reflected in the material's Durability of 1, as obsidian is only as strong as thick glass. In addition, if using the optional blade sharpening rule below, obsidian weapons can't benefit, as attempts to sharpen these weapons further merely chip the material away.

Weapons of obsidian aren't easy to find. Most of them are in museums, though anyone can attempt to craft an obsidian blade using a Dexterity + Crafts roll (but pressing the rock against any hard surface will cause it to flake and break).

Silver

Silver is a soft metal. Blades made of silver are less effective than those of steel. Because of this, silver weapons inflict a –1 modifier to attack, and only have a Durability 2, as opposed to steel, which has a Durability of 3 or more. Of course, silver weapons are of particular use against Lupines. The metal burns their flesh as the silver injures, doing far greater damage than it perhaps should. This damage is aggravated, and does not heal with the speed to which werewolves are normally accustomed.

Blade Sharpening

Anything with an edge can be sharpened. Whether it's a paring knife or a bastard sword, it can be made to fillet fish, cut paper in two and sink deeper in a foe's flesh.

In this case, assume that the statistics below for all edged weapons are for weapons

in a normal, moderately sharpened state. Meaning, *as an optional rule,* they can be sharpened further. Storytellers, determine whether you wish to allow blade sharpening in your chronicle. If you do, it's only fair to allow certain antagonists to avail themselves of it, as well.

An edged weapon cannot be given more than a +1 bonus through sharpening. A blade can become only so sharp — it'll never be able to split tank barrels in half or splice water molecules. However, the better the sharpening device, the *longer* the edge will hold. For every point of Cost incurred in purchasing the sharpening device, assume that the blade maintains its improved edge for five points of damage inflicted by the weapon. So, a whetstone (Cost •) would allow a knife to maintain its better edge (+1 to attack) until the knife has caused five points of damage on an opponent or object. A nice kitchen knife sharpener (Cost ••) would grant 10 points of damage with the bonus, and an industrial grinder with diamond abrasives (Cost •••) will allow for 15 points of damage until the blade loses its superior edge.

Weapons Training

One might assume the fine art of wielding close-combat weapons is long gone, and in a way, that's true. The sound of steel sparking against steel has been long replaced with the chatter of machine gun fire and the roar of explosives.

However, while formalized training isn't altogether common, it's still possible to find. Moreover, a basic understanding is pretty easy to come by.

Melee 101

A basic grasp of close quarters combat equates roughly to "hit target with stick." While such a loose comprehension doesn't mean that one can make precision attacks with a weapon, a character can make contact and do some damage, however minimal. This general understanding of melee combat usually provides a Weaponry score of 1 or 2. Resources for learning this elementary level include the following:

Sports: A number of sporting activities involve hand-eye coordination that results in hitting something with a stick. In baseball, a batter must force contact between the bat and ball. In hockey, the player has to hit the puck *and* other players, generally while skating. In fact, tennis, racquetball, polo and pool all demand that players must strike an object with some kind of stick. While this doesn't train them how to attack pressure points or disable a target, it allows a character to aim, swing and hit.

Crafts: Any character who possesses more than one point in Crafts probably knows how to hit things. Carpenters know how to hit a nail with a hammer, farmers know how to thresh wheat or corn with a scythe and plumbers know how to swing a wrench at an errant pipe. It's a good bet that a minimal Crafts score might segue into a minimal Weaponry score. Players with characters that have any points in Crafts may want to consider also purchasing a point or two in Weaponry.

Self-Defense Class: Few self-defense classes delve deeply into actual combat. They range anywhere from one to five sessions, and don't usually train students in any kind of martial ability. It's all about escaping conflict with yourself and keeping your possessions safe. Characters who train in a self-defense class may learn how to wield a stungun or a baton, and probably learn how to hit an assailant with a purse, a set of keys or any other mundane object.

Police Academy: Beat cops don't know how to *riposte* with a rapier or choke an opponent with a chain weapon, but they learn how to swing a nightstick. In many criminal apprehensions, deadly force isn't required, but *some* force is. Cops learn how to put the nightstick and flashlight to good use in disabling resisting suspects.

Basic Training: Normal military training doesn't spend a lot of time on melee weapons, but cadets still learn the essentials. They learn how to strike with knives, batons and even the ends of their firearms.

Melee 201

Melee 101 covered the bare bones, but how can a character possess a proficiency in close quarters combat? How do characters gain a Weaponry Skill of 3 or above?

Stage Combat: It sounds strange, but elaborate stage combat is rough stuff. Whether training for a Shakespearean duel or a wire-fu katana fight, stuntmen and physical actors must learn how to wield weapons convincingly. Stage combat generally involves very real practice with actual trainers. The swords may be blunted, but they leave bruises just the same. Many actors take a few months' worth of stage combat classes, and stuntmen may study for *years*.

Fencing: The sport of fencing involves training that goes above and beyond "hit target with stick." Fencers learn how to work strategy and psychology into their matches. Their rapiers and épées are used with great precision to parry and thrust. Characters with fencing in their backgrounds may range from proficient (they've taken classes) to exceptional (Olympic-level).

Martial Arts: Some martial arts training is all about using one's body as a weapon, but many fighting arts also train in weapons. Some of these arts include Escrima, jujutsu, kendo and Gatka. Much of these martial arts are for display and not for practical fighting, but regardless, martial arts training can still be used effectively in combat.

Special Forces: Navy SEALs, Green Berets, and Marine Special Forces aren't trained exclusively in ranged weapons. These units learn how to wield combat knives effectively in close quarters, how to sneak up to a target and choke him and how to use a telescoping baton to collapse the trachea, a kneecap, an elbow joint or the bridge of the nose.

Weapons Catalog

Below is a list of melee weapons that characters may carry or pick up for use in close combat. This list certainly isn't exhaustive; including every melee weapon throughout the ages wouldn't be practical. For purposes of weapon Traits, any item not found here could be easily approximated in comparison with existing listed items.

Each weapon has a number of important Traits to consider.

Type: This is the name of the weapon. Some entries in the text have descriptions of other versions with altered Traits. These do not appear on the chart.

Damage: Less about the weapon's actual damage and more about its overall utility in combat, this number is a bonus (or in some cases, a penalty) indicating just how easy the item is to wield and how much injury it might cause if an attack is successful. These numbers are added to or subtracted from any dice pools used during the attack roll. Also noted here is whether the weapon uses the 9 again or 8 again rules (see p. 134, the **World of Darkness Rulebook**), and if it inflicts fire damage, which is aggravated to vampires.

Size: This indicates how concealable (or not) a weapon is. Size 1 can be hidden in hand, Size 2 can be hidden in a large coat, Size 3 or more cannot be hidden. Alternate concealment rules are available: P (Palm/Pocket), S (Shirt), J (Jacket), L (Long coat) or N (Not concealable). See Weapon Concealment (p. 198) for more information on these categories.

Unless otherwise noted, each weapon listed has a Strength requirement to be used in combat. Much as how a weapon's Damage is more about total damage potential than just the keenness of an edge, so the Strength requirement is more about leverage and balance than just weight. Generally, the Strength requirement is equal to the item's Size. If a character's Strength is below this requirement, his attacks with that weapon suffer a –1 penalty. (At the Storyteller's discretion, using a weapon below the Strength requirement might invoke –1 *per dot of difference* between a character's Strength and a weapon's Size. For example, a character with Strength 1 attempting to wield a long sword of Size 3 would suffer a –2 penalty, as the weapon is simply too large.)

Durability: This is how many successes are subtracted from attacks targeted at that weapon before damage is applied. This is the average of the Durabilities of whatever materials make up the weapon, favoring whichever material makes up the largest or most vital components. A weapon's Structure is equal to its Durability + Size. (For weapons with alterable Size, use the smallest Size to calculate Structure.) See p. 138, the **World of Darkness Rulebook**, for details on targeting items.

Cost: A weapon's price is an abstract representation of the Resources Merit score required to purchase the item. (See p. 13 for how this corresponds to real dollar values.) Note that not all items are widely available for purchase. Some weapons can be found at Wal-Mart, but the majority of them are strange, antique or otherwise exotic tools that require diligence on the part of the character to find and purchase. A rapier, for instance, can be purchased, but not without some scrutiny on the part of the character. Such items might be sold on the Internet, at gun shows or Renaissance fairs, by collectors or historians or even by legitimate blacksmiths. Some items also have no Cost associated with them. This means they are particularly cheap or free, must be handmade or are simply not for sale anywhere in the public sector. Refer to the item descriptions for more information.

Notes: This is a brief summary of any other special rules that apply to the weapon. See the individual weapon descriptions for full explanations.

Knives and Daggers

Knives have been used in combat for thousands of years. Ancient Egyptians fought with stone blades. Aztecs sacrificed the willing with knives made of obsidian. Archeologists refer to the period of 1,800–500 BC in Scandinavia as the *Dolktid*, or Dagger Period. Far older as well as still seeing use in modern combat, knives and daggers have seen greater use than swords in combat. Below is a representative catalog of knives and daggers that could see use in a World of Darkness game.

Bayonet: The bayonet is a dagger attached to the end of a long firearm, meaning a long rifle or assault rifle. Used predominantly in World War II but still used today by a number of rebel forces throughout the world, the bayonet is used to stab forward, almost like a spear. The above Traits are for a bayonet mounted on a Size 3 rifle. If mounted on a bullpup (Size 2) rifle or detached and used as a combat knife, a bayonet is Damage 1(L).

Bowie Knife: If the stories are true, the Bowie knife, that quintessential American blade, has spilled buckets of blood since its invention in 1830. In various fights, famous pioneer Jim Bowie reportedly decapitated, disemboweled and dismembered his opponents with it. The knife is said to be of Bowie's own design. He took a wooden model of the weapon to Arkansas blacksmith James Black, who later put the knife into production. Some have suggested that James Black sold his soul to the Devil and in return was given the secrets of making this knife. Others say that Black knew the true magic behind authentic Damascus steel. Whatever the case, Black's secrets remain occulted; he did all his work behind a leather curtain and left behind no documented information.

A Bowie knife, with its sharp edge and heavy blade, is equally at home splitting skulls and chopping wood. True Bowie knives continue to have a reputation for being some of the toughest around. A Bowie knife's Durability is always at a +1 from the reinforced layers of steel. Also, in appropriate situations, the knife adds +1 to Crafts rolls (when chopping or whittling wood, for instance).

Combat Knife: This basic set of Traits covers everything from archaic daggers to modern commando knives. Almost every simple knife designed and balanced primarily for injuring or killing people falls under these auspices.

Katar Punch-Dagger: Katars are notable because their horizontal grips allow the user to punch with them, like brass knuckles with a blade jutting forward. The katar blades are wide and taper to a quick point, and cause severe damage when thrust against an unarmored body. Attacks with a punch-dagger are done with Strength + Brawl rolls,

eschewing use of the Weaponry Skill. Some characters choose to wield two punch-daggers at one time; in this case, off-hand penalties still apply.

A more modern version of the katar is the "push dagger," an American-made knife whose blade sticks out from between the knuckles. (Its ratings are equal to that of the katar.) Rare versions of the katar exist (Cost •••), however, that have one blade that actually splits into two butterfly-like blades upon squeezing the grip tightly. Assailants use this in a brutal manner: once the blade is buried in another's flesh, pulling the grip expands the blades *inside* the victim. If one of these katars is used in this way, the blade does continuous damage (provided the victim does not pull away first with a Strength + Brawl roll). This damage is done in the form of 2 lethal regardless of Defense or armor. This damage is done once while inside and a second time when the blade is removed from the body (doing considerable harm as the blade exits).

Keris: Also sometimes called a kris or kriss, this unconventional blade has a curved, nearly pistol-like grip that rests in the hand and allows the forefinger to guide the weapon. Its blade may be wavy or straight, and the hilt is likely to be sculpted in sumptuous abstractions of Hindu or Islamic iconology. Using the weapon is meant to be natural, acting nearly as an extension of the arm. The keris isn't meant for slashing. The blade is thrust forward in close quarters, the goal being for the blade to slip between the ribs and perforate a lung. Unfortunately, although the dagger is meant to be easy to wield, it's awkward for untrained users. A user without an appropriate Keris Specialty suffers a –1 modifier to her attack roll. (Note that the Specialty still grants the bonus die.)

Few daggers are as replete with legends as the Malay keris. The idea behind every keris is that it is a mystical weapon, forged out of *Tosan Aji* ("magical metal") and given a mind of its own, and many keris blades are engraved with images of the Naga, the legendary snake creatures from Hindu myth. Straight blades are considered *sarpa tapa*, or "snake in meditation," while wavy blades are *sarpa lumuka*, or "snake in motion." Stories persist about keris daggers that leap from their sheaths to behead hidden enemies or daggers that murder their users to expose the corruption in their hearts. Some owners don't use the keris as normal daggers, and instead hang them from their rafters or doorways because the blades will (according to myth) attack evil spirits invading the home.

The wavy-bladed keris has entered pop culture's consciousness as the traditional weapon of robed cultists, though these props often lack the unusual pistol-like grip. Keris daggers without these grips have a Damage trait of 1(L), but don't require a Specialty to wield effectively.

Khukri: The Gurkha fighters of Nepal reportedly have a saying about these favored fighting knives: if a Gurkha unsheathes his khukri, the blade must spill blood. If history is any indicator, the saying holds some truth. The Gurkha, operating as foreign complements to the British Army, were said to be fierce opponents on the field of battle, chopping off limbs and heads, the blood running down the notched grooves often found on a khukri's handle.

The khukri itself is a wide knife, almost like a machete, except that the blade is curved sharply inward, looking nearly like a boomerang. Most of the weight is located at the top of the blade. This gives the weapon a fierce arc. The weight drives the blade forward with astonishing force. This force is why the knife is considered particularly useful when chopping off body parts on the battlefield, and why the Gurkhas would aim for the exposed necks of their adversaries. A character wielding a khukri normally is certainly fierce enough. A character using a khukri to try to decapitate or dismember an opponent is all the more worrisome. When using a khukri to target a specific body part, the normal penalties apply (see p. 154 of the **World of Darkness Rulebook**). However, the khukri allows the 9 again rule on targeted attacks, as the weapon's unique blade contributes mightily to such direct attacks.

The khukri, with a blade approximately a foot long, is very nearly a sword. Sword versions of the khukri do exist, however (with blades over 20 inches in length). A sword khukri has Damage 3(L), Cost ••••, and Size 3.

Main Gauche: The main gauche (French; literally "left hand") isn't really a weapon in itself. It certainly *can* be, as it's a dual-edged blade that can be used like any normal knife in combat. That belies the tool's original use, however, which is to serve as a parrying tool in fencing. Duelists hold the weapon in the left hand (per the name) while wielding a rapier or épée in the right. The main gauche has a knuckle-guard that allows the fighter to deflect incoming close-combat attacks.

If a character wishes to use the main gauche to help him parry incoming close-combat melee attacks, it grants him a +1 modifier to his Defense. However, this dagger doesn't offset the –2 penalty from off-hand attacks unless the character has the Ambidextrous Merit.

Pocketknife: A pocketknife is not at all meant for use in combat. Pocketknives (or penknives) are small, awkward and rarely sharp enough to cause anything beyond superficial injury. Still, sometimes a penknife is all a character has when her back is against the wall and something is slavering and snapping at her, trying to rip out her trachea.

A pocketknife's problems are manifold. Beyond allowing for minimal damage, a pocketknife is also relatively fragile. If used in combat, the blade will break away from the base after doing 3 damage in a single attack. Worse, should the user suffer a dramatic failure when attacking with a penknife, the blade will close upon the wielder's fingers, doing one point of lethal damage as the penknife cuts across his digits. That said, a penknife can come in handy *outside* of combat, and may add +1 to appropriate Crafts rolls (especially if the knife is of a multi-tool variety like the Swiss Army models).

Rondel Dagger: The rondel ("Eared") dagger originated in the 14th century in southern Europe. End to

end, the rondel dagger is nearly 20 inches long (with the blade comprising about 12 of those inches). The blade is thin, tapering to a point; most of the blades were double-sided, though a variation exists in which the blade is actually four-sided (cruciform). More curious is the grip and pommel. The bottom of many of these daggers is split in two, splayed out in two metal pieces that looked like ears. The function of this was so that the wielder would have a place to hook his thumb or place the heel of his hand. Why? Because it provides greater power to a stabbing blow.

The rondel is not meant for slashing attacks. It remains only truly effective when used to stab. In fact, it's so effective that its point can puncture chain mail armor. While the blade won't generally pierce plate armor, savvy users can still kill a plated opponent by driving the weapon between the joints of the suit. Historically, this dagger was seen by some as a last-resort weapon on the field of battle. Others realized that it was a nearly perfect weapon for assassination.

The eared dagger comes with a number of bonuses. First, its precise tapered point grants the knife Armor Piercing 1. Second, if the weapon is used in a surprise flank or rear attack, and the target fails to notice the assailant (i.e., he fails his Wits + Composure roll), not only does the attacker get to ignore the target's Defense, but he can make his attack with a +2 bonus.

Collectors might be able to find a peculiar Turkish variation of this knife, with a small door in the handle (either in the side of the grip or at the base of the pommel), the perfect size for a smaller phial. History suggests that assassins used to fill these phials up with potent poisons, smearing the blades with the toxins moments before plunging them into the unaware victims' flesh. This variation is generally expensive (Cost ••••).

Trench Knife (World War I): In the muddy trenches of war-torn Europe, men were forced at times to rely upon their hand-to-hand weapons for survival. Pistols jammed and weren't reliable in close combat. In the darkness, some soldiers relied upon their trench knives to dispatch enemies.

A trench knife is the precursor to the more modern commando knife. It is double-edged and balanced for fighting. The World War I trench knife has a modification, however, that many modern combat knives do not feature. The trench knife's knuckle-grip doubles as a set of brass knuckles. The damage is lethal if used as a normal knife (requiring a Strength + Weaponry roll) and bashing if the character chooses to utilize the knuckled grip (requiring Strength + Brawl).

Switchblade: A switchblade is a thin, small-bladed knife that is concealed in the weapon's handle and is only sprung when the wielder hits a switch on the grip. Popular with gangs once, switchblades are now mostly *passé* in the criminal community. Other versions of the switchblade are the butterfly knife and spring knife. Note that this blade is illegal to possess and/or carry in many countries, including much of the United States.

Knives and Daggers

Type	Damage	Size	Durability	Cost	Notes
Bayonet	2(L)	1/S	3	•	Damage 1(L) if mounted on a bullpup*
Bowie Knife	2(L)	1/J	4	•	+1 to some Crafts rolls*
Combat Knife	1(L)	1/S	3	•	
Katar Punch-Dagger	2(L)	1/S	3	••	Strength + Brawl*
Keris	2(L)	2/J	3	••	–1 Damage without Specialty*
Khukri	2(L)	2/J	3	••	9 again on targeted attacks*
Main Gauche	1(L)	1/S	3	•	+1 Defense if used with another weapon*
Pocketknife	–1(L)	1/P	2	•	Fragile 3, +1 to some Crafts rolls*
Rondel Dagger	1(L)	1/S	3	••	Armor Piercing 1, +2 Damage on surprise attacks*
Trench Knife (World War I)	1(L/B)	1/S	3	•	Doubles as brass knuckles*
Switchblade	0(L)	1/P	3	•	

**See text for further details and special rules.*

Daggers of the Schutzstaffel

Artifacts from the Third Reich enjoy an odd popularity in modern nights. Collectors (be they genuine historians or neo-Nazi zealots) have made the trade of these goods an industry unto itself. Collectors collect, trade and sell ceremonial plates, uniforms, medals, even items plundered from the concentration camps. The weapons of the Nazi regime are also popular collector items — anything from oft-used Luger pistols to the never-used swords of ceremony. One niche market, however, is the trafficking of SS (*Schutzstaffel*) daggers.

The daggers of this elite unit of German soldiers, with their silver handles and ivory inlays, were unlike the ceremonial weapons granted to officers. These daggers were functional knives and not just for presentation, and, by all evidence, saw frequent use against unarmed opponents.

The daggers of the *Totenkopfverbände*, the Death's Head unit of the SS, are of particular value. The majority of these daggers are engraved with the SS motto *Meine Ehre Heißt Treue* ("My Honor is Loyalty"). Perhaps the most important historical connection for these daggers is their relation to Germany's Night of the Long Knives, whereupon Hitler seized power by eliminating his rivals, killing 300 to400 of his political enemies in a single night. The Nazis made these daggers instrumental in these murders.

Some say that these weapons are cursed. Few can explain why, and those who believe this rarely experience the same effects as others with similar claims. Many have reported that poltergeist-like effects occur where the dagger is stored — mirrors fly from walls, windows open and then close so hard they break, plates rattle and shatter. Some say they have even witnessed the daggers themselves hovering in the center of the madness, like the eye of an invisible storm. Others report no such incidents, and instead suggest that stranger, quieter things happen when in possession of the blades. A few have heard the weapons talking to them, whispering barely audible messages that may or may not be in German. One collector claimed that the dagger instructed him, in a perfect Austrian dialect, how to use it to "slice open a door between worlds."

Swords

Originally, swords were little more than long knives with blades of copper and bronze. With the technological advances of iron smelting, however, swords became more powerful and practically ubiquitous. By 500 BC, swords were the primary hand-to-hand weapon of most warriors, be they Roman soldiers or barbarian berserkers. History and legend are replete with a number of famous and magical swords — Arthur's Excalibur, Siegfried's Balmung and Caesar's Crocea Mors. For nearly a millennium, swords remained the dominant weapon of the warrior class and the wealthy. However, the advent of gunpowder would change all that, and by the 16th century, swords began a slow fade. They're still produced in this modern age, but mostly as items of vanity or ceremony.

Bastard Sword: Called a "bastard" sword because it is said to be the bastard child of the long sword and the great sword (and also called the "hand-and-a-half"), this sword can be wielded with a single hand or held in two for greater damage. Wielding it one-handed requires a Strength of 4, and provides a Damage of 3(L). Wielding it two-handed demands a Strength of 3, and allows a Damage of 4(L).

Popular about 500 years ago, bastard swords are now generally weapons of antiquity and show up at auctions and in museums. However, one group of werewolves sometimes leaves them behind as a kind of calling card. Some of the Pure known as the Ivory Claws plunge them into the murdered bodies of their Forsaken prey, presumably because the Uratha werewolves are considered bastards by the Pure.

Curved Sword: The curved sword (or "backsword") is not a single sword but an entire category. The blade features

a mild-to-deep curve, and is generally only sharp on the outer edge. The original curved design was meant to be used by riders upon horseback. Warriors found the curved weapons to be better weighted than straight blades toward uneven, roughshod fighting. Atop a horse, any iota of imbalance could send a knight or soldier toppling off his steed and to the ground, which was tantamount to a death sentence.

Ancient versions of the curved sword include the Indian *talwar*, the Persian *shamshir* and the Greek *makhaira*. More modern versions include the cavalry saber, used prominently in conflicts such as the Napoleonic Wars and used ornamentally in the American Civil War.

The curved sword is a poor thrusting weapon, but excels when slashing or chopping. The weapon provides a +1 bonus when chopping downward from a position of height, as if upon horseback. Although modern characters might not frequently swing the sword while upon a charging steed, other situations may grant the bonus. A character attacking from an open truck door or a stairway may find that the weapon is suitably balanced for such a vantage point.

Fencing Swords: The sport of modern fencing is a match of strategy, a constant give-and-take of whip-thin blades and anticipatory maneuvers. Masked combatants clash swords in what is called the *right-of-way* convention, in which one opponent parries while the other presses an attack. When the attacker reaches the end of his potential assault, the tables turn and he becomes the one to parry as the match goes back and forth until someone scores a hit. Some rules demand that only the torso is game; others allow the whole body to be targeted.

The swords used in fencing aren't blades, precisely. They're long and thin but not edged, similar to an automobile's antenna, featuring a curved basket hilt as the grip. The *foil* is a small, light version, while the *épée* is a slightly heavier, rapier-like blade. These swords are useless at the cut and slash. While such attacks might do minor damage, it's like being whipped by a heavy willow branch. No, these weapons are only useful on the thrust.

Fencing weapons are light enough that a user may ignore the normal Strength requirement. Also, similar to the rapier, a fencing sword has Armor Piercing 1. For information on fencing, see the Fighting Style: Fencing Merit in the Appendix.

Fish-Spine Sword: Fish-spine swords are predominantly found in India and New Guinea, though versions exist throughout the islands of the South Pacific. Fishermen looking to protect themselves take the snout of certain fish (usually that of the sawfish shark) and bisect it. They then wrap the base of the snout in cloth or leather or give the snout an all-new handle. The weapon features a blade of barbed, uneven teeth: a blow with this sword can cause ragged wounds across exposed flesh. Survivors of attacks made with these swords suffer terrible scarring. The weapons, for this reason, excel at causing lasting damage. Users can apply the 9 again rule to their attacks. However, while the bone is strong, the nature of its tiny spine-like teeth gives the weapon a short lifespan. Fish-spine swords have only a Durability 1 because of this.

Metal versions of this weapon exist, generally in India. They're heavier than their bone-made cousins (Size 3), but have Damage traits of 2(L) and Cost •••.

Gladius: The gladius was the weapon of the Roman legionaries. This short sword, measuring no more than 26 inches, was meant for quick thrusting and chopping in mass combat formations, where soldiers stood close together and longer blades would have been impractical.

No Roman gladii survive today that could be used in battle. They're relics aged over two millennia. Using one in a fight is not only a foolish move (the weapons are so brittle they will take more damage than they give), but one that destroys a priceless artifact. Any gladius used in battle today is a replica or re-creation, most of which suffer from the "Decorative Weapons" rule listed earlier in this chapter.

The Holy Damned of the Lancea Sanctum sometimes use the gladius both as adornment and in combat. The gladius was, after all, the weapon that their prophet carried at his hip when he thrust his spear into the side of Christ. In many cases, elder Sanctified actually craft their gladii from genuine relics, borrowing perhaps still-sturdy hilts or instead using antiquated scabbards. The blades, however, are almost always new, carefully forged and obsessively sharpened. Some Sanctified value elaborate ornamentation, to reveal the glory of the Dark Prophet and God the Father, whereas others prefer a humble weapon, unadorned with such intricate embellishment.

Great Sword: The generic term "great sword" likely derives from the Scottish two-handed long sword known as the claymore. And even that term is an Anglicized pronunciation of the weapon's true name: the *claidheamh mór*, which, sure enough, is Gaelic for "great sword." It's a heavy weapon (about seven pounds) and long (blade of four feet, hilt just over a foot). The great sword is meant to be held with two hands. Using it one-handed is particularly difficult, and requires a Strength of 4 to manage.

This blade was used for a timeframe of about 300 years, starting in the 13th century, though the great sword didn't see prominent use until the latter end of that period. Warriors wielded the claymore and used the brutishly long sword to upend knights from horses, smash shields and take off heads at their unprotected necks. True claymores from the late medieval period are rare and highly prized. They exist mostly among old, aristocratic collections seldom seen by the public.

Katana: The katana was once the symbol of the military class and of the prestigious lords of feudal Japan. The katana was more than just a sword; it was a statement that spoke to an individual samurai's style and spirit. The character of the smith was said to be burned into the folded steel, and the wielder could purportedly sense the spark of life hidden within each blade. The blades were versatile in both offense and defense, providing the warrior with a dynamic ebb-and-flow in battle. The blade could block an attack from on-high or down-low. If the blade penetrated the defense, the edge could split an opponent's skull in two. The katana was an instrument of deadly alacrity and precision.

And now, you can buy katanas in shopping malls and on the Internet.

The katana has attained an almost fetishistic resonance in modern pop culture, showing up in movies like *Highlander*, *The Matrix Reloaded* and *Kill Bill* as well as in comic books, anime and television shows. As such, these swords are now prominently sold (along with a number of martial

arts weapons) to collectors and pop culture aficionados. These swords might be beautiful, but they're not meant to be used as weapons. They are, instead, meant to hang on walls or rest in display cases, nothing more. As such, the majority of katanas sold suffer from the Decorative Weapons rules mentioned above, with Damage 2(L) and Durability 2. These swords *can* be used in combat, but they certainly shouldn't. They are of lower cost, however (Cost ••).

Some actual smiths still produce genuine katanas. The weapon chart Traits apply to these swords in particular, and not to the kind of katana one might purchase at a flea market. Weapons-grade katanas are well-balanced and sharp, and have the folded steel technique that helps to make these swords particularly special and tough (Durability 4). Ultimately, the sword's Durability is really its only key advantage over European-style swords.

Masamune and Muramasa

In the 14th century, two blacksmiths lived, both of whom were renowned for their forging of legendary katanas. The eldest was Masamune, who legend tells was an honorable man with a good heart. His blades were strong, with the steel folded over so many times that no other blacksmith has been able to replicate the resilience of his swords. It's said that Masamune designed his weapons with peace in mind, and that each sword was imbued with a spirit of honorable protection.

The younger of the two blacksmiths was Muramasa, who was the pupil of the elder Masamune. Muramasa was unlike his teacher, however. Where his teacher was kind, Muramasa was cruel. Where his master was evenhanded, Muramasa was ill tempered. Muramasa's blades were invested with bloodthirsty anger. While he did not have the skills to make his blades as strong as his teacher's, his katanas surpassed Masamune's swords in pure sharpness.

One myth that best exemplifies this says that one can differentiate between the craftwork of the two smiths by placing the swords in a slow-moving stream. Leaves floating upon the current gravitate toward the Muramasa blade, and are neatly sliced in half regardless of the water's direction. The leaves, however, will never touch Masamune's sword — they always float gently around the steel, passing by untouched.

Rumor suggests that the blades of these master craftsmen are still available today, held by powerful and wealthy collectors. Masamune's blades have a +2 to Durability, and also offer the wielder a +3 to Defense. The evil blades of Muramasa, on the other hand, offer no such honorable protection. Instead, his blades grant the wielder a +2 to all attack rolls, *and* all attacks are subject to the 9 again rule. The Cost of these blades, if they even truly exist, cannot be measured in mere Resources. Some suggest that the cost is taken from the user's soul. And besides, it's probably just a story, anyway.

Long Sword: The long sword, or broadsword, was the most common weapon on the battlefield in the mid-to-late Middle Ages, up until the inclusion of artillery and the arquebus. The long sword is perhaps the most basic of swords: a single-handed, double-edged blade approximately three feet in length. This sword could be used to slash or chop (design elements left over from early sword-making), but the point allowed for wielders to thrust with it, as well. Thrusting allowed a warrior to make his attacks more effective against armor that could absorb slashing or hacking blows.

Machete: The machete is probably the most common "sword-style" weapon found in the hands of assailants worldwide. Machetes are carried by Columbian guerillas, Afghan warlords, Burmese poppy farmers and Sudanese rebels. Machetes were some of the primary weapons used for murder in the Rwandan genocide and by the Haitian Tontons Macoutes. They can be found in the hands of North Americans all across the rural landscape, too. Whether used for chopping vegetation or cutting up bodies, this tool and weapon is a popular one because it serves the dual function of being useful on the farm *and* on the battlefield.

While a machete is a tool, it is a well-balanced one. It does not suffer from the improvised weapon penalty.

Rapier: A rapier's dual-edged blade, easily three feet in length, is poorly balanced for slashing. The weapon instead makes small cuts — little slices, really, more demeaning than damaging — in an opponent. When the time comes for the kill, the swordsman thrusts forward and runs his adversary through with the point.

It was for this reason that the rapier saw little battlefield experience. Historically, the rapier was the weapon of the wealthy, a sword of distinction marking one's own influence and affluence. Some called this sword the *espada ropera*, the Spanish dress sword, as it mostly hung by a man's side as ornamentation. A man only unsheathed the sword during fencing matches or duels, and rarely were such duels to the death. Those contests were all about that first degrading cut, whether it was a sliver of flesh taken from the back of a hand or a slash through the adversary's cheek. The rapier has fallen out of usage, even in modern fencing (see "Fencing Swords"). Still, some elder or traditionalist vampires carry their rapiers with them during events of pomp and circumstance, just in case they need to embarrass some upstart with a quick whisper of the flashing blade.

Two more battlefield-savvy versions of the rapier are the estoc and the *Panzerstecher* (or "Armor-Stinger"). All rapiers have a point sharp enough and a blade thin enough to pierce armor, and thus have Armor Piercing 1.

Sword Cane: The gentleman's cane is often made of elegant wood and comes topped with a metal ornament, such as an eagle's head, a reared cobra or a simple umbrella hook. The sword cane appears to be nothing more than a tool meant to aid one in walking, until a gentleman pulls a sword from it.

Sword canes seem like silly collector's items straight from spy films, except these canes actually do serve as functional weapons. The cane can be used as a blunt object, and the sword within allows for slashing lethal damage. Much like a weapon drawn from a scabbard, the sword takes a turn to remove from its cane sheath.

Another version of this exists, one that comes from India. This device, called a "fakir's crutch," isn't a sword contained within a cane, but a blade hidden inside a cripple's crutch. This weapon can be used in the same manner as its more stylish cousin.

Wakizashi: The wakizashi is a samurai's sidearm, acting as a short version of the more popular katana. An attacker can use the wakizashi one-handed, as opposed to the katana, which is generally held in a two-handed grip.

Of particular note is the weapon's history in ritual suicide. Dishonored samurai used these short swords in the act of *seppuku*. This requires the samurai to withdraw the sword from its sheath (*saya*) and thrust the blade deep into his belly. From there he would make a number of cuts across the original cut, opening his abdomen and

Swords

Type	Damage	Size	Durability	Cost	Notes
Bastard Sword	3/4(L)	3/N	3	••	One- or two-handed*
Curved Sword	3(L)	2/L	3	••	+1 Damage from positions of height*
Fencing Sword	1(L)	2/L	3	•	Armor Piercing 1*
Fish-Spine Sword	1(L) 9 again	2/L	1	n/a	
Gladius	2(L)	2/S	3	••	
Great Sword†	4(L)	3/N	3	•••	
Katana	3(L)	2/L	4	•••	
Long Sword	3(L)	2/L	3	••	
Machete	2(L)	2/J	3	•	
Rapier	2(L)	2/L	3	••	Armor Piercing 1*
Sword Cane	2(L/B)	2/L	3	••	Bashing damage when sheathed*
Wakizashi	2(L)	2/S	4	•••	
Zweihander†	4(L) 9 again	4/N	3	•••	

**See text for further details and special rules. †This weapon requires two hands. If used one-handed, the Strength requirement increases by 1.*

literally spilling his guts. From that point, a friend or master would decapitate the shameful samurai with his own wakizashi's companion katana. Some women were allowed to kill themselves with the wakizashi as well, but they were expected not to disembowel themselves, only to slit their throats.

These short swords tend to feature the same folded-steel technique as the katana. As such, the wakizashis are Durability 4.

Zweihander: This is a monstrous weapon, longer and larger than even the great sword, with a hilt of over a foot, and a blade that measures nearly *five feet* in length. The zweihander is taller than some people. It also weighs nearly 14 pounds, requiring a Herculean effort just to swing the weapon, regardless of accuracy. The blade itself might be flamberge (wavy curves like a snake) or have parrying hooks about 10 inches up from the hilt.

If one can wield this beast and connect with it, the massive weapon can wreak hideous damage. Attacks made with this sword apply the 9 again rule to the roll.

Blunt Weapons

Blunt weapons are the simplest and most straightforward weapons available to characters. One character might bludgeon another with a wooden board, a crowbar, a combat mace, a nightstick or a walking stick. The functions of the blunt weapon are to cause bruises, break bones and crack heads.

Escrima Sticks: Filipino fighting sticks (generally called Escrima sticks) are small batons, about 17 to 20 inches, generally made of rattan or wood. They can be used for ornamental combat, or can instead be used to break hands, noses and elbows, or to smash teeth, pop eyes and collapse throats. Many practitioners use two sticks (one in each hand) in concordance. One stick is meant for offensive strikes, while another is meant for defensive maneuvers.

The material of the baton determines its functionality in combat. Rattan sticks are purely for sparring, and have Durability 1 and a Damage trait of –1(B). Wooden sticks (hickory, usually) have Durability 1 and Damage 0(B). Metal batons or sticks made of polycarbonate plastics have Durability 2 and Damage 1(B).

See p. 211 for information on the Fighting Style: Filipino Martial Arts Merit, which grants bonuses to using this and other weapons.

Flail: Consisting of only a heavy ball attached to a wooden or metal handle with a length of chain or rope, flails have been used by peasants throughout history to thresh wheat. However, when the time came to defend themselves (as in the French or American Revolutions), farmers were able to wield their grain-threshing flails with some effectiveness against the enemy.

The medieval flail grew out of this idea, and became a weapon that helped thwart the knighted class. With the combat version of the flail, the ball is heavier (no more wooden handles, for instance), and is sometimes peppered with spikes. The historical advantage is that the flail could reach over and around a knight's shield because of its chain. A sword's blade did not bend, but the flail was flexible. Because of this, it wasn't considered an honorable weapon, and did not match the proliferation of swords and daggers upon the battlefield. Regardless of history, even now shields do not offer any Defense bonus against flails (see p. 178 for information on shields).

If the flail is just a heavy weight atop a chain, the flail does bashing damage. If that weight is spiked, it does lethal damage. The flail requires a Dexterity 3 in addition to Strength 3 to use effectively. Without the Dexterity requirement, the wielder suffers a –1 penalty to attack.

Mace: A mace is little more than a metal club, usually consisting of a reinforced shaft with a metal head (sometimes studded). Although the mace has a history that goes back all the way to 12,000 BC, this weapon didn't see prominent use until the Middle Ages. Armor was designed then to help a knight withstand attacks from bladed weapons. The damage from blades, axes and arrows was more easily nullified with chain or plate mail. Although a mace certainly could not pierce armor, the mace *did* crush the chain mail enough to allow for blunt trauma to a knight's body. Where an arrow would simply bounce off, the mace could still, on an off-chance, break bones or crush heads.

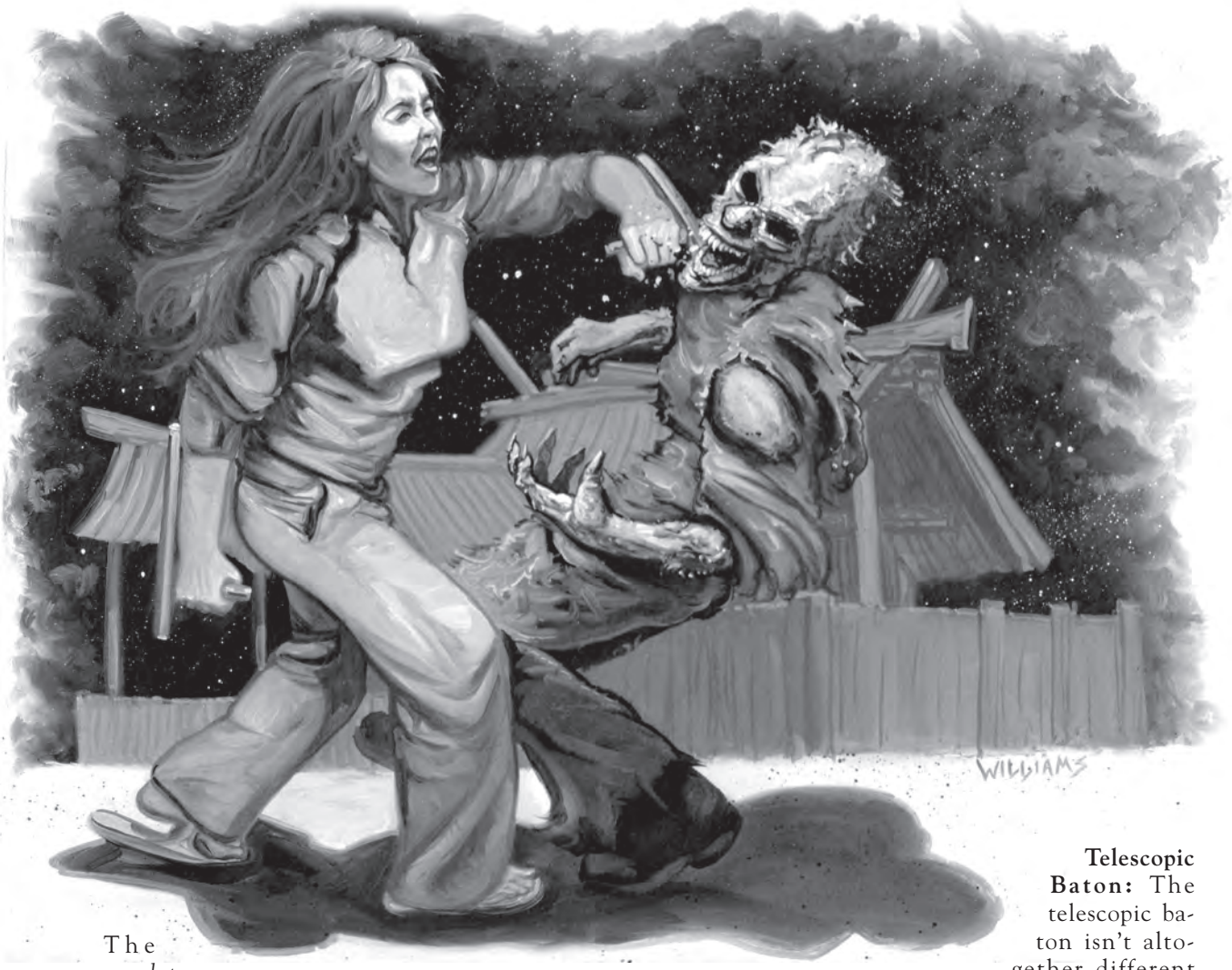
Another curious piece of history about the mace is its occasional use by medieval clergy. Canon rule forbade priests from drawing blood. A mace, on the other hand, doesn't precisely spill blood — damage can theoretically be delivered to an enemy without ever spilling a drop. Apocryphal stories (sometimes in tales from the Battle of Hastings or in poems like the "Song of Roland") from this time period tell of priests wading into a battle, maces at the ready.

Maul: A maul is a two-handed mace. The maul is longer by a foot or more, and heavier, as well. Some are shaped like hammers, but most have pear- or bell-shaped heads. They were originally used to sweep riders from atop their horses.

Morning Star: The morning star is a heavy mace. Topping the weapon is a ball adorned with a series of sharp metal spikes or needles. When the morning star hits open flesh, the weapon doesn't just break bones, it also scores flesh *from* the bones. The morning star has gained two curious nicknames over time. The first (*goedendag*) is a Dutch word meaning "nice day." The second (*holy water sprinkler*) is because most morning stars look similar to the *aspergillum*, a Catholic device used in the dispersion of holy water.

The Kindred of the Lancea Sanctum make use of *aspergillum* morning stars. The pious vampires use the device during ritual ceremonies to dispense sacred Vitae (dipping the *aspergillum* in an urn of blood, then shaking the morning star over the congregation), and also use the weapon to battle their enemies.

Sap: The sap is usually a palm-sized flat "bag" of leather filled with lead shot or powder. For a small weapon, though, it packs a big wallop.



The sap *used* to be part of every cop's arsenal about 20 years ago. After a quick hit from the sap, a criminal would think twice about acting violent. When used, the bag of shot — often targeted at elbows, knees, collarbones or even noses — did such sudden trauma to the target that it would leave him or her stunned, howling in pain.

Using a sap can causes a Stun effect. Unlike other Stun weapons, if the damage caused by the attack meets or exceeds the target's Stamina (not Size), the target loses his next action.

Shakuhachi Flute: Perhaps one of the unlikelier weapons of the ancient samurai was the bamboo flute known as the shakuhachi. In 1876, the Sword Abolishment Act forced samurai to relinquish their titles and arms. Still desiring weapons, the fallen samurai redesigned these traditional flutes to be heavier, with harder hollow cores and greater balance.

Shakuhachi can still be purchased from appropriate Asian-themed vendors. Not only can a character play the flute (Wits + Expression with a +1 bonus), but she can use it as a wooden baton against foes. The item is balanced for this, and as such takes no penalty for being improvised.

Telescopic Baton: The telescopic baton isn't altogether different from any other metal club or mace. The baton is made of solid steel, and can be used to shatter skulls, break arms or split kneecaps just like any other baton. The difference here is that the baton is spring-loaded or, instead, is opened with a quick kinetic snap. A character can conceal the steel baton inside the grip, which is of a significantly smaller size (Size 1/S) than the average club. With a flick of the wrist, the grip expends the telescopic club, which springs to approximately 26 inches in length (or Size 2/J).

Tonfa (Nightstick): The Okinawan tonfa did not begin as a weapon. Once, the tonfa was nothing more than a handle used to turn a millstone. But peasants, unable to afford or keep weapons, were able to adopt these makeshift handles for defense. Over time, martial arts developed around the handles, and they became excellent handled batons for defense. Tonfa are the prototype for the modern police baton, the nightstick.

Most tonfa are made of wood or hard plastic. They're not only functional as powerful clubs, but also provide strong and simple defense. Anyone using a tonfa in close combat gains a +1 modifier to her Defense. This Defense modifier *is* applied against Firearms attacks provided the

Blunt Weapons

Type	Damage	Size	Durability	Cost	Notes
Escrima Sticks	1(B)	2/S	2	•	Damage varies by type*
Flail	3(B/L)	3/N	3	••	–1 Damage without Dexterity 3, ignores shields*
Mace	3(B)	2/L	3	••	
Maul†	4(B)	3/N	3	••	
Morning Star	3(L)	3/N	3	••	
Sap	1(B)	1/P	2	•	Stun (Stamina)*
Shakuhachi Flute	0(B)	1/S	2	•	+1 to some Wits + Expression rolls*
Telescopic Baton	3(B)	2/J	3	•	Collapses to Size 1/S*
Tonfa (Nightstick)	2(B)	2/J	2	•	+1 Defense*
Wooden Club	2(B)	2/J	1	n/a	

**See text for further details and special rules. †This weapon requires two hands. If used one-handed, the Strength requirement increases by 1.*

shooter is within close range, as normal.

Wooden Club: Seen throughout folklore and popular culture as the favored weapons of cavemen and giants, the club is truly one of the oldest and most straightforward weapons available. The wooden club is not only easy to improvise, but has a number of real-world analogs, as well. Modern clubs include baseball bats, walking sticks, Irish shillelagh, African knobkerries and wooden batons. All of these are weighted appropriately and can be used to bash a foe upside the head without penalty.

Improvised clubs might include chair or table legs, two-by-fours or broom handles. (These weapons suffer the –1 penalty associated with most improvised weapons, however.)

Non-wooden clubs have the same Traits, except for their Durability, which is that of the material they're made of.

Chain Weapons

Generally speaking, chain weapons consist of a blunt end or blade at one end of a long chain. The chain itself can function in a number of ways. It can bind an opponent, choke him or act as a long-distance delivery of the bladed or blunt end.

Anybody can pick up a chain weapon, but using it effectively is a whole other matter. Without proper movement (learned through training), a chain weapon is an unpredictable tool. Swinging it wildly around provides only chaos, and an unskilled wielder is as likely to bind or cut himself as he is to harm his adversary.

Unless otherwise noted, chain weapons require at least one point in the Fighting Style: Chain Weapons Merit (found on p. 209). If a character does not meet this requirement, she takes a –2 penalty to use the chain weapon in combat.

Chain (Basic): The average metal chain, favored by certain thugs and gang members, does a mean job of causing bruises and breaking bones. A character can use anything from a bike chain to thicker gauge chain (like those used to lock up fences or gates). Most chains are too unwieldy for a character (too big to fit in a hand or a little too long to use properly) and ultimately aren't meant to be used as weapons. In this case, the Storyteller may invoke the –1 improvised weapons penalty. Unlike the other chain weapons, however, this basic chain does not require the prerequisite Fighting Style: Chain Weapons Merit to use.

Kusari Gama: The kusari gama is three weapons in one. This weapon is a heavy weight, a chain and a farmer's straight-blade sickle. This weapon (used first by farmers and later by martial artists) is all but useless in the hands of the untrained. Contrary to popular belief, the sickle is not "thrown." A user holds the sickle in his right hand while his left hand manipulates the chain and weight.

Kyoketsu Shogi: Like the kusari gama, this weapon is three weapons – in this case, it's a hooked knife, a rope and a weighted ring. A character can use the rope to grapple, the ring to cause bashing damage and the hooked knife to cut an entangled foe.

However, this weapon can also serve as a grappling hook or climbing device. It adds a +2 modifier to any Climbing rolls (see p. 64, the **World of Darkness Rulebook**).

Manriki Gusari: The manriki gusari is two blunt weights linked by a length of chain. The weapon tends to be shorter than its two cousins (mentioned above), and for that reason can be more easily concealed. However, it is longer than nunchaku (below), and is meant primarily for grappling. The weights strengthen any fettered entanglement from the chains; an enemy trying to escape such a grapple suffers a –1 penalty to his escape roll. A character can also use the weapon's weighted ends to bash opponents.

Nunchaku: Nunchaku (or "nunchucks") are little more than two blunt grips connected by a short chain. Like the katana, nunchaku have attained a kind of mythic stature from pop culture exposure. Images persist of martial artists using this weapon in a whirling flurry of attacks, unstoppable in their alacrity and fury. It rarely works that way. Like most chained weapons, the nunchaku is awkward in the hands of the untrained. A character is as likely to break his own nose as he is to shatter the jaw of an adversary.

Nunchaku do not require the Chained Weapons Merit to use, but characters without a Dexterity of 3 or higher suffer a –1 to attack. Nunchaku cannot be used in any of the fighting moves provided by the Chained Weapons Merit.

Poi: The Maori of New Zealand practice a spinning, dancing art that uses a device called *poi* (translation: "ball"). Poi is generally a set of two spheres attached by a rope or

Chain Weapons

Type	Damage	Size	Durability	Cost	Notes
Chain (Basic)	1(B)	1/S	3	n/a	Sometimes improvised*
Kusari Gama	2(B/L)	3/N	3	••	–2 Damage without Fighting Style: Chain Weapons Merit*
Kyoketsu Shogi	1(B/L)	3/N	2	••	–2 Damage without Fighting Style: Chain Weapons Merit*
Manriki Gusari	2(B)	2/L	3	•	–2 Damage without Fighting Style: Chain Weapons Merit*
Nunchaku	1(B)	1/S	3	•	–1 Damage without Dexterity 3*
Poi	0(B)	1/S	3	n/a	

**See text for further details and special rules.*

chain. The Maori dance with the poi, whirling it about in a furious spinning juggle. These days, the poi is meant as an art form (both for tourists and traditionalists), but its original purpose was to train a tribesman in manual dexterity. The poi can also be used as a weapon itself. It doesn't cause massive damage, but the weighted ends of the poi can be spun forward and used to hit an opponent. The rope or chain, as well, can be used to grapple.

One variation worthy of note is the *fire* poi. Fire poi have ends soaked in flammable liquid (lamp oil, usually). A user lights the ends on fire and then spins them wildly around. Characters can use a fire poi as a weapon, but the attacks are made at a –1 penalty. However, while the damage is still bashing, a successful attack will burn the target with lethal wounds. Assume that the burning ends of a fire poi have a Size of Fire 1 with Heat Modifier of +1, thus inflicting two lethal damage per turn of contact. If the fire poi is used successfully to inflict this damage for two consecutive turns, any combustible items on the target (hair, clothing) catches fire. (For this reason, a dramatic failure while wielding the fire poi is not recommended, as the wielder will catch fire herself.)

Polearms

A polearm is, simply, a weapon mounted upon a long pole. Spears are daggers atop a pole, and halberds are axes.

Polearms — specifically the spear and quarterstaff — have been used as hunting and fishing weapons for thousands of years. Over time, however, the advantage a polearm provides in combat became clear. With a polearm, a warrior may keep his opponents at a greater distance while still doing harm to them. The foe cannot close in to make an attack, but the warrior with the spear or the staff can still stab, slash or pummel the foe from afar. It is for this reason that, unless otherwise noted, all polearms grant the bearer a +1 Defense.

Halberd: The halberd, a polearm with an ax, hook *and* pike at the business end, saw heavy use in the 14th and 15th centuries. In battle, a warrior could use the hook to unseat riders from their mounts or yank a foe's leg out from under him and knock him to the ground. Swinging the ax-blade with great momentum allowed the user to chop and hack his opponents while keeping them at a relative distance. The pike served to stab at those opponents or kill their horses.

A character using a halberd can make a trip attack as if he possessed the Fighting Style: Staff Fighting Merit (see p. 213). A character using a halberd who *does* possesses the Merit receives a +1 bonus to the roll.

A number of polearms mirror the halberd's general construction with slight variances in the design of the weapon's head. Particular variations include the ox tongue, bardiche and voulge. These polearms function as the halberd, with equal stats.

The halberd remains a ceremonial weapon of the Vatican's Swiss Guard, and some say the weapons aren't purely ceremonial, but that the guards are quite versed in using them to dispatch opponents.

Naginata: At the end of this polearm is a two-foot curved blade. This weapon, favored by samurai and several other warrior classes of old Japan, is a relatively light and well-balanced item. The lower weight and higher balance of the naginata allows it to be used with a greater grace than other polearms. In this case, the Strength requirement is one less than is suggested by the item's Size. Two-handed, the weapon requires a Strength of 3, and a Strength of 4 is necessary to use the naginata in a single hand.

Other versions of the naginata include the glaive, guisarme, bill and fauchard.

Ghosts of the Sohei

The naginata was the favored weapon of the *sohei* warrior-monks of feudal Japan. The Buddhist monks remained prominent for nearly 700 years, until their demise in the late 16th century. These battle-minded holy men fought viciously against any perceived oppression against them or the farmers of the countryside. The *sohei* were not solitary monks, but instead acted as mobs of warriors amassing in the country, rioting with their naginatas whenever they perceived a threat to Buddhism or to their own power. Their sense of justice was clouded by fierce wrath, and many suggest that caused their eventual downfall.

Today, farmers in the countryside say the *sohei* can be seen today as spectral mobs traveling across the land, each with a rusted naginata at the ready. Some believe the *sohei* seek to end oppression, and claim to have also seen them in Tibet, gathering in the quiet snowy hollows of the mountains. Others claim that they are simply disturbed and angered, unable to properly leave the Wheel of Samsara, and that their taste for death grows night by night.

Quarterstaff: The quarterstaff (also known as the bo staff or longstaff) is a shaft made of heavy wood. Each one is five to six feet in length and makes for an uncomplicated weapon. The staff has seen use all around the world, from the samurai in feudal Japan to Little John in the story of Robin Hood. A number of martial arts still include training with staves. The staff can be used as a long club, or can be thrust forward to keep opponents at bay.

True weapons-level staves are made of particularly thick and strong wood (ash or hawthorn, for instance) and may have a Durability of 2, though such items also cost •• to match. One can also improvise a staff by breaking off the end of a brook or rake, but these are Damage 1(B) due to the improvised weapon penalty.

Spear: This polearm is topped with a sharp point made of bone, stone, wood or metal. The spear can be held in the hands and used as a long thrusting weapon, or may instead be thrown (for information on thrown weapons, see p. see p. 67, of the World of Darkness Rulebook). The spear is a fundamental weapon, counted as one of the earliest hunting tools, and similarly believed to be one of the first true weapons of war.

This history is perhaps why the spear appears in a number of significant myths. The Irish hero Cuchulainn had a magical spear (the Gae Bulg), said to be a notched bone from a primeval sea monster. Odin's spear was Gungnir, a spear crafted from the World Tree of Yggdrasil, and the stories suggest that the spear never missed its target and always returned to the hand of Odin when thrown. Perhaps the most popular "mythic" spear is the Spear of Destiny, the lance supposedly used to stab Christ's side. This particular spear is said to burn with the power of God *or* the Devil, and has popped up in countless apocryphal tales for the last two millennia. The Spear of Destiny has been attributed to pagan kings, corrupt popes and even Adolf Hitler. One recent tale tells that General Patton managed to wrest the spear from the Germans, finding it in a hidden bunker with a cache of other forgotten occult treasures. With the magical weapon, the American forces became unstoppable, and the tide of war truly turned. It's assumed that, if this is true, the United States lost possession of the spear sometime before the Vietnam conflict.

Trident: The trident is a three-pronged spear meant to catch fish, but, like many tools, can be also used as a deadly weapon. Like a spear, the trident can be used in close quarters combat or thrown at enemies. The three pointed tips give the weapon a slightly greater potential for damage than its lesser cousin, the spear.

The trident is often associated with Poseidon, the Greek King of the Seas. It's also associated with the medieval concept of the Christian Devil, who sits upon his Hell-born throne, the trident in his hand acting as an infernal scepter. In modern terms, the trident is a ballistic missile used by Western nations.

Other versions of the trident include the spetum and ranseur.

Axes and Hammers

Axes and hammers were tools before they were weapons, but over time, their value in battle became clear. While generally unwieldy, axes and hammers could bring tremendous damage in the hands of the strong. Hammers could break bones and crumple armor, while axes could cleave through the vulnerable joints in mail suits, thus lopping off arms, legs, even heads. Axes and hammers may not have required the finesse of a proper swordsman, but these brutal devices did not demand that level of grace to draw blood.

Battle-Ax: The earliest stone axes were produced nearly 8,000 years ago, and since then, axes have been a common tool throughout the growth of civilization. Axes were (and are) used to fell trees and split wood, chop roots and vegetables and even to break stone. It's hard to know at exactly what point someone recognized that an ax would be an excellent tool to fell and chop *humans*, but it might've been around the time when someone realized the ax's potential in beheading livestock or other animals.

Regardless, the battle-ax was born. Smiths modified the felling axes for better balance in combat. Smiths no longer lashed the ax-head to the handle, but socketed it instead for greater sturdiness. Barbarian tribes used axes to attack the horses bearing down upon them, whereas riders used the axes' momentum to swing hard and fast from the greater vantage point. The ax became a vicious tool in

Polearms

Type	Damage	Size	Durability	Cost	Notes
Halberd†	4(L)	4/N	3	•••	+1 Defense, trip attack*
Naginata†	3(L)	4/N	2	•••	+1 Defense, –1 minimum Strength*
Quarterstaff†	2(B)	4/N	1	•	+1 Defense*
Spear†	3(L)	4/N	2	•	+1 Defense*
Trident†	4(L)	4/N	3	••	+1 Defense*

**See text for further details and special rules. †This weapon requires two hands. If used one-handed, the Strength requirement increases by 1.*

combat, certainly not as light as the sword or dagger, but with far greater power once it connected.

Curiously, the battle-ax has a place in religion and superstition, as well, starting all the way back in the Neolithic period. Axes were often "gifts" to the gods, and were left upon altars or buried so that the gods could use them as exalted weapons. Axes were also icons of protection: men placed them upon rooftops to thwart lightning strikes and hailstorms, left them in the middle of fields to ensure good crops and buried axes under houses or under beds to ward off witches and other monsters.

Battle-axes may be single or double-headed, and are generally light enough to be carried in one hand.

The Labrys

The labrys is an ancient Minoan-designed battle-ax. Often crafted from bronze or gold, these axes are considered works of great beauty, and upon them are scribed intricate mazes meant to symbolize the Labyrinth of Crete. Legend includes these axes in a number of apocryphal tales, putting them in the hands of the Amazon warrior women, Hercules, the Minoan Minotaur and even the African god Shango, whose ax brought thunder and ill weather.

The strangest and most recent tale regarding the labrys concerns a number of these axes unearthed in an archaeological dig of caves near Knossos. Reportedly, the archeologists who uncovered the weapons (of which there were 13, said to be found in a bodiless tomb) seemed obsessed with the artifacts, particularly with the intricate mazes etched upon the ax-heads, which seemed to defy solution. Eventually, members of the dig team stole the artifacts and vanished. The axes, and the archaeologists, remain missing to this day, and no one knows what will happen when the tiny labyrinths are solved.

Crash Ax: A crash ax is a small survival ax made for use in emergencies. Several small airplanes have at least one crash ax on board, and fire fighters often carry them, as well. The ax can be used to break glass, chop open metal doors, dig, even clear debris. These axes are particularly tough. Not only are they made of drop-forged, reinforced steel (+1 Durability), but they also have rubber handles insulated to withstand up to 20,000 volts of electricity.

Fire Ax: Fire axes are common among fire and police personnel, but can be purchased for home use, as well. These axes can be used in forcible entry, crash extractions and impromptu ventilation in heavy smoke areas. Fire axes can also be used to chop trees, behead animals or lop off an adversary's limbs with a hard swing. While a fire ax isn't meant for combat, its sole purpose *is* to cause damage. As such, the fire axis balanced for powerful strikes and doesn't suffer any penalty for being an improvised weapon.

More advanced fire axes cost ••, and may have fiberglass handles (total Durability 3) as well as a pick on the end of the ax, which has a Damage rating of 2(L) but which may bypass armor (Armor Piercing 1).

Hatchet: A hatchet, mostly meant for campfire chopping or other small tasks, can be used as a weapon in a pinch. Hatchets sometimes come in camping or survival kits, and many hatchets actually have hollow handles that can be filled with waterproof matches, a penknife or a sharpening stone. A hatchet does not count as an improvised weapon.

Ice Ax: The ice ax isn't really an ax at all, but a pick used in mountain climbing. The pick on top and spike on the bottom are used to anchor oneself, gain balance and stability and dig carabiner holes.

Like fire axes, ice axes are balanced enough that they doesn't suffer the normal –1 penalty associated with improvised weapons, even though they weren't designed to cause harm to the human body. Also, the pick and spike of an ice ax can both be used to pierce armor (Armor Piercing 1).

Leon Trotsky, Marxist thinker and one of the scions of communism, was murdered in Mexico with an ice ax.

War Ax: The war ax is a giant, two-handed version of the battle-ax. Most war axes are double-headed, featuring iron or steel crescent blades heavy enough to bisect a horse's skull with one swing. They didn't see a lot of practical battlefield use — they were too heavy, ultimately — but some barbarian tribes counted them among their most vicious and effective weapons. Characters wielding war axes find them *so* deadly, in fact, that attacks made with these weapons may apply the 9 again rule to the roll.

Axes and Hammers

Type	Damage	Size	Durability	Cost	Notes
Battle-Ax	3(L)	3/N	3	••	
Crash Ax	2(L)	2/L	4	•	
Fire Ax†	3(L)	3/N	2	•	
Hatchet	1(L)	1/S	2	•	
Ice Ax	2(L)	2/J	1	•	Armor Piercing 1*
War Ax†	5(L) 9 again	4/N	3	•••	
War Hammer†	5(B)/4(L)	4/N	3	••	Armor Piercing 1 (lethal only), recover after swing*

**See text for further details and special rules. †This weapon requires two hands. If used one-handed, the Strength requirement increases by 1.*

Before the mechanical efficiency of the guillotine, the war ax doubled as the decapitating weapon of many executioners, and there are tales of stained axes that refuse to come clean, with faces faintly visible in the blood. Whether they're the faces of the executioners themselves, or their victims, isn't apparent.

War Hammer: Sometimes called a "war pick" or "horseman pick," the war hammer is essentially a gigantic claw hammer. This two-handed juggernaut has a blunt end that can crush bones, and a pick end that can punch through most armor. Warriors often wielded war hammers against those on horseback, against whom these weapons could break the legs of oncoming steeds, thus sending the riders to the ground where they were vulnerable to further attack. The blunt end has Damage 5(B), while the pick end has Damage 4(L) and Armor Piercing 1, and, of course, the weapon has monstrous damage potential due to its sheer weight. Unfortunately, that also makes the weapon incredibly slow and unwieldy. After a turn using the war hammer, the attacker must wait a full turn to use the weapon again or suffer a –3 to the attack. (In fact, all turns after the first suffer this –3 penalty until the wielder takes a turn wherein he takes no other actions other than to re-balance himself.)

The most famous war hammer was the mythical hammer of Norse legend, Mjolnir. Literally translated as "That Which Smashes," Mjolnir was the prized weapon of the thunder god Thor. Every time he swung it, Mjolnir's power issued forth a booming thunderclap that would deafen those nearby.

Miscellaneous Weapons

Some weapons fail to find a home in larger categories. Often, strange archaic weapons or the modern weapons of self-defense fall into this hodge-podge category. Below are some of these variant weapons.

Bagh-Nakh: The bagh-nakh (or "Tiger Claw") fits over the knuckles or under and against the palm. The device is usually all metal, with two or four steel claws protruding out, meant to slash through skin and muscle. Many bagh-nakhs are designed to create wounds that appear to mimic those created by a wild animal, like a slash from a tiger or bear claw. (The Storyteller may allow an Intelligence + Survival roll to determine if any characters are fooled by these injuries. Success indicates a character knows they are man-made.) Using the bagh-nakh is the province of hand-to-hand fighting, not normal melee combat. As such, an attack using the bagh-nakh requires a Strength + Brawl roll.

Similar to the bagh-nakh are the supposed ninja weapons known as shuko. Shuko are worn around the wrist, with a metal (and barbed) protrusion resting in the palm of one's hand. A shuko does the same damage as the bagh-nakh, but the shuko's claws are smaller and the wounds it leaves do not mimic an animal's. Also, shuko aid in climbing, and provide a +1 bonus to any climbing rolls made by a player whose character is wearing them. (See p. 64, the **World of Darkness Rulebook**).

Brass Knuckles: Metal knuckles (brass or chrome) are an old favorite of mob toughs, bouncers and back-alley pugilists. Brass knuckles are of minimal construction, being nothing more than metal curled around each finger allowing someone to deliver a mean-ass, jaw-breaking blow.

A more modern version of brass knuckles is sap gloves. These tough leather gloves — used by numerous law enforcement agencies (and criminal organizations) globally — have steel shot or plates sewn into the fingers. These gloves serve the same function as brass knuckles (powerful, bone-crunching punches), having the same game Traits. The gloves are not as obvious as brass knuckles, appearing to be nothing more than thick black gloves. However, the wearer's manual dexterity suffers while wearing sap gloves, and any actions performed that require such manual dexterity (operating a gun, using a hand tool, climbing) are done with a –1 penalty.

If the sap gloves are a modern update to brass knuckles, the weapon known as dragon knuckles are more brutal. Dragon knuckles are brass knuckles with sharp, bristly steel nodules raised up from the metal. These metal burrs wreak havoc across exposed flesh. Dragon knuckles receive zero attack modifiers, but do lethal damage instead of bashing. Dragon knuckles are also illegal in the United States and most Western countries.

For the purposes of fighting in enclosed spaces (p. 159), brass knuckles (and their variations) are Size 0.

Catch Pole: Catch poles are used to restrain animals. The device consists of a three- to five-foot aluminum pole with a plastic-covered metal cable noose at the one end. An animal handler loops the noose over an animal's head and once the noose is around the beast's neck, the handle features a mechanism that allows the trainer to tighten and lock the cable. This keeps the animal at a reasonably safe distance, and allows the trainer to direct the animal's movements. She can release the creature by turning a knob on the handle, thus opening the noose. Generally, this is used on dogs, though certainly it can be used on cougars, alligators or other creatures.

"Other creatures" might very well include people. There's no reason why a character couldn't loop the noose around a person's neck and keep him at bay with the length of the pole. Looping the device around a subject's neck requires a grapple roll, except the attacker must use Strength + Weaponry (minus target's Defense) instead of Brawl. Escaping the catch pole can be a little more difficult for the subject, as well. The target may try to escape on his next action by making the requisite Strength + Brawl roll (minus the attacker's Strength), but the target also suffers an additional –2 penalty (maximum –5) because of the durable wire cable around his neck. Alternately, the subject may try to break or damage the aluminum pole. Assume the catch pole to have Durability 2 and Structure 5 for purposes of taking damage.

If so desired, a character can use the catch pole as a simple blunt object, but it's light and picks up little momentum when swung, and has a Damage trait of 0(B).

Fakir's Horns: Fakirs, the mystical recluses and beggars of India and Islam, are often troublesome miracle-makers. Rarely content to remain in reclusion, fakirs often come to the streets of India to put on "shows" for passersby. These events sometimes

have the fakirs yelling out magical names and chants at people, sometimes screaming the mantras and epithets in their faces. Other fakirs dance across hot coals, attempt levitation, starve themselves publicly and charm various animals such as snakes. While not all fakirs are so intolerable (some are quiet Sufi ascetics), they tend to draw the ire of those around them and are illegal in a number of cities because of this.

Fakirs, knowing that they may be attacked, often bring a set of "fakir's horns" with them for protection. The device, essentially a round, metal buckler shield with two long antelope horns winding from either side of it, grants the wielder a modicum of offensive and defensive capability. A fakir grips the shield, or *madu*, in the middle and uses the antelope horns (generally tipped with metal or otherwise sharpened) to parry attacks aimed at disrupting the fakir's "magic." While predominantly used to ward off attacks, the wielder can also use the horns as thrusting implements.

Using the horns as a weapon is difficult, and is reflected in the –1 modifier toward the attack roll. However, brandishing the *madu* shield also grants the user a +1 bonus to Defense. If the wielder possesses the Weaponry Dodge (•) Merit, it grants him an *additional* +1 Defense.

Iron Fan: The iron fan (or *gunsen*) is a folding fan with metal ribs. Samurai were never without a fan tucked into their *obi* (sash); etiquette demanded it. Sometimes, however, the warriors were required to relinquish their swords on formal occasions, which left them defenseless. The iron fan allowed a samurai to retain a concealed weapon.

If the user has the Weaponry Dodge Merit, he may add +1 to his total Defense when dodging if he is using an iron fan to parry incoming close quarter attacks.

Japanese myth suggests that the very idea for the war fan came from the crow-spirits, the Tengu. They taught the fan's construction to those warriors who appeased them with gifts and tricks. The Tengu reportedly carried their own *gunsen*: fans made of oily crow wings, barbed at the ends.

Jittei: Jittei are iron clubs once used by the police forces of Japan. While these iron bars can be used as metal clubs, they also come fitted with "sword-catcher" hooks extending up from the weapon, just above the grip. Skilled users of the jittei can actually target a melee weapon used in an incoming attack and block it. Particularly talented (or lucky) wielders can even use the "sword-catcher" to *break* a blade.

General use of the jittei grants the user a +1 to Defense. However, the combatant can specifically target an opponent's weapon in an effort to break it. Such an attack is made at a –3 modifier (for a targeted attack penalty). However, the jittei takes no damage itself if it fails to do damage in excess of the targeted weapon's Durability. (See "Targeting Items," p. 138, the **World of Darkness Rulebook**.)

The sai is another version of the jittei, except the sai appears as a metal knife with no edge and two "sword-catchers" instead of one. A sai's Damage is 2(B).

Ring Blade: A ring blade is exactly as it sounds. Such a weapon consists of a metal ring with some manner of blade sticking out. The ring blade fits over one finger, usually the index or middle, and can be used to slash opponents. Some ring blades aren't bladed at all, and instead feature spikes or needles to deliver lethal damage.

Attacking with a ring blade requires a successful Strength + Brawl roll. The small size of the weapon confers a –1 modifier to the user. Ring blades can be crudely handcrafted with the right tools (steel grinder, soldering iron) with an extended Dexterity + Crafts roll. Five successes are needed, and each roll equals 15 minutes of time.

For the purposes of fighting in enclosed spaces (p. 159), ring blades are Size 0.

Strangle Wire: The term "strangle wire" isn't entirely appropriate, because this weapon (generally consisting of a thin metal wire connected by two handles or ball-grips) isn't used to strangle but to damage the critical parts of a victim's neck and throat. The wire bites deep into the neck and can damage the trachea or sever the carotid or jugular arteries. Some call it a "garrote," though that's not precisely accurate, either, as garrotes were Spanish execution tools that involved a spiked metal collar, placed around a victim's neck and then tightened until it crushed the vertebrae or esophagus. Whatever one wants to call a strangle wire, it's a particularly brutal tool used by assassins, serial killers and murderous cultists all around the world. Moreover, the strangle wire is an almost silent weapon, as the only sound tends to be some panicked thrashing followed by the soggy gurgling of the target's final breaths.

Attacking with a strangle wire first requires the wielder to succeed on a grappling roll. The following round, the attacker can apply the wire to the subject's neck with a successful Strength + Weaponry roll (–3 for a targeted attack, but the victim's Defense is not subtracted from the attacker's roll). However, if the attacker makes a successful surprise attack *from behind*, and the opponent fails her Wits + Composure roll to notice the ambush, the attacker can grapple directly with the Strength + Weaponry roll. The opponent's Defense is not applied.

The victim may attempt to break the hold every subsequent turn (per the grappling rules, pp. 157–159, the **World of Darkness Rulebook**). Every turn after the first, the victim takes a cumulative –1 penalty to the escape roll, as the blood flowing to her brain diminishes (maximum –5 penalty). Once the victim takes damage equal to her Stamina, she passes out. She can fight unconsciousness by succeeding on a reflexive Stamina roll. A single success allows her to stay conscious until the following turn, when she must succeed again on another Stamina roll.

This works only on living creatures. Vampires suffer the damage, but do not require oxygen to remain conscious. Werewolves or other living supernatural entities cannot preternaturally heal any of the damage caused by strangulation until they manage to once again take air into their lungs.

Sjambok: The sjambok is a cross between a whip and a baton. About three feet in length, the sjambok is generally made of stiff-yet-flexible leather, though other versions are made of whalebone, animal penises or plastic. Used almost like a riding crop, it's meant to sting exposed flesh and cause little damage but lots of pain. South African police continue to use the sjambok on criminals and rioters, despite the purported cruelty of the weapon. It is also a device favored in certain S&M circles. If the weapons strikes open flesh, the victim's next action is performed at a –1 penalty due to the overwhelming pain. This modifier is in addition to any damage modifiers that may already exist.

Stun Gun: The stun gun is a widely available, handheld self-protection tool. It consists of little more than a black grip with two metal contact probes sticking out of the top. Thrust the probes into an assailant, pull the trigger on the grip and approximately 300,000 volts of electricity go coruscating through the target's nervous system.

Stun guns do not cause actual damage. The voltage that courses through a subject plays havoc with their body, causing intense pain and severe muscle contraction. The longer one holds the stun gun to the target's body, the worse the "stun" effect becomes.

Attacks with a stun gun require a Dexterity + Weaponry roll (with the subject's Defense subtracted, though armor is ineffective). Even a single success allows for contact and sends electricity into the subject's body. Successes gained on the roll count as penalties against the target's next roll. If these successes cumulatively exceed the target's Size, even over a number of consecutive turns, the victim enters unconsciousness for a number of turns equal to the successes rolled.

The wielder can continue to attack with the stun gun while keeping the contact probes connected to the target's body. Doing so requires a subsequent Dexterity + Weaponry roll, but these rolls can ignore the target's Defense score. Note, however, that the target can attempt to pull away from the stun gun with a Strength + Brawl roll. One success allows him to escape the contact probes. If a target is knocked unconscious, the stun gun ceases to have any mechanical effect. (The stun gun continues to cause pain and contraction, but does not prolong the duration of the victim's unconsciousness.) Again, be aware that the stun gun causes no actual damage to the body, though a Storyteller may want to consider falling damage if the stun gun causes the victim to drop to the ground.

A baton version of this weapon exists. The baton can be used as a club to cause damage (+1 modifier to attack, does bashing damage only) *or* it can be used to deliver a charge from its tip. The baton cannot be used to do both.

Stun guns and stun batons are legal in most, but not all, states.

Whip: Most whips are about six feet long (some are closer to 10) and crafted from braided or corded leather. In a skilled hand, a whip can be a very precise weapon. The leather strikes out, snapping the air and leaving a welt upon the target. Occasionally the leather does draw blood, but such damage is peripheral.

To handle a whip requires a certain deftness. Therefore, the weapon has no Strength requirement, and attacking with the whip demands a Dexterity + Weaponry roll as opposed to the standard Strength + Weaponry.

A character wielding a whip can also attempt to strike at an opponent's weapon. Targeting the weapon inflicts a –3 modifier to the attack roll, but if even one success is gained, the opponent must make a Strength + Stamina (minus the attacker's Dexterity) to retain his grip on the weapon. No damage is done to the opponent, however, as the whip simply snaps the weapon out of his hand.

Some cruel (or perhaps pragmatic) users tie objects to the end of the whip to promote further injury. Such objects are usually metal, and might include nails, needles, coins or metal studs. If a whip is fitted with such accoutrements, its Damage becomes 0(L).

Wooden Stake: The classic vampire-hunting weapon. In order to stake a vampire, the stake wielder must make a targeted attack against the vampire's heart (–3 dice to the attack roll) and score an exceptional success. Otherwise, the stake does damage, but doesn't penetrate far enough to impale the heart fully.

Story Seed: With the Sword He Must Be Slain

Vampires may not be the only creatures in the World of Darkness with a certain degree of resistance to modern weapons. If a group of characters grows too overconfident in their firepower, how will they face an opponent who shrugs off bullets like rain? Some

Miscellaneous

Type	Damage	Size	Durability	Cost	Notes
Bagh-Nakh	1(L)	1/P	3	•	Strength + Brawl*
Brass Knuckles	1(B)	1/P	3	•	Strength + Brawl*
Catch Pole†	0(B)	3/N	2	•	Catches opponents*
Fakir's Horns	–1(L)	3/N	3	•	+1 to Defense (+2 with Weaponry Dodge Merit)
Iron Fan	0(B)	1/S	3	••	+1 Defense if used with Weaponry Dodge Merit*
Jittei	3(B)	2/J	3	•	+1 Defense*
Ring Blade	–1(L)	1/P	3	•	*
Strangle Wire	2(L)	1/P	2	n/a	Grappling aid*
Sjambok	1(B)	2/J	2	•	Painful*
Stun Gun	n/a	1/P	3	•	*
Whip	1(B)	2/J	1	•	*

**See text for further details and special rules. †This weapon requires two hands. If used one-handed, the Strength requirement increases by 1.*

creatures may be wholly immune to most sources of injury, while others might only be vulnerable to a specific weapon made centuries ago to defeat them. Manifested spirits tied to conflict or warfare are particularly likely to be able to resist certain forms of injury that are incongruous with their natures — for example, requiring a would-be attacker to engage in "honorable" combat, which must be hand-to-hand or blade-to-blade.

Improvised Weaponry

If characters get into an unexpected fracas, and they don't have weapons handy, what weapons will they use? The answer, whatever is closest. The environment is an open weapons case, and it doesn't even require a whole lot of creativity. When two desperate souls are pummeling each other in a kitchen, it won't be long before one of them reaches for that frying pan full of hot grease. Or a kitchen knife. Or even the mop leaning up against the counter. The point is, weapons can be found anywhere for those desperate enough to need them.

What happens when a hunted mortal hits his vampire predator with an Art Deco gazelle made of heavy brass? Or when the housewife tries to beat a red-eyed rabid dog to death with the flat end of a garden shovel? What about when some poor bastard has no other choice but to defend himself with a toaster oven, a half-chewed femur or a running chainsaw? The pen can be mightier than the sword, after all — especially when jammed into somebody's carotid artery.

Bar-Stompings, Shit-Kickings

Not all fights end up as murderous free-for-alls in which one's life is on the line. Bar brawls, domestic fights and back-room pugilism all come with the quiet understanding that the fighters aren't trying to kill each other, and if anybody's going to the hospital, it's for a broken finger or stitches, not for a sucking chest wound.

The unspoken assumption is that a fighter doesn't go for the rough and lethal stuff unless the scuffle has reached the point of no return. Usually, grabbing for such extraneous weapons takes the fight up another notch, and the fight becomes potentially fatal. Occasionally, a few items (bar stools, bottles full of beer, trash can lids or other bashing damage weapons) make their way into the fracas without elevating its seriousness, but bringing anything bigger into the fray means somebody might go to the hospital for an extended stay — or to the morgue for a permanent one.

Rules to Remember

Improvised weapons are discussed on p. 136 of the **World of Darkness Rulebook**. When using found or improvised weaponry, a few permutations, such as the following, are worth remembering:

Unless otherwise noted, all improvised weapons incur a –1 penalty to the wielder's attack roll. For convenience, this penalty has already been incorporated into the Traits given on the weaponry chart and in the text below.

Like most melee weapons, any improvised weapon has a Strength requirement equal to its Size. If the user does not meet the minimum Strength, she takes a –1 (or more; see p. 21) penalty to attacks using that item.

For weapons not listed below, an item's Damage rating is usually equal to its Durability or Size (whichever is lower), with an additional –1 for the improvised weapon penalty.

The Storyteller may allow an individual the chance to gauge which items around him would make the best weapons. The player should roll Wits + Weaponry to determine which object nearby is the most suitable choice. An exceptional success on this roll may allow the character to ignore the normal –1 penalty associated with using improvised weaponry. Assessing nearby objects with this roll, however, takes a full turn.

Tools, Power and Otherwise

Perhaps some of the strangest and most complicated "weapons" one can use are tools. It might be illegal to carry around a halberd or a hunting rifle, but what about a handsaw or a pipe wrench? Yes, a chainsaw is painfully obvious, but if the wielder is dressed in landscaper gear or is carrying a short ladder, he might not attract undue attention — at least not until he tries to cut his neighbor apart. Although obvious, a chainsaw or any other tool is more easily explained away than a battle-ax.

Of course, people don't usually go into Home Depot looking for weapons. Most times, a tool ends up as a default possibility for some unfortunate, unarmed victim. A man beset by unknowable things might lock himself in the shed out back of his house, scrabbling to get hold of something, *anything*, with which to ward them off. Whatever he grabs, it's important to know just how this newfound weapon will act in combat.

An optional rule invoked at the Storyteller's discretion is that a player may ignore the improvised weapon penalty (for tools only) provided her character has a requisite Crafts ••• score. This ability in Crafts may counterbalance and thus nullify the improvised penalty for tools used as weapons, as the character is arguably comfortable using them for whatever purpose, however grim. For most tools, this means +1 to the Damage rating listed below.

Traits by Comparison

We can't describe every possible object or tool in this chapter. If the item in question isn't listed, feel free to compare it to the other weapons in this book. A fire ax is listed early on, but what about a fire ax handle? It would qualify as a wooden club with the same permutations. A French knife and a bread knife have minimal differences, and, therefore, both count as a knife that does 1(L), is Size 1 and features a Cost •. A pipe wrench would be comparable to a mace. A broom, rake or mop would most easily count as a quarterstaff.

Just remember that wielding such a item as an impromptu weapon causes the wielder to suffer a –1 penalty to his attack rolls, because such a creation is not meant to hurt people. Tools used as improvised weapons are not weighted appropriately, might not have useful grips and certainly aren't designed for any kind of combat precision.

Belt Sander: A portable belt sander is good for removing the rough edges from wood, some metals, even hard plastic. Of course, particularly inventive or desperate users might instead decide to use a belt sander to burn skin and muscle away from bone. Brandishing a belt sander as a weapon is not without complications, however. It's likely that the sander must be plugged into an outlet to operate — without power, the belt sander becomes nothing more than a rough metal bludgeon whose damage is bashing, not lethal. Hence, the weapon's use is limited by the length of the power cord, which will be around 10 feet. Still, if one manages to connect with the device and can press it against bare flesh, the belt sander will scour and burn that flesh with the whirring ribbon of sandpaper. Therefore, attacks by a belt sander are subject to the 9 again rule.

Characters reduced to zero Health by a belt sander will suffer severe and disfiguring scars. At the Storyteller's discretion, the character will experience a permanent –1 penalty to all Presence rolls (excluding Intimidation rolls). Dramatic plastic surgery may offset this penalty.

Blowtorch: Any kind of hand torch (propane, acetylene, butane) can be a weapon. A torch is fire, after all, and a blue flame spitting from a metal tip is going to burn whomever the flame touches. Note that any blowtorch must be connected to the appropriate gas source. Most tanks are portable, though some sit beneath cabinets or attached to walls and cannot be moved.

The flame emitted from a blowtorch is of Torch size (Damage 1) and burns with the intensity of a Bunsen burner (+2 Damage bonus). Thus, an attack with

a blowtorch will never inflict more than three points of damage. On an exceptional success, combustible items on the victim (hair or clothing, for instance) will catch fire, and, the following turn, hell begin taking one point of lethal damage per turn until extinguished. (See p. 180, the **World of Darkness Rulebook**.)

Chainsaw: Loud, awkward, and heavy, chainsaws are not meant to be melee weapons. That said, the whirring metal teeth of a chainsaw will chew through a body as if it were a rotten stump. Regardless of the tool's size, a chainsaw does quite a number on flesh and bone. If an attack with a chainsaw is successful, the bodily destruction it causes is unparalleled. Chainsaws benefit from the 8 again rule, meaning *all* successes are re-rolled. However, dramatic failures made while wielding a chainsaw are likely to cause horrendous damage to the user. (Roll 3 dice, applying the 8 again rule; this is the damage the user takes as a result.)

Using a chainsaw in combat adds +1 to the wielder's Defense score. A character attempting to make close-combat attacks against the chainsaw's wielder have to first get past the spinning teeth.

Note that better chainsaws exist than the average one used to chop down errant branches. High-end pneumatic chainsaws (with diamond teeth) can cut through concrete. These chainsaws are Damage –1(L), Size 4, Cost ••••.

Claw Hammer: Not much to be said about a trusty hammer. The handle likely consists of hardwood or fiberglass, and the hammer's head is likely composed of drop-forged steel. The claw hammer is a friend to every carpenter (and many serial killers). The twist on the traditional claw hammer is that it can cause different types of damage depending on how it's wielded. The blunt end of the head causes bashing damage, whereas the claw will deliver lethal damage, as noted above.

Fishing Gaff: A fishing gaff is a large barbed hook on the end of a telescoping pole. Fisherman use the hook to haul fish of varying sizes up onto shore, the dock or into a boat. Fighting with a gaff is a whole other matter.

The hook doesn't leave a wound and then withdraw, like a sword or knife. If the hook does any damage at all, the barbed end catches *through* an opponent's flesh and hooks her as one might hook a sailfish. During the time the victim is "on the hook," her Defense against any incoming attacks is halved (round down). Extracting herself from the hook requires a Strength + Brawl roll, and if successful, she takes one additional point of lethal damage as a result of the barb coming free of her body.

Most gaffs are of relatively cheap construction and have a Durability of 1. Unextended, a gaff is about four feet in length (Size 3), but is light enough to only require a Strength 2 to wield properly. A gaff can be extended to about 11 feet in length (or Size 6), and using it at this length requires a Strength of 3 to wield. Some gaffs are for deep-sea fishing and are made of heavy stainless steel. Such items cost ••, and have Damage 0(L), Durability 3 and require +1 Strength to use.

Flare: Road flares are readily available safety tools, generally placed on the ground or used as a torches, which can be turned into weapons just by wielding them at an opponent.

A flare will illuminate a 5x5 yard area and functions similar to a flashlight. (See p. 140, the **World of Darkness Rulebook**.) The flame emitted from a flare is of Torch size (Damage 1) and burns with the intensity of a chemical fire (+3 Damage modifier). No matter how many successes the attacker rolls, an attack with a flare will never inflict more than four points of damage. On an exceptional success, combustible items on the victim will catch fire, and, the following turn, he'll begin taking one point of lethal damage per turn until extinguished. (See p. 180, the **World of Darkness Rulebook**.)

Nail Gun: A nail gun shoots nails into hard surfaces without the use of a hammer. Most nail guns are electric. Nails are fed into the device from a glued

Tools

Type	Damage	Size	Durability	Cost	Notes
Belt Sander†	–2(L)	2/N	3	••	*
Blowtorch	–1(L) fire	2/S	2	•••	Maximum damage 3*
Chainsaw†	–2(L) 8 again	3/N	3	•	+1 Defense*
Claw Hammer	1(B)/0(L)	1/S	3	•	Damage varies by side used*
Fishing Gaff	–1(L)	3/N	2	•	*
Flare	–2(L) fire	1/S	1	•	Maximum damage 4*
Nail Gun	0(L)	2/J	3	•	Strength + Firearms, 1 extra success*
Post-Hole Digger†	1(L)	4/N	2	•	*
Power Drill	0(L)	2/J	3	•	*
Screwdriver	0(L)	1/S	3	•	Armor Piercing 1*
Scythe†	2(L)	4/N	2	•	+1 Defense*
Shovel	1(B)	3/N	2	•	Full lethal damage on exceptional success*
Sledgehammer†	2(B) 9 again	3/N	2	•	

**See text for further details and special rules. †This weapon requires two hands. If used one-handed, the Strength requirement increases by 1.*

strip, and do not eject from the tool until the end is pressed firmly against a surface. Pull the trigger, and a nail buries fast and deep into the material.

That material could be wood, aluminum, soft tissue or bone. A nail punctures any surface with alarming speed, and will even punch through the thickest part of the human skull.

Technically, a nail gun must be pressed against a target before fired. Doing so demands success on a Strength + Firearms roll. An opponent's Defense is applied normally. A nail does one automatic point of lethal damage in *addition* to any damage caused by successes on the attack roll.

Should an opponent's appendage, such as a hand or foot, be nailed to something, removing it without tools requires a Strength + Stamina roll with a –3 modifier. If successful, one point of lethal damage is taken as the limb rips away from the metal nail. If done surgically or with tools (such as the claw end of a hammer), a Strength + Crafts roll is required with the –3 penalty, but no additional damage is conferred upon success.

A nail gun can be modified so that the contact guard is always depressed, meaning that the nails can be fired without pressing the nail gun up against the target. In this way, the tool is fired like a gun. Modifying the nail gun requires a Wits + Crafts roll. The device fires nails with more force than some handguns fire bullets, over 1,400 feet per second. In this case, the nail gun should be considered to have stats equal to a Generic .22 Revolver (see p. 62).

Post-Hole Digger: Whether planting crops or planting fence-posts, the post-hole digger does the trick, extracting dirt from the ground with its two scoop blades. The post-hole digger works almost like a pair of scissors: thrust down into the earth, remove soil and make a hole. Those seeking to use the post-hole digger as a weapon, however, are in for a harder time. Essentially, the post-hole digger functions as an ungainly spear. Thrust forward, the blades can cause deep cuts and other abrasions. And, like a spear, the "weapon" puts about six feet of distance between the wielder and his target, and provides the same +1 Defense bonus. However, if the wielder manages an exceptional success with the digger, the blades thrust far inside the victim, and the user has little choice but to scoop out part of the target, much as one would do with garden soil. Removal of this weapon (and any of the insides of the target) requires another attack roll made at +2 dice. The target's Defense can be ignored in this roll. This damage is lethal.

Power Drill: The spinning bit of a power drill is meant to go through wood, ceramic and even steel. Flesh is certainly softer and more pliable, and as such a drill bit will pierce it with ease. A little extra push, and the power drill will even bore through bone.

Using a power drill to cause damage in combat is tricky. The pistol-grip (or T-grip) makes it awkward to use as a melee weapon, and therefore, it must be thrust instead of slashed. Still, if an attack is successful, it not only does lethal damage but is also Armor Piercing 1. Worse, if three or more successes are made on the attack roll, the drill bit can remain in the skin and muscle, still whirring against flesh. The following turn, the drill does an automatic one lethal point of damage against the victim regardless of Defense or Armor. This damage is done even if the victim pulls away from the drill with a successful Dexterity + Brawl roll. If this roll to pull away is not successful, the drill continues to do 1 lethal damage per turn until the bit is somehow removed from the victim's body, as long as the wielder maintains her grip on the drill.

Screwdriver: A screwdriver is a simple tool, and an equally simple weapon. Phillips or flathead doesn't matter, a screwdriver makes a reasonable stabbing implement. It pierces armor easily enough, as well. Screwdrivers have Armor Piercing 1.

Scythe: When Alaric stood outside of Rome with the Visigoth army, Roman envoys told him it would be a fruitless attack. Rome's nigh-infinite soldiers would easily overpower the barbarians, the envoys threatened. Alaric replied, "The thicker the grass, the more easily scythed." The barbarians then sacked the city.

The Visigoth king wasn't speaking of scythes, specifically, but the comment applies to the device regardless. A scythe features a tall, crooked wooden handle (close to six feet long), at the top of which is a thin blade measuring around 30 inches in length. Some people employ the scythe to cut grass, others might use it to cut corn or other crops. They do so with wide sweeping motions — the blade swoops down and severs the green stalks in twain.

Of course, the scythe is also the mythical tool of Death himself. Father Death (that wretched figure in the black cloak, holding the ever-dwindling hourglass) reaps the souls of the dead with his black scythe blade. The scythe, for this reason, is certainly a weapon of legendary proportions. As with polearms, a character using a scythe gains a +1 bonus to Defense.

Shovel: A shovel makes a good, handy weapon on the fly. A shovel is usually a little better weighted than most tools, and despite its size, the item is actually pretty light and easy to wield in comparison. The shovel is an exception to the rule regarding Size and Strength requirements. While the tool's Size is 3, the Strength score required to brandish a shovel in combat is only 2.

The shovel has another advantage. Its curved metal blade is rarely sharp enough to do anything more than bashing damage. However, if the assailant makes an exceptional success on his attack roll, the shovel's damage ceases to be bashing and becomes lethal. That extra force means the metal doesn't just thud against someone's body, but instead slices right into it.

Sledgehammer: The average 8 to 10 pound sledgehammer is a cumbersome tool, generally meant for pounding stakes or pegs into the ground. The sledgehammer is even more so as a weapon. The sledgehammer's weight is almost entirely located at the one end, making this weapon poorly balanced for personal combat. Still, if one manages success with the sledgehammer, its weight can deliver crushing blows, whether thrust forward or downward. Bones crack, splinter and disintegrate beneath a strong-enough blow from one of these monster-sized hammers. Therefore, sledgehammers benefit from the 9 again rule.

Found and Rigged Weapons

As mentioned, close combat is generally a short and brutal affair with assailants grabbing for whatever impromptu weapons are nearest. Such objects are unlikely to be *actual* weapons. Honestly, they're unlikely to even be normal tools such as the ones mentioned above. So, how do you figure out the combat values for such seemingly mundane items?

As discussed, the first thing to do is to determine whether or not the stats can be approximated in comparison to an already existent weapon. A frying pan is metal, but probably not heavy enough to serve as a mace. It's likelier that a frying pan's stats are closer to a wooden club instead. On the other hand, an iron skillet is sure to be heavier and denser than a normal frying pan, and probably does have the statistics of a metal mace. Most of this is a case of give-and-take, of making on-the-fly decisions about how closely a found object fits with the statistics of pre-existing weapon design. The Storyteller is the final arbiter of impromptu stats.

Some spur-of-the-moment weaponry doesn't really match any of the current objects listed, however. Many of these improvised objects are listed below, and feature properties that make them unique. Feel free to pepper the battlefield (whether it's a kitchen, an abandoned barn or a local watering hole) with these articles to help complicate close combat.

Board With a Nail in It: The board with a nail in it is the archetypal improvised weapon. Boards with nails are widely available on construction sites and can easily be pried from the rotting walls of a ruined building or quickly improvised using a board, a long nail and something to drive the latter through the former. (See below for more information on rigging weapons.) Half the damage a character using a board with a nail in it inflicts is lethal (round down, minimum 1). Characters can choose to attack with the blunt side of a board with a nail in it, in which case the weapon simply does bashing damage.

Bottle: Every bar fight has someone getting hit by a bottle. They're everywhere in such a situation, and they're free. Of course, they're also slippery, and run the risk of breaking in a character's hand and slicing

up her palm, but in an insane or desperate situation, the closest object makes the fastest weapon.

The advantage of a bottle is, if at any point the bottle does two or more points of bashing damage in a single attack, the bottle breaks. A broken bottle is far deadlier, as it is a jagged ring of glass spikes as opposed to a fragile bludgeoning device. A broken bottle has the same Damage trait, but does lethal instead of bashing damage. A similar rule applies, however. If the attacker does more than two points of damage in an attack with the jagged bottle, the glass breaks *again* and the bottle becomes useless — unless someone wants to pick up the glass shards and fight with those, in which case see "Shard of Glass," below.

The Traits listed above are for a small bottle. Larger, more solid bottles, like those used to hold wine, are Damage 1(B/L) and Size 2/J, and break if they do more than *three* points of damage in a turn.

A dramatic failure at any point using a bottle as a weapon means it breaks in the hand and the wielder takes a single point of lethal damage as it cuts his palm.

Scalding and Burning

Burning hot objects add a whole other realm of pain when employing impromptu weapons. What happens when a character grabs for a pot of boiling water, a sizzling skillet or a curling iron?

First, a character making an attack with such an object does so with a –1 penalty that is taken in addition to the normal penalty associated with improvised weapons. Second, the item does normal bashing damage (unless the weapon is edged, wherein it does lethal) per the successes on the attack resolution roll. However, the item also causes first-degree burns, meaning the subject also takes a single point of lethal damage on top of any bashing damage suffered. If an exceptional success is made, two lethal points of burn damage are taken. Note that these items aren't actually on fire, and don't run the risk of igniting combustible items.

Homemade Sap: Making a homemade sap involves taking some kind of sack (like a sock, a pouch or a leather bag) and filling it with something heavy (marbles, coins, BBs, doorknobs). Usually, all of the individual components can be found with quick scrutiny, and putting a homemade sap together requires minimal effort (and no roll).

The homemade sap acts just like a manufactured sap, and can cause the Stun effect on targets. Similar to genuine saps, if the subject takes enough damage in a single attack equal to or exceeding her *Stamina*, she loses her next action.

At the Storyteller's discretion, a check might be made to see if the sap breaks, as most homemade saps don't last very long. A sock filled with stones will break after a few attacks, for example. A good rule of thumb is that once the sap has caused 3 levels of damage, it'll come apart. Stitching tears, fabric rips and the item becomes useless.

Power Cord: Most appliances require power from a wall socket, and everything from printers to vegetable steamers use an everyday power cable. These cords can be used to grapple and strangle a victim. A character looking to choke a target into unconsciousness or death can wind the cable around the subject's throat and tighten.

Attempting to strangle someone with a power cord first requires the combatant to succeed on a grappling roll. Once a grapple is successful, the attacker can apply the wire to the subject's neck with a successful Strength + Weaponry roll (–3 for a targeted attack, but the victim's Defense is not subtracted from the attacker's roll). The victim may attempt to break the hold every subsequent turn (per the grappling rules, pp. 157–159, the **World of Darkness Rulebook**). Every turn after the first, the victim takes a cumulative –1 penalty to the escape roll, as the blood flowing to her brain diminishes (maximum –5 penalty). Once the victim takes damage equal to her Size, she passes out. She can fight unconsciousness by succeeding on a reflexive Stamina roll. One success allows her to stay conscious until the following turn, when she must succeed again on another Stamina roll.

This works only on living creatures. Vampires suffer the damage, but have no concerns about strangulation. Werewolves or other living supernatural entities cannot heal any of the damage caused by strangulation until they manage to take more air into their lungs.

Note that a power cord isn't the only household object that can do this. Any kind of cord or rope that can be gripped with two hands can be used to choke a subject, including extension cords, speaker wire, bungee cables, even the cable connecting an Xbox controller to the console.

A power or extension cord can be used as a makeshift whip. To use such an item, refer to the Whip stats (p. 36) and apply the –1 improvised weapon penalty.

Razor Blade: These small blades are honed to incredible sharpness, usually for shaving purposes, but sometimes they see other uses. Razor blades are clumsy in open combat, and a failed attack roll results in the wielder dropping the weapon. They're more useful against opponents who have already been restrained. In a grapple, a razor blade has Damage 0(L). (See p. 157, the **World of Darkness Rulebook**.) For the purposes of grappling in enclosed space (see p. 159), razor blades are Size 0.

Straight razors and utility knives have the same Traits as razor blades, being essentially razor blades set into handles, but are not automatically dropped on a failed attack roll. Instead, straight razors and utility knives break if they ever inflict three or more points of damage in a single attack (outside of a grapple).

Rock: A fist-sized rock is a time-honored bludgeoning tool. A character who grabs any rock lying around (whether a found stone, hunk of brick or piece of broken sidewalk) can use it to beat an opponent, but doing so is difficult. Rocks are not exactly made for one's hand, and because of that, even a normal failure on an attack roll causes the attacker to drop the rock.

In areas where rocks are commonplace, players may make an extended Wits + Weaponry (or Survival) roll to find a well-shaped rock that doesn't suffer from the improvised weapon penalty (and that characters won't drop on a failed attack roll). Each roll represents a turn of searching, and five successes are required.

Characters can also throw rocks. Information on thrown objects can be found on p. 67, the **World of Darkness Rulebook**. As a thrown weapon, a rock has a Damage trait equal to its Size and is not aerodynamic.

Rocks have the Knockout special feature. (See p. 168, the **World of Darkness Rulebook**.)

Shard of Glass: Things break when people fight. Windows shatter, coffee tables collapse and doors are wrenched from their hinges. Sometimes, the result of this chaos is glass littering the floor, which combatants may use to cut one another. A piece of glass is far from the most practical weapon, but if it's the only thing that might save a character's life, so be it.

Using glass in a fight requires that the shard be approximately knife-sized (at least six or seven inches in length). Like a knife, a glass shard does lethal damage to a target. Unlike a knife, a glass shard also does lethal damage to the wielder. Every time the shard is used as a weapon, the user suffers one automatic point of lethal damage, regardless of the success of the attack roll. Also, if the glass ever does two or more damage in a single attack, the shard breaks and becomes useless.

Shiv: A shiv is a makeshift, improvised knife common in prisons (though one doesn't need to be imprisoned to craft a shiv). Shivs take various forms: sharpened spoons, razors taped to toothbrushes, tin cups or scraps of metal with duct tape or bars of soap as the handle. Prisoners sharpen the metal against concrete floors, or, if the inmates are lucky, they have access to the prison machine shop. Two styles of shiv are common: "slashing" style and "ice pick" style. Slashing shivs are essentially flat, sharpened pieces of metal that inmates use to cut throats, slice wrists

Found and Rigged Weapons

Type	Damage	Size	Durability	Cost	Notes
Board With a Nail in It	1(B and L)	2/L	1	n/a	Half damage is lethal (round down, minimum 1)*
Bottle	0(B/L)	1/P	1	n/a	Fragile 2*
Homemade Sap	0(B)	variable	1	n/a	Stun (Stamina), fragile 2*
Power Cord	1(B)	1/P	1	n/a	*
Razor Blade	–2(L)	1/P	2	n/a	Damage 0(L) in a grapple, drop on a failure*
Rock	0(B)	1/P	2	n/a	Drop on a failure*
Shard of Glass	–1(L)	1/J	1	n/a	Inflicts 1 lethal on user, fragile 2*
Shiv	0(L)	1/P	1	n/a	
Straightened Wire Hanger	–1(B)	2/J	1	n/a	1 lethal damage on exceptional success, painful*

**See text for further details and special rules. †This weapon requires two hands. If used one-handed, the Strength requirement increases by 1.*

or slash faces. Ice pick shivs are stabbing weapons — driven into stomachs, between ribs or through necks. Mechanically, shivs have identical Traits.

Shivs are also known as shanks, splinters, tools, pigstickers, silencers, picks, thorns. Making a shiv can be done with a "Rigging Weapons" roll (see below). In prison, where supplies are limited, five successes are required.

Straightened Wire Hanger: Plastic hangers don't make very good weapons. Wire hangers don't make very good weapons, either, but if a wire hanger is the only thing handy, at least it won't be completely useless. Wire hangers can be whipped against an opponent's skin; the metal certainly stings. If a straightened wire hanger strikes exposed flesh, the victim suffers a –1 penalty to his next action due to the pain. On an exceptional success, one of the levels of damage taken is lethal, as the wire bites deep.

Location, Location, Location

When considering the availability of found weapons, picture where the scene is set. Simply lumping the location into a certain category can provide you with a menu of potential *ad hoc* weaponry.

In a normal bathroom, combatants might be able to hit each other with hand mirrors, curling irons, shower curtain rods, toilet lids — or even jam toothbrushes in each other's eyes. At a campsite, an assailant might attack his victim with tent pegs, grill accessories, a rusty machete or any number of small pots and pans. If a human, beset upon by a pack of hellhounds, hides in a janitor's closet, what does she find there? A broom? An abrasive spray cleaner that might function like chemical mace? An extension cord she can use to strangle one of the things?

Taking a moment to consider the setting of the fight will go a long way toward helping you determine just what horrible tools of death and dismemberment are within arm's reach.

Rigging Weapons

Dice Pool: Wits + Crafts + equipment

Action: Extended (4–10 successes; one roll equals 15 minutes of work)

Sometimes, a character has enough time to jury-rig a weapon of his own, cobbling together various parts to make a weapon slightly more powerful than what's already lying around. Perhaps he wants to wind electrical tape around the bottom of a lawnmower blade and craft a makeshift machete, or maybe he wants to duct-tape a diving knife to the end of a sawed-off broomstick to make a spear. Or it could just be time for the old standby, a board with a nail in it.

Rigging a new or modified weapon is an extended action, requiring a pre-established number of successes depending on the complexity of the weapon. Simple weapons (a shard of glass tied to a trowel handle to make a knife or a rock taped into the bell of a plunger to make a club) might require only four successes. More complicated items (rigging anything electric or with more than one moving part) might require upward of 10 successes. A basic rule of thumb is that the successes needed are equal to twice the damage rating of the weapon (*before* the improvised weapon penalty is figured in). Blunt objects confer bashing damage, edged weapons cause lethal damage.

Many makeshift weapons require specific tools to craft. If the character is missing some of these tools (or must deal with sub-par facilities), a –1 penalty applies to the roll. If the character has none of the appropriate tools or facilities, the Storyteller may declare the task to be impossible.

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: Your character not only fails to make the weapon desired but also breaks one of her tools. Further crafting rolls are made at a –1 penalty.

Failure: Your character fails to rig the weapon.

Success: Your character finishes the weapon.

Exceptional Success: Your character not only finishes the weapon but can also ignore the –1 improvised weapon penalty.

Suggested Equipment: High-grade tools (+1), high-quality materials (+1), lathe (+2), reference instructions (+2)

Possible Penalties: Poor-quality or broken tools (–1), poor-quality materials (–1), undue stress (–1)

Makeshift Stakes

Intrepid vampire-hunters make their stakes beforehand. Stakes in this manner are weighted carefully and sharpened to as fine a point as the wood allows. However, such preparation is not always possible. Perhaps the vampire-hunter is caught unawares, or maybe the victim isn't a vampire-hunter at all. Whatever the case, sometimes, one has to make a stake on the spot.

Creating a stake involves little actual crafting, and instead requires simply breaking off a piece of wood from an existing object. A character might snap a table leg, a chair back or even a broomstick in half and use the sharp part as the stake. She might kick at it or try to break it in her hands. To do this, roll Strength + Stamina. Assume that the item's Durability is 1 and has a Structure of 5. She must eliminate three of the item's Structure points to break an effective stake. This requires a full turn (or more, if she was not successful the first try). The resultant makeshift stake is Damage 0(L) and Size 1; targeting the heart requires an exceptional success.

"What'd you need, son?"

I thought about the man following me. He had a tattoo of a moth on his left hand; it matched the one on my right. I knew he wasn't going to stop. He hadn't stopped yet, he just kept on coming. I'd tried everything to get the man to stop. I tried paying him, baiting him, lying to him. In Tulsa, I hit him in the head with a tire iron and ran.

Wind chimes — really nothing more than a handful of hollowed-out bones — rattled in the dry breeze outside. Crows called to one another out across hardpan.

He's coming for you. He won't stop.

"I need something with stopping power," I said.

"Home defense?" the dude behind the counter asked. An old Pepsi bottle cap danced on his knuckles. He stared at me from behind squinted eyes.

"Something like that."

He dropped the bottle cap and pulled out something mean-looking, shiny as a dime with a barrel big enough to blow a man's heart out of his body.

"Mossberg 12-gauge," the old dude said. "Six-shot capacity, fiberglass stock to keep it light. Eighteen-inch barrel with bead-sights. I can sell you a pistol grip with it, some people like that."

"It'll do the trick?"

He snorted. "Buddy of mine lives in Florida. He throws chum in the water to bring out the tiger sharks off Venice Beach. He uses his to blow holes in their heads so he can sell the meat and teeth. I guess that's why they call it the Mariner."

"I'll take it."

"I'll throw in a box of double-ought buck shot shells," he said.

I nodded. The man would find me soon.

Chapter Two: Firearms and Ranged Weaponry

"We deal in lead, friend."

– Vin, *The Magnificent Seven*

Since the later days of the Renaissance, firearms have been humanity's dominant personal weapons. The intervening centuries have seen vast improvements in lethality, range, accuracy and reliability, but the basic principle of the gun remains the same. The rapid expansion of hot gas released by a small confined explosion propels a roughly aerodynamic projectile down a metal tube, which serves to impart an initial direction to the projectile's flight. When this projectile and a human body attempt to occupy the same space, the human body usually loses. Everything else is a matter of details.

The details, however, are where the Devil is said to reside. Kyujutsu, traditional Japanese archery, holds that every shot has four elements, all of which must exist in a state of harmony for the shot to strike true: the bow, the arrow, the archer and the target. The **World of Darkness Rulebook** addresses the human half of this equation, while this chapter is devoted to the details of the material half: the weapon and the projectile. In addition to firearms, this chapter provides Traits for other personal-scale ranged weapons and examines the skills and practical considerations of using guns.

The Way of the Gun

Guns are complex pieces of machinery — if they weren't, people wouldn't pay hundreds of dollars for a few pounds of metal. However, guns have been around for several hundred years, and thus are a mature technology. They're reliable (if maintained properly) and don't require a lot of operator knowledge to be used as intended. The average shooter doesn't need to be able to diagram the inner workings of every firearm in existence, but it does help to understand a bit about how the things function. If nothing else, maintenance is a lot easier if the user knows what general parts he's likely to find the first time he breaks down his weapon. Likewise, the average player or Storyteller doesn't need to be able to recite ballistics tables from memory, but a basic understanding of the subject matter never hurts when crafting a story.

How Guns Work

To fire a gun, the wielder pulls the *trigger*, the protruding part of an internal mechanism. The trigger *breaks* and releases a small catch, or *sear*, which is holding back a metal *firing pin*. The firing pin, in turn, has been keeping a small spring compressed. When the firing pin is freed of the sear's restraint, the spring drives the pin forward into the back end of a *cartridge*, which has been sitting in the gun's *chamber*. The explosive portions of the cartridge then detonate.

The force of an explosion tends to move in the direction of least resistance. When a cartridge's propellant explodes, the expanding gases from this reaction are surrounded by the relatively immobile metal of the cartridge casing and the chamber in every direction except one. That direction is down the *barrel* of the gun, at the near end of which the chamber is located. However, in order for the explosion's force to move outward, a small obstacle needs to be shoved out of the way. That obstacle is the bullet, which the explosion forces down the barrel at speeds of hundreds or thousands of feet per second. Giving the bullet direction before it exits the gun is the realm of marksmanship.

Marksmanship

Waving a gun in the general direction of a target and wildly spraying lead isn't usually effective. Consistent accuracy requires the shooter to have a stable stance, good alignment of his weapon's sights and his eyes, and control of his breathing and trigger finger.

Of course, in the middle of a gunfight, speed is more precious than aim. That's when training takes over and gives a definite advantage to the practiced shooter who's refined all these actions to the reflex level and can shoot accurately without putting conscious thought into the process. Firearm experts universally agree that shot placement is more important than caliber, magazine capacity, ballistic performance, safety configuration or any other engineering factor. The best gun in the world means nothing if a shooter can't hit his target.

Handgun Marksmanship

Firearm instructors teach three basic stances for handgun shooting: two for combat and one for marksmanship. All of the following examples assume that the shooter is right-handed; reverse "right" and "left" for southpaws.

The *Weaver stance* places the shooter's torso at about a 45-degree angle to the target, with her right shoulder away from the target and her right arm coming across her body, elbow almost straight. She holds the gun in her right hand, with her left hand wrapped around it. Her right hand pushes forward as her left hand pulls back with equal force, establishing the dynamic tension that allows her to control recoil. This stance minimizes the profile the shooter presents to her target, and the left arm provides a bit of protection for her torso.

The *Isosceles stance* thrusts the gun directly in front of the shooter, with both elbows locked or nearly locked and the left hand wrapped around the right hand. The shooter leans slightly forward from the hips to resist recoil. This stance presents a wider target profile than the Weaver, but feels more balanced and natural to many shooters.

A normal *competition stance* places the shooter's body sideways to the target, with her feet spread shoulder width apart. Her right hand is raised to eye level and her elbow slightly bent, while her left hand is tucked behind her back or at her waist. This stance evolved from the classic pistol dueling stance of the Renaissance era, and, while it does present a smaller target than the Weaver or Isosceles stances, offers less support.

Point shooting, otherwise known as *stress shooting*, is a variant handgun (and shotgun) technique that emphasizes rapid reaction to close targets. In point shooting, the shooter uses his instinctive understanding of space, physics and body position rather than of aim and posture, using the alignment of his hand to point at the target with his wrist and elbow locked. Some point shooting advocates teach the shooter to put his right index finger along the side of the gun, point it at the target and pull the trigger with his middle finger or left index finger. Point shooting avoids the problem of fine motor control going away in a high-adrenaline situation, but is effective only at close range.

Two-Handed Shooting

The Strength requirements for one-handed firearms assume that the character uses only one hand. Shooting with both hands increases her effective Strength by 1 for the purpose of avoiding penalties from Strength minimums.

Bad Handgun Technique

"Gangsta-style" shooting, popularized by movies, is the "technique" of tilting a handgun parallel to the ground to fire it. This moves the sights and barrel out of a proper shooting position and allows the shooter's wrist to flex upwards under recoil, which makes her much less accurate. In addition, with a semi-automatic, the gun ejects its brass upward — into the shooter's face — rather than to the right, thus making jams likely as the brass can't always clear the ejection port. Many professional shooters wince when they see a street punk holding a gun like a bike's handlebar. Shooting gangsta-style inflicts a –1 penalty. However, shooting gangsta-style provides a +1 bonus to Streetwise rolls in appropriate situations, such as attempting to impress gangstas or wannabes immediately after they've seen the character shoot.

Limp-wristing is the shooting term for not locking the wrist of the shooting hand. This leads to poor aim with every type of handgun as the weapon's recoil starts the gun moving before the bullet leaves the end of the barrel. In autoloaders, a weak grip is even more of a problem because the grip transfers more of the gun's recoil to the shooter's upper arm. This can rob the gun of the energy the weapon needs to cycle its action, resulting in a jam.

Rifle Marksmanship

Prone, kneeling and standing are the three basic positions for combat rifle shooting. All of these positions use the same basic principles. The shooter pulls the rifle tight against his shoulder with his right hand. His left hand goes under the rifle's barrel and loosely grasps the foregrip to support the barrel. His cheek is flush against the rifle's stock (referred to as "getting a cheek weld"), which naturally puts his right eye in line with the rifle's sights or scope. On a scoped rifle, the shooter's eye is several inches back from the scope's rear lens, as shooting with the face pressed directly against the scope usually leads to a recoil-induced black eye.

Many shooting instructors teach their students to shoot with their dominant *eyes* rather than their dominant *hands*, which can cause a great deal of initial confusion for the small portion of the population whose eye dominance doesn't match their handedness. This section assumes a right-eye-dominant shooter.

In the *prone* position, the target is about 20 degrees to the left of the shooter's long axis. The shooter rolls his torso and hips slightly to the left to make breathing easier and to prevent his abdominal pulse from affecting his aim. His left leg is straight, with his right hip bent at a 45-degree angle for stability and the inside of his right knee flush with the ground. His left hand slides under the rifle's foregrip, supporting rather than grasping, with the left elbow against the ground. His right elbow is cocked slightly outward from his body, also in contact with the ground.

In the *kneeling* position, the shooter's left foot goes directly below the rifle, allowing his left elbow to tuck into the hollow between his left kneecap and femur for solid support of the rifle's weight. His right knee and foot go to the ground, with his weight evenly distributed between his right knee and both feet.

In the *standing* position, also known as the *offhand* position in competition, the shooter stands with his feet spread at shoulder height, his torso aligned at almost a right angle to the target, leaning slightly backward and to his right to balance the rifle's weight. His left arm is tucked against his ribs, allowing his entire bone structure to support the rifle's weight. His right elbow is extended in a natural position, with his upper arm about 30 degrees away from his side.

In addition to these three positions, competition shooters sometimes use a fourth position, *bench* or *seated*. In a seated position, the shooter sits on a chair or stool, with a table or bench in front of him on which his left elbow rests to support the rifle's weight. Most militaries do not teach this position as a combat shooting stance due to the rarity of proper equipment on the battlefield, but this stance is part of the curriculum for police sharpshooters who usually operate in urban terrain and have ample time to set up their shooting positions.

Shotgun Marksmanship

Shotgun shooting, because of the close ranges involved, relies more on instinct than rifle shooting. The basic shotgun shooting stance is similar to a good boxing stance: one foot leading, with the shooter leaning forward at a slight angle to absorb recoil and ready to swing to either side. As with a rifle, the shooter pulls the shotgun's stock tight against her shoulder to absorb recoil, bringing the side of the stock up to her cheek so her line of sight naturally follows the shotgun's barrel.

Bad Rifle and Shotgun Technique

Storytellers may choose to replace the rules for one-handed firing in the **World of Darkness Rulebook** with the following rules for more realistic results.

As Hollywood shows us, it's possible to *hip-shoot* a longarm, holding it just above waist level with the stock tucked under the right arm. This is a normal reflex for a shooter who's surprised while carrying a gun loosely at waist height and brings it up to point at the target as quickly as possible. Hip shooting has two critical disadvantages: the sights are nowhere near the shooter's eye and the gun is not properly braced to absorb recoil. If a character hip-shoots a longarm, increase its Strength requirement by 1 and double any range penalties the shooter incurs — but the character automatically wins any Initiative ties that turn.

Shooting a longarm one-handed is even more awkward. Regardless of how strong a character is, he doesn't have the leverage necessary to control a gun whose center of mass is up to a foot in front of his shooting hand. If a character one-hands a longarm without the support of a bipod, increase the longarm's Strength requirement by 2 and apply a –4 penalty to the character's attack roll. Bullpups (see p. 56) are a *slight* exception to this situation due to their rearward center of gravity, but still need both hands for stability: one-handing a bullpup

applies only a –2 penalty. One-handing a longarm has no benefit, but a character may have no choice if he lacks the use of one hand.

Marksmanship in Combat

Human physiology has evolved to react a certain way to immediate physical danger. Blood vessels in the arms and legs constrict, reducing blood flow in expectation of imminent injury to the extremities. Blood sugar levels rise, resulting in stronger and faster movement. Blood pressure and rate of respiration increase while vision and consciousness focus on the immediate threat. Unfortunately for a shooter in a combat situation, all of these factors occur at the expense of the judgment, situational awareness and fine motor control, which are critical to accurate shooting. An Olympic-caliber marksman who finds her life threatened for the first time is fortunate if she can put one in 10 shots into her intended target.

The best way for a shooter to prepare for a gunfight is to train until she's developed the muscle memory necessary to carry her through violence without conscious thought. Militaries and law enforcement agencies have long been aware of the difference between safe, calm target practice and the chaos of actual combat, and they train their personnel relentlessly to ensure their survival. The core of this training is reflexive aim for the target's center of mass. "Called shots" and "shooting to wound" run directly counter to the principle of accurately putting a bullet into the target's vital organs. A moving person's arms, legs and head all flail around too much for accurate aim if he's moving, or just popping in or out of cover, in a fight.

In game terms, this is why a character normally can only make one effective attack per three-second turn, even if her gun is capable of much more rapid fire. This book's Appendix provides Merits appropriate for characters who've dedicated a significant amount of time and effort to training to survive gunfights.

Ballistics

Ballistics is the branch of physics that deals with the motion of projectiles. Once a bullet leaves a gun, ballistics can calculate every aspect of the bullet's flight path until the bullet strikes something.

Gun enthusiasts talk about two basic ballistic characteristics of a bullet: *muzzle velocity* and *muzzle energy*. The former is the speed that a bullet has at the instant it leaves a gun, and the latter is the kinetic energy that the bullet has as a result of its speed and mass. Most handgun bullets move at between 80% and 150% of the speed of sound, which is a little over 1,100 feet per second. Rifle bullets typically reach speeds between two and three times the speed of sound.

If a bullet travels a significant distance, the bullet's flight time is measurable. During the bullet's flight, gravity acts on the bullet, pulling it down as it travels forward. The result is a parabolic arc rather than a laser-straight line. Experienced shooters can compensate for this drop by estimating the range to their targets (or using a rangefinder to get an exact number) and raising their point of aim appropriately.

In addition to dropping during flight, a bullet loses velocity due to atmospheric drag. This is another consideration for long-range shooting, but not a significant factor for Storytelling System damage purposes.

How a Bullet Hurts You

Basic physics gives us the equation $\mathbf{E_k = 1/2mv^2}$. In plain English, an object's kinetic energy is equal to half of its mass times the square of its speed. Thus, the two basic factors that determine how hard a bullet hits are its weight and its speed at the moment of impact. Of these two, speed is more important than mass: if you double a bullet's mass, you double its kinetic energy, but if you double its speed, you *quadruple* its kinetic energy. This is why rifle bullets are so much more deadly than handgun bullets.

When a moving object comes into contact with another object, a transfer of energy occurs, and the object that is the human body tends to deform when subjected to a sudden transfer of energy. Typically, a bullet punches a small hole in the skin. Once the bullet passes through that and encounters denser tissue and yet denser bone, the bullet transfers much of its energy to these things. This happens so quickly that the body parts on the receiving end of the impact don't have time to compress, as they would if poked with a fingertip. Tissue tears; bone shatters. The actual hole made by the bullet's passage also widens as the bullet deforms and tumbles, because an irregularly shaped projectile loses energy faster than a streamlined one, and all that energy affects the surrounding body parts.

A perfectly behaved bullet remains within the body of its victim. This occurs if the bullet transfers all its energy to the target. If the bullet has enough energy left to travel out the other side of the target, that's energy that the bullet didn't transfer to that object, and, thus, energy that didn't go toward inflicting damage. Terms like "overpenetration" and "blow-through" describe this eventuality.

Films often show villains being blown clean off their feet and sent sailing through the air by the impact of bullets. This is pure fiction. Newton's third law of motion states that every action has an equal and opposite reaction. A gun capable of sending its target flying would also send the shooter flying an equal distance. Extremely heavy caliber rifle bullets or shotgun slugs might make a target stagger back a few feet as he regains his balance, but any wild bullet-induced launches are the result of involuntary muscle spasms, as being shot can be quite the surprise.

Why Don't Bullets Hurt Vampires (So Much)?

All theories of supernatural intervention and reduced hydrostatic shock aside, the simple truth is that vampires are already dead. Their blood does not circulate to bring oxygen to all their tissues.

Vampires do not require their lungs, livers or spleens. The only internal organs that are really important to a vampire at all are the heart (the mystic seat of the animating force that keeps that dead body walking and talking), the brain (the home of consciousness) and various sensory receptors. Everything else is just meaty stuffing. A bullet may do just as much physical damage to a vampire as it would to a mortal human — a hole in the skin, two in the lung, a few shattered ribs and four or six layers of torn muscle — but the vampire doesn't really need the skin to hold in blood, doesn't need the lung to oxygenate that blood and treats the ribs and muscles only as a frame and a set of pulleys to facilitate motion. Thus, the actual amount of *damage* remains the same, but the degree of *injury and impairment*, which is what Health points really measure, is much less.

In game terms, this is represented by the rule that bullets do bashing damage to vampires rather than lethal damage, save for shots to the head (which is just as important, but no more durable, after death).

Recoil

Recoil is the energy that propels a gun backward whenever it's fired. This energy is equal to the gun's muzzle energy. In a semi-automatic or automatic weapon, the shooter doesn't feel all of this energy because the action uses some of it to cycle itself.

Because of the way human joints work, the natural tendency for the shooter is to absorb and control this energy by letting her wrists and elbows bend, causing the gun to rise. Skilled shooters are experienced at controlling this *muzzle climb* and quickly bringing the gun back on target for a follow-up shot. Fully automatic weapons exacerbate the problems of recoil because the action cycles faster than the shooter can return the gun to a stable firing position.

Heavier weapons are less susceptible to recoil than lighter weapons because the same amount of energy moves their greater mass a shorter distance.

For greater realism, consider the following recommended change from the **World of Darkness Rulebook**. The basic Strength requirement of all weapons takes recoil into account for single shots. If a character's Strength is lower than this requirement, she suffers the *difference* as a penalty to her attack rolls. For example, a character with Strength 1 trying to fire a gun with a minimum Strength 4 suffers a –3 penalty. Automatic fire is harder to control than single shots. For such a weapon, a parenthetical set of three additional values in its weapon table entry indicates its Strength requirements for short, medium and long bursts — for example, 2 (2/3/4).

Actions

The moving parts of a firearm that enable the shooter to load a cartridge, fire the bullet and discard the empty casing are collectively known as its *action*. One complete sequence of firing, clearing and reloading is a *cycle*, and a character *cycles* the action (or the action cycles itself) to accomplish this.

The types of actions in widespread modern use follow.

Break Action

A break-action weapon has no internal ammunition reserves. The only ammunition this weapon contains is the cartridge in the firing chamber. The break-action weapon has a hinge just behind the chamber that enables it to swing open, exposing the chamber, when the wielder releases a catch. The shooter must manually extract the empty casing from the chamber and insert a fresh cartridge.

Some break-action firearms (typically shotguns and large-caliber hunting rifles) have two barrels, each of which holds one shell or cartridge. These weapons have double trigger mechanisms that allow near-simultaneous firing of both barrels.

Mechanics: If a character discharges both barrels in a single attack, the weapon's Strength requirement is increased by 2, but the attack gains the "9 again" effect. If the attack already has "9 again," it gains "8 again." If the attack already has "8 again," it gains a +2 bonus. If the gun's two barrels are loaded with different types of ammunition, base the attack's Traits on the one with the higher Damage trait. The Storyteller has the final say in situations in which one or both types of ammo have additional special effects.

Revolver

A revolver uses a single barrel with multiple firing chambers. The revolver's chambers are holes drilled through a metal cylinder that rotates to bring each chamber into line with the barrel in turn. Older revolvers often broke open like break-action firearms for reloading, but most revolvers produced within the past century have small swing-out arms on which the cylinders are mounted.

The first revolvers were *single-action*, in which pulling the trigger only releases the sear. Between shots, the shooter must manually draw back (or *cock*) the *hammer*, an external spur attached to the firing pin. Cocking the gun also rotates the cylinder to bring a fresh cartridge into firing position. This is readily visible in countless cowboy movies, usually with a menacing "click" as the villain cocks the revolver and shoves it in the hero's face.

Later designs, including most modern revolvers, are *double-action*, in which the trigger pull cocks the hammer, rotates the cylinder and releases the sear. This allows a higher rate of fire than a single-action revolver, but a double-action revolver requires several more pounds of pressure on its trigger, which can make shots less accurate as the shooter's squeeze pulls her aim to one side. Any double-action revolver can be cocked as a single-action revolver for this lighter trigger pull and menacing "click." There is no game difference between single-action and double-action revolvers.

Fanning

The way in which revolvers operate lends itself to a unique method of rapid fire known as *fanning*. While inaccurate, fanning does allow a shooter to put a lot of

lead in the air within a few seconds, effectively simulating automatic fire.

To fan a revolver, a character uses both hands. With her gun hand, she holds down the trigger, keeping the sear disengaged. With her off hand, she rapidly slaps the weapon's hammer, repeatedly cocking it. Because the sear is disengaged, the hammer springs forward again as soon as the character's hand comes off it, firing the round in the chamber.

Mechanics: A character must have Firearms 2 with a Revolvers Specialty to fan. She may expend three shots to fire a short autofire burst. If the revolver has at least six shots loaded, she may completely empty it to fire a medium autofire burst (see p. 160, the **World of Darkness Rulebook**). In either case, fanning raises the revolver's Strength requirement by 1. A dramatic failure while fanning may result in the character snapping off the hammer or slapping the gun out of her own hand to land at an enemy's feet.

Bolt Action

In a bolt-action firearm, the chamber is closed and opened with a mechanism that resembles a common deadbolt on a door. To open and unload the chamber, the shooter rotates a small knob about 60 degrees around the gun's long axis, then pulls back on the knob. This unlocks and opens the *bolt*. When the shooter opens the bolt, the gun automatically ejects the empty casing and a spring pushes the next cartridge in the magazine up into a ready position. When the shooter reverses the process, pushing the knob forward and then rotating it to close and lock the bolt, the bolt pushes the cartridge into the chamber. This simple mechanism makes a bolt action the strongest action type for rifles, more readily able to withstand the firing pressures of heavy-caliber or magnum ammunition.

Because the shooter must manually work a bolt action, it remains stable when he fires. This lack of internal movement during the firing process makes bolt-action rifles the preferred weapons of competitors, hunters and snipers, all of whom must make precise shots that any unnecessary movement in the gun can ruin. However, bolt-action weapons have relatively low rates of fire because the shooter must take his hand off the trigger to chamber a fresh round.

Lever Action

A lever action is similar in general principle to a bolt action, but instead of directly working the bolt with an attached knob, the shooter swings down a hinged lever located on the underside of the gun, usually around the trigger. The forward swing works the mechanism that clears the chamber, and the return swing loads a fresh cartridge. Modern lever-action guns are rare. Rifles and a few shotguns from the 19th century, as well as modern copies, most commonly use this action type.

Lever actions normally require the use of both hands to operate, unless the shooter spin-cocks the gun (see below).

Spin-Cocking

Spin-cocking is a risky method for operating a lever action one-handed. To spin-cock, the shooter releases his grip on the weapon, holding it only with the pressure and balance of his hand against the inside of the lever. He then spins the entire gun around the lever, using leverage to work the action. With skill and luck, the spin ends with the gun's stock slapping back into firing position against his hand. It's an inefficient technique, but it looks cool.

Mechanics: A character must have Firearms 2 with a Lever-Action Specialty to spin-cock. This provides a mechanical benefit only if the character has only one hand with which to work the action or wants to put on a brief and flashy show of competence. A character can attempt to spin-cock a lever-action gun once per turn as a free action. This requires a Strength + Firearms roll with a penalty equal to the gun's Size. With success, the character spin-cocks the gun. For the next three turns, whenever he makes a Presence or Intimidation roll against a target who saw his successful display of machismo, he gains a bonus equal to the number of successes he achieved on the spin-cock. A dramatic failure while spin-cocking is likely to result in the character shooting himself in the stomach, suffering damage equal to the gun's base Damage trait.

Pump Action

A pump-action (or *slide-action* in some lexicons) firearm has a handgrip (or *slide*) attached to the underside of its barrel. To operate a pump action, the shooter pulls this slide backward, then shoves it forward again. As with bolt and lever actions, the first motion clears the chamber and the second motion chambers the next round. This pair of motions is collectively called *racking the slide*. Most shotguns as well as a few hunting rifles also use pump actions.

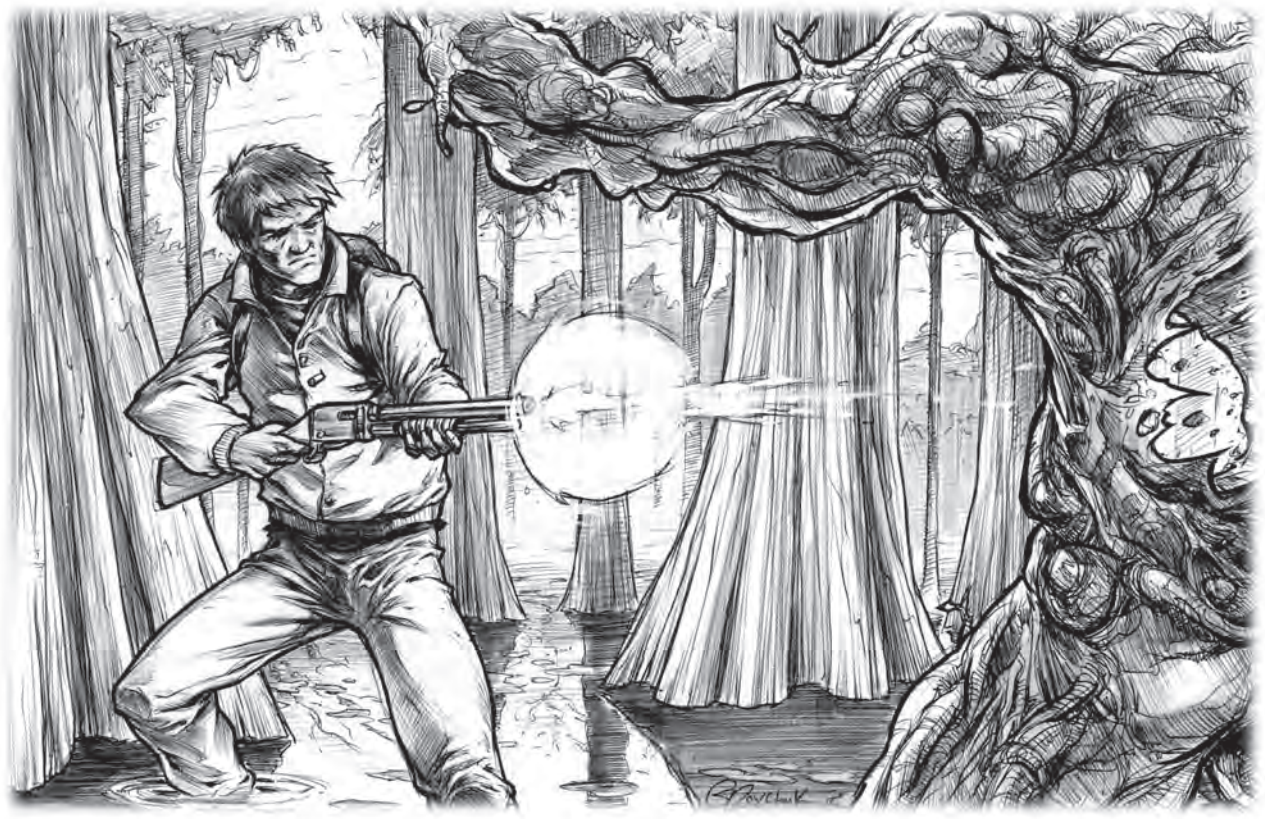
Mechanics: Thanks to countless television shows and films, the distinctive "ka-chunk" sound of a pump action being worked is instantly recognizable as the noise that comes immediately before someone opens up a can of whoop-ass with a shotgun. Working a pump action in conjunction with an Intimidation skill check gives a character a +1 bonus (though this action also ejects a perfectly good shell if the weapon already had a live round in the chamber).

Semi-Automatic

Semi-automatic actions take most of the work off the shooter. When a semi-automatic weapon fires, the action uses part of the force that the shot releases to cycle itself. Three main subtypes of semi-automatic actions exist. *Recoil-operated* actions employ the kinetic energy of the gun's recoil. *Gas-operated* actions trap a portion of the rapidly expanding gas released by the propellant's explosion and use its pressure as motive force. *Blowback-operated* actions, unlike the other action types, do not lock the bolt against the chamber before firing, and use the expanding gases to blow the bolt backward.

Most handguns and submachine guns are recoil-operated, with a few blowback-operated. Rifles and shotguns tend to be gas-operated. Gas-operated firearms have less recoil, while recoil-operated guns are less prone to jamming and require less cleaning.

Semi-automatic weapons are quite literally capable of firing as quickly as the shooter can pull the trigger. A human is physically incapable of shooting faster than a semi-automatic weapon



can cycle itself. However, control suffers with rapid fire. While it is impossible to jam a semi-automatic weapon by pulling the trigger too fast, rapid fire can lead to a loose grip on the weapon, which *can* cause jams in recoil-operated actions because the weapon needs to have solid resistance against which to cycle. If the weapon doesn't have that resistance, the semi-automatic simply kicks back against the shooter, expending the force that would normally cycle the action in wasted motion instead. As might be expected, stronger shooters generally have an easier time controlling rapid semi-automatic fire, though training also plays a significant role.

When loading a completely empty semi-automatic firearm, the wielder must still manually chamber the first round, because the action doesn't have any energy to work with. In handguns, this requires him to pull back and release the slide. In longarms, he usually pulls an external *charging handle*. While recognizable, this noise doesn't carry the same visceral impact of a shotgun's pump working and provides no game effect.

Automatic

Automatic (or *fully automatic*) firearms take semi-automatic operation a step further. In a fully automatic weapon, the action continues to cycle as long as the shooter holds down the trigger, sending a continuous stream of bullets downrange.

In addition to recoil-, gas-, and blowback-operated actions, some high-end military weapons use external motors (usually electrically driven) to cycle their actions. These are usually machine guns or light cannon with exceptionally high rates of fire, and not a concern for most World of Darkness characters.

Full-Auto Conversion

It's possible for someone who knows what he's doing to convert virtually any semi-automatic firearm to fully automatic fire. This process requires the character to disassemble the gun, grind down one or more parts of the action with a file, re-assemble everything and succeed on an extended Dexterity + Crafts roll (six successes needed; each roll equals one hour of work).

This is, of course, both illegal and unreliable. Any weapon converted to fully automatic fire in this manner is capable of firing bursts only — no single shots. In addition, do not re-roll 10s on the attack roll. If a character rolls a dramatic failure while firing a converted gun, it's likely to explode in his hands or "run away" and keep firing until it runs dry.

Safeties, Selectors and Burst Fire

Most firearms (revolvers being a notable exception) have safety catches (or *safeties*), which are mechanical switches that prevent weapons from firing when engaged. Modern safeties also prevent the firing pin from moving forward if the trigger isn't pulled, which keeps weapons

from accidentally discharging if dropped. Some handguns also replace or supplement these *internal safeties* (or *firing pin blocks*) with *grip safeties*, which lock the firing pin in place unless there's pressure on the weapon's grip. In recent years, *magazine disconnect safeties* have come into vogue in handguns, which lock the firing pin if there isn't a magazine seated in the gun. These are a popular feature in law enforcement sidearms, as an officer who finds himself struggling with an opponent for control of his weapon can hit the magazine release and not have to worry about being shot with his own gun.

When automatic weapons were first introduced as personal armament, manufacturers and users saw a need for semi-automatic operation. This led to the introduction of the fire selector, a control which allowed the shooter to toggle the gun between semi-automatic and fully automatic operation. For the sake of simplicity, most guns combined safety switches and selectors, leading to three-position fire selectors with safe, semi-auto and full-auto options.

During the early years of the cold war, it became obvious that fully automatic weapons were often wasteful and inefficient, leading to lousy marksmanship. The compromise between semi-automatic and automatic fire was the regulated burst. A firearm with a burst regulator has a selector setting for firing a mechanically regulated number of shots (almost always three) whenever the shooter pulls the trigger. This adds a fourth possible option for fire selectors, though most submachine guns and assault rifles have only three: either safe/semi/burst or safe/semi/full. Almost all machine guns lack semi-auto and burst settings.

A few automatic weapons are produced with two-stage triggers. A short pull fires a single shot in semi-auto mode, while yanking the trigger all the way back unleashes fully automatic fire. This simplifies operation but requires the shooter to have good trigger control.

Feeds

A firearm's action is the mechanism for getting ammunition into and out of the chamber, while its *feed* is its mechanism for providing ammunition to the action. A weapon's feed mechanism determines how quick and easy it is to reload. Types of feeds include:

Internal Magazine

In an internal magazine, a firearm's design includes a fixed storage space for a set amount of ammunition. The action draws fresh cartridges directly from this space. Internal magazines are relatively simple, but must be reloaded with individual loose cartridges. Most bolt-action, pump-action and lever-action rifles and shotguns use internal magazines.

Break-action firearms and revolvers both hold their ammunition internally, albeit directly in their chambers rather than in separate storage spaces. For game purposes, both break-action guns' firing chambers and revolvers' cylinders are considered internal magazines.

Mechanics: Loading loose ammunition into an internal magazine takes one or more turns. In a single turn of reloading, a character can load a maximum number of cartridges equal to his Composure +1, and a character loses the benefit of his Defense score for any turn in which he reloads cartridges one-by-one. A character can hasten the process with a speedloader (see p. 167).

Detachable Magazine

A detachable magazine (commonly and inaccurately referred to as a *clip*) is a container that holds cartridges side by side, with a spring pushing the stack toward the open end of the magazine. The magazine attaches to the gun by sliding into a receptacle called the *magazine well*. To remove a detachable magazine, the shooter presses the *magazine release*, a small catch that allows the magazine to slide or fall out of the weapon. All semi-automatic handguns, submachine guns and assault rifles, as well as many semi-automatic rifles and a few semi-auto shotguns, use detachable magazines.

Detachable magazines are made to fit specific weapons or weapon families, and are not interchangeable between different makes and models of guns. Some weapons can accept *drums*, very large detachable magazines that are shaped like flattened cylinders rather than rectangular boxes.

Mechanics: Removing a detachable magazine from a gun and inserting a fresh one takes one turn. Removing ammunition from a magazine manually, or reloading an empty magazine, is as slow as loading an internal magazine (see above).

Belt

A belt is a set of cartridges held side by side with metal links. Only machine guns feed from belts. A belt-fed weapon grabs the links to draw the cartridges into the gun in sequence, spitting the links of the fired cartridges out along with the empty casings.

Belts can be of virtually any length, though practical considerations of weight and bulk usually limit belts to 200 rounds or less. Multiple belts may be linked end to end, allowing the gun to continuously feed hundreds of rounds without stopping for reloading. However, the longer the belt, the more likely it is to twist or get caught on something, resulting in a jam. A machine gunner usually has an assistant whose job is to carry extra ammunition, connect a new belt to the end of one that's running low and keep the belt feeding smoothly.

Mechanics: Reloading a belt-fed weapon takes two turns, as the character must open the gun and attach the links of the first cartridge in the belt to the gun's action. Linking two belts end to end takes one turn, and may be done by another character adjacent to the shooter.

Glossary

Firearms terminology, similar to any other specialized engineering vocabulary, can often be confusing to the uninitiated. Here are some common gun-related terms, both formal and slang.

General Terminology

Accidental Discharge: Any shot that the shooter didn't make a conscious decision to fire. In civilian life, results range from embarrassment to a dead hunting partner. In law enforcement and military operations, the minimum penalty for an accidental discharge is a reaming from a sergeant, even if the bullet didn't hit anyone or anything.

Automatic: Capable of continuing to fire as long as the shooter holds down the trigger. Also, commonly accepted shorthand for semi-automatic pistols (a.k.a., "autoloaders").

Bullpup: A firearm in which the action is located behind the trigger, rather than above or in front of it. This allows for a shorter overall weapon with the same barrel length, which is important for maintaining effective range. In addition to size, a bullpup has the advantage of managing recoil better by moving the weapon's center of gravity closer to the shooter. The bullpup's disadvantages include reduced overall length for bayonet combat, cartridge ejection that must be carefully designed to keep from hitting the shooter in the face, uncomfortably close muzzle blast and awkward firing and magazine changes from the prone position.

Caliber: The diameter of the bullet that a gun fires (except for shotguns). Caliber is measured in either millimeters ("5.56mm") or hundredths of an inch (".223 caliber"). To add confusion, multiple types of bullets are available in the same caliber, and they are not interchangeable — for example, 9mm ammunition of German and Russian origin. In such cases, the convention is to refer to the specific type with its diameter and length ("9x19mm, 9x18mm") or origin ("9mm Luger, 9mm Makarov").

Carbine: A rifle with a relatively short barrel. Most carbines are cut-down derivatives of full-sized rifles. Carbines trade effective range for reduced weight and length.

Chamber: The rear part of a gun's barrel that is built to accept a cartridge. A firearm is said to be chambered for, or built to accept, a specific caliber ("that rifle is chambered for .223 Remington"). Also, the act of moving a cartridge into the chamber ("Rosalyn sneered, chambered a round of buckshot and shot Enrique.").

CQB: Close Quarters Battle, the military term for firefights occurring at short range (under 50 yards) and inside enclosed or confined spaces. The definitive CQB fight is a hostage rescue operation.

Downrange: The area into which a shooter is firing, literally down the shooting range. Also used in military parlance to describe a combat zone ("Another deployment to Balkanistan? Guess we're going downrange again.").

Ejection Port: The opening in a gun out of which it ejects its empty casings. Most guns have their ejection ports on their right sides and fling brass up and to that side.

Extractor: The part of a gun's action that removes an empty casing from the chamber after firing.

Firing Pin: The small metal pin in a firearm's action that strikes a cartridge or shell to fire it; also referred to as a striker. Investigators can use the combination of marks that an extractor and a firing pin leave on a casing to match a casing to a specific gun.

Foregrip: The part of a longarm in front of the trigger and magazine, used for stabilizing the weapon with the shooter's off hand. A foregrip insulates the shooter's hand from the heat that the barrel develops from firing. Some weapons are built, or can be equipped, with a vertical foregrip, which is a vertical handle that is easier to hold onto when firing the gun from the hip.

Furniture: The parts of a gun that have no mechanical function but make it possible for a human hand to hold and use the gun.

Gauge: A measure of the diameter of a shotgun's barrel. The gauge of a shotgun is not a measurement of distance, but rather of quantity. If a shotgun has a gauge of X, X solid lead balls of a diameter equal to that of the gun's bore will make one pound of lead. Thus, a 12-gauge shotgun's barrel is as wide as a 1/12-pound lead sphere. For a more easily visualized reference, 12-gauge is the same size as 19mm, or about .75 caliber.

Handgun: Any firearm designed to be fired accurately using one hand, including revolvers, autoloaders and machine pistols (though the latter often fail the "accuracy" test).

Jam: A mechanical failure caused by a cartridge or empty casing getting stuck in a weapon's action. Break-action firearms and revolvers are largely immune to jams because cartridges remain stationary inside their mechanisms.

Longarm: Any firearm designed to be fired with both hands, either from the hip or braced against the shoulder, including submachine guns, rifles and assault rifles and shotguns.

Overpenetration: What happens when a bullet strikes a solid target but retains enough energy to blow through the other side with potentially lethal force. Overpenetration is a particular concern in police and hostage rescue work, in which there are likely to be innocent bystanders somewhere behind any potential target.

Rifling: A set of spiral grooves on the inside of a gun's barrel. These grooves cause a bullet to spin as it travels down the barrel, which stabilizes the bullet in flight. Rifles derive their names from this term. Every barrel's rifling is unique, and the marks it leaves on bullets fired through it produce a distinctive "fingerprint" that forensic investigators can use to prove that a specific gun fired a particular bullet. All modern firearms except shotguns have rifled barrels.

Sear: The part of a firearm's internal workings that holds the firing pin back against a compressed spring. When the sear is released, the spring drives the firing pin forward.

Semi-Automatic: Capable of firing once every time the trigger is pulled, with no additional effort required of the shooter.

Smoothbore: A firearm without rifling. The only modern firearms that are commonly smoothbores are shotguns. A projectile fired from a smoothbore does not pick up unique marks from rifling, and thus investigators cannot match a bullet to the specific gun that fired it.

Suppressor: A device that masks the sound of a gun firing by reducing the noise of the shot's explosion and/or slowing the outgoing bullet to subsonic speeds. Also referred to as a "silencer." See p. 167 for details.

Ammunition-Specific Terminology

Gun and ammunition manufacturers attach a bewildering array of acronyms and terms to ammunition notation, including the following:

ACP: Automatic Colt Pistol, used to differentiate specific ammunition types developed by John Browning for Colt autoloaders, including .25 ACP, .380 ACP and .45 ACP.

AE: Action Express, used to differentiate the .50 caliber cartridge that the Desert Eagle autoloader uses.

BMG: Browning Machine Gun, used to differentiate the .50 caliber cartridge developed by John Browning for heavy machine gun use.

Brass: Slang for empty casings, regardless of their actual composition. Usage: "Pick up your brass after the hit if you don't want to leave evidence all over the room."

Cartridge: One complete unit of handgun or rifle ammunition, including the bullet, casing, primer and propellant.

Casing: The cylindrical outer part of a cartridge or shell. Cartridge casings are almost always made of metal (most commonly brass), while shotgun casings are typically plastic or cardboard. The term "shell casings," which technically refers only to shotgun casings, is in widespread colloquial usage for all casings.

FMJ: Full Metal Jacket, the most common bullet design. In a FMJ (or "ball" in military parlance) bullet, a thin sheath of hard metal, usually copper, surrounds a lead core. FMJ ammunition is the default ammunition type by whose performance a firearm's Damage trait is determined.

Grains: A measurement commonly used for the weight of a bullet or propellant. 1 grain = 0.0648 grams = 0.00229 ounce.

LR: Long Rifle, used to differentiate the most common type of .22 caliber ammunition (despite the fact that it's used in as many handguns as rifles).

Magnum: A cartridge made longer than normal for a certain caliber, using the extra volume inside the casing to pack in more propellant for a faster bullet. This leads to much higher firing pressures, and a magnum cartridge can blow apart a firearm not built to withstand it.

NATO: North Atlantic Treaty Organization. In a gun-related context, this acronym refers to a small family of standard calibers that all NATO member nations' militaries have adopted for greater commonality in their supply chains.

Shell: One complete unit of shotgun ammunition, including the casing, primer, propellant and projectile or projectiles.

Soviet: In a gun-related context, this refers to a small family of standard calibers that the former Soviet Union and its Warsaw Pact allies adopted for greater commonality in their supply chains. In the modern era, Russia and several Eastern European nations still produce both old and new firearm designs chambered for Soviet-designed calibers.

Manufacturers

AI: Accuracy International, a British manufacturer specializing in precision rifles.

CZ: Ceska Zbrojoka, a Czech firearm manufacturer generally viewed as Eastern Europe's best.

FN: Fabrique Nationale, a Belgian firearm manufacturer. Also refers to ammunition types originally developed by the company, such as 5.7mm FN.

H&K: Heckler & Koch, a German firearm manufacturer widely regarded as making some of the most resilient and reliable guns in the world.

IMI: Israeli Military Industries, an Israeli manufacturer.

KAC: Knight's Armament Corporation, a Florida-based company specializing in converting limited numbers of standard American-made military firearms to designs suitable for special applications in covert operations.

RSA: Russian State Armories, a collective term for the various state-owned weapon design bureaus and factories that Russia inherited from the Soviet Union. Products of the RSA are frequently referred to by the names of their designers ("Kalashnikov AK-47") or by the factories in which the products were produced (IZHMASH Saiga 12k), rather than with the RSA designation.

S&W: Smith & Wesson, an American firearm manufacturer. Also refers to ammunition types originally developed by the company, such as .40 S&W.

Gun 101

Anyone can use a gun, but using one properly is another matter entirely. The following section details the most common sources from which characters might receive firearms instruction.

Civilian Training Programs

In nations that permit private ownership of firearms, training is generally accessible to any civilian who can legally purchase a gun. These courses cover firearm safety, the legal aspects of owning, carrying and storing guns and marksmanship and maintenance for a limited set of weapons. There are three general types of civilian training programs, which usually cost between $50 and a few hundred dollars.

Beginner's Instruction: A professional introduction to firearms begins with classroom instruction on safety, how firearms work, local laws and basic maintenance before moving on to hands-on practice. Beginning courses are usually available for handguns, rifles, shotguns and bows. These classes are intended to teach the basics of safe shooting, not any degree of combat skill or competitive marksmanship.

Hunting Safety: These programs are most common in rural areas and are intended to prepare new hunters to take the field. Passing a hunting safety course is a prerequisite for a hunting license in some areas. Hunting safety courses are available separately for rifle, shotgun and bow hunting. In addition to matters directly related to weapons, these classes also cover state hunting laws and basic fieldcraft. An applicant must pass written and marksmanship tests to obtain a license.

Concealed Deadly Weapon: Many American states and some other nations (see p. 202 for a partial list) license qualified citizens to carry concealed deadly weapons for self-defense. These courses generally assume that the participants are at least marginally competent with their weapons before signing up. A typical concealed deadly weapon course covers local laws regarding weapon ownership, the use of lethal force in self-defense and the regulations governing

when and where the permit-holder can carry, and culminates in written and practical tests.

In addition to these types of training, civilians can rent a lane at a firing range for a nominal fee, usually less than $20 for an hour. This provides the opportunity for practice in a controlled environment. Indoor ranges usually limit their clientele to handguns, while outdoor ranges and sportsmen's clubs allow rifle and shotgun use.

Likely Firearms Rating: 1 to 2.

Rural Upbringing

Firearms are commonplace tools in rural areas around the world. Removed from political debates and violent crime, rural gun owners see their weapons as necessary to protect their crops and livestock from wild animals and put meat on the table. Many men (and a smaller number of women) raised in such environs begin learning to shoot as soon as they can handle small-caliber rifles. No formal instruction or schools exist — children learn from fathers, uncles and elder brothers in a generations-old tradition. Teenagers are capable of handling themselves in the wilderness and bringing home game. This way of life isn't as common in the early 21st century as it was even a few decades ago but is still familiar to millions of people. Some militaries aggressively recruit such experienced hunters for special duty, believing that the same fieldcraft and marksmanship that allow them to bring down animals will enable them to hunt humans with equal skill.

Likely Firearms Rating: 2 or higher, usually with a rifle or shotgun Specialty. Animal Ken, Stealth and Survival are also likely to be equally high.

Law Enforcement Academies

The emphasis of police firearm training falls on handguns, more specifically the single model of handgun that recruits will carry as their duty sidearms. Police officers are trained to shoot in a variety of situations that civilian marksmanship programs typically don't cover, ranging from night firefights to self-defense from the driver's seat of a cruiser. Police officers also receive weapon retention training: how to keep opponents from disarming the officers during scuffles. A smaller amount of training is devoted to the department's supplemental weapons, such as shotguns or submachine guns, pepper spray and stun guns. Finally, in addition to teaching use-of-force laws and policies, many police departments now invest significant time and funding in shoot/no-shoot training. These elaborate simulations present officers with a potentially threatening situations and grade the officers on not only on their marksmanship, but also on their judgment in choosing whether or not to fire.

Likely Firearms Rating: 1 for desk jockeys and new recruits, 2 for seasoned patrol officers who take their responsibilities seriously; handgun Specialties somewhat likely for the latter and shotgun Specialties less common.

Military Boot Camp

Military firearm instruction focuses on the soldiers' primary weapon, the assault rifle. Soldiers must attain a certain level of proficiency before they graduate from basic training, and must also know how to maintain their rifles under adverse battlefield conditions. Soldiers must also maintain this minimum degree of proficiency for the rest of their military careers, which means annual qualification trials.

Soldiers also receive a lesser degree of training with all other standard infantry weapons in their nation's arsenal, including handguns, grenade launchers, rocket launchers, anti-tank guided missiles and machine guns. This is only intended to teach recruits the basics of using these weapons, however. More focused training is provided only to soldiers who become infantrymen. Likewise, training in some rare or limited-use weapons such as surface-to-air missiles and flamethrowers is provided only to specialists whose jobs require them to use those weapons.

Military forces that do not engage in ground combat on a regular basis, such as air forces and navies, generally provide much less training to their recruits than what is described above. The average seaman or airman may never handle a firearm for the remainder of his military career after completing boot camp.

Likely Firearms Rating: 1 for non-combat troops, 2 for newly trained combatants, 3 for veteran infantry; assault rifle Specialties are common for regular troops.

Insurgent and Militia Indoctrination

From Nepal to Northern Ireland, the world is full of small paramilitary groups dedicated to political violence. Many of these groups receive external funding, enabling them to buy black-market arms with which to outfit their fighters. The quality of training varies widely, with most of it going to the dedicated fanatics who survive their time as fledgling thugs. This training usually takes place covertly, using older, military-surplus weapons. Many insurgencies employ former military personnel as trainers — ex-Soviet intelligence agents and special operations troops are particular favorites after the USSR's collapse put tens of thousands of them on the job market.

Likely Firearms Rating: 1 for disorganized rabble, who may think themselves much more competent; per military standards for hardened terrorists and freedom fighters.

Street Lessons

Most criminals have little to no formal training. Practice, if they even use the word in the same sentence with "guns," consists of blasting away at improvised targets in an alley or vacant lot. The idea of paying good money for range time and practice ammunition just isn't likely to occur to a gangsta. Most gang-related shootings are the result of the sheer volume of fire rather than deliberate marksmanship. Maintenance is likewise a foreign concept — why clean a gun? The one area in which street-level thugs excel is in weapon concealment.

Likely Firearms Rating: 1, maybe with an Intimidation Specialty in looking impressive while shooting.

Popular Culture

Although involving even less experience than street-level criminal activity, firearm knowledge gained from popular culture is all that the majority of citizens possess. This "teaches" little-to-nothing in the way of marksmanship, safety or law. Although pop culture may actively disseminate incorrect information, anyone who grew up with the 20th century's mass media at least knows how to pull a trigger.

Likely Firearms Rating: 0, though the character may think he has more, particularly if he plays a lot of first-person-shooter computer games.

Safety First!

Most firearms instructors commonly devote as much time to teaching the safe use of a gun as they do to marksmanship training. Anyone who's gone through any sort of firearms education learns some variation of the following basic principles of gun safety before she ever fires her first shot:

• **Every gun is always loaded.** Never assume that a firearm isn't capable of killing until you've verified the gun's status for yourself.

• **Never point a gun at anything you don't intend to shoot.** At best, you're risking an accidental discharge and a hole in the bathroom wall. At worst, pointing a gun at someone else can be classified as aggravated assault even if the gun doesn't go off, or could trigger a lethal response from someone who takes self-defense seriously.

• **Keep your finger off the trigger until you're ready to fire.** Again, the best way to prevent an accidental discharge is to avoid a situation in which involuntary movement could affect the gun.

• **Always be aware of your target and what's beyond it.** Missing your target can result in the bullet going into something or someone best left intact. Overpenetration can be a hazard for bystanders even if you do hit your mark.

These commandments, when taken together and drilled into a student's head until they're internalized at a reflex level, ensure that a shooter won't put a bullet into anyone or anything she doesn't intend to shoot — usually.

Gun 201

The sources of training detailed in the previous section cover the basics of gun use (in game terms, up to Firearms 3, or 2 with an appropriate specialty). Professional shooters are much less common, and tend to specialize in one particular aspect of marksmanship. Possible sources of advanced firearm training include the following:

Competitive Shooting

From local clubs to the Olympics, shooting competitions are available for all levels of skill. Competitive shooting tends to be a formal affair focusing entirely on marksmanship, with no attention paid to tactics or laws. The following are major types of competitive shooting:

Target: Basic competitive shooting for handguns or rifles involves aimed, timed fire at a series of targets at a known distance. Scoring is measured entirely on the basis of shot placement. Standard Olympic ranges are 25 and 50 meters for pistols and 50 meters for rifles.

Trap and Skeet: The most common shotgun competitions are trap and skeet, both of which require competitors to hit moving targets in midair. Trap shooting throws the targets past or over the shooter from behind, while skeet shooting throws the targets across the shooter's field of view. Scoring is determined by how many targets the shooter hits.

Winter Biathlon: This event combines cross-country skiing with 50-meter rifle shooting. Courses are timed, with missed shots adding time penalties, so biathletes must be able to transition from peak physical exertion to precision marksmanship in seconds.

Pentathlon: The modern pentathlon, introduced as an Olympic event in 1912, was constructed as a romanticized vision of the skills required of a contemporary military scout and features the following events: equestrian show jumping, fencing, swimming, cross-country running and 25-meter pistol marksmanship.

In addition, many specialized competitions also exist. Cowboy action shooting, limited almost exclusively to the United States, involves the use of Wild West-era firearms in "gunfight action" scenarios. Defensive handgun associations likewise hold competitions based on self-defense scenarios limited to concealable pistols and revolvers. Long-range rifle marksmanship courses can involve ranges of a half-mile or greater.

Likely Firearms Rating: 3 to 4, with an appropriate Specialty for regional or national competitors; 5, with a Specialty, for Olympic athletes. Biathletes also typically have Athletics 3 or better with a skiing Specialty; pentathletes have at least Animal Ken 2, Athletics 3 and Weaponry 3.

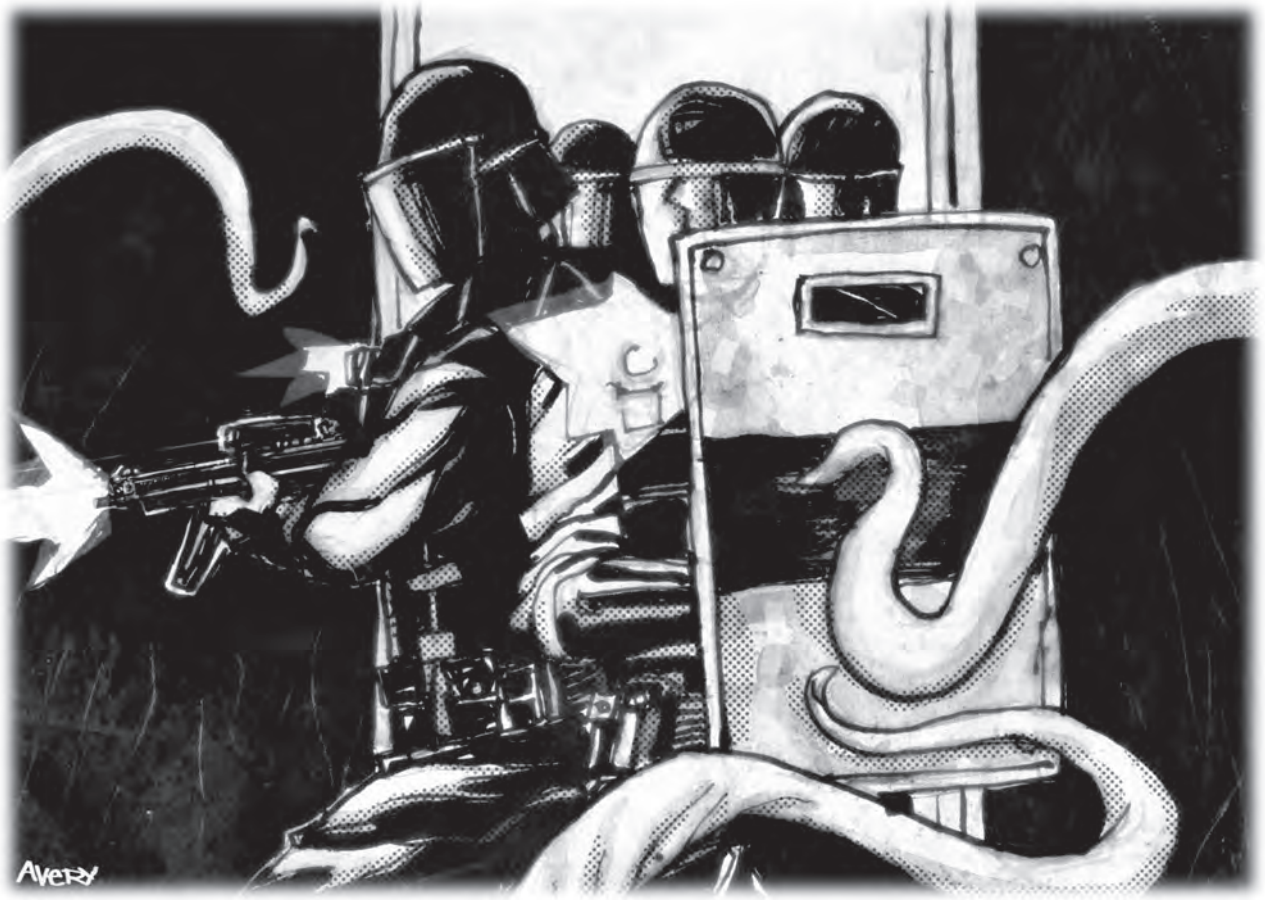
Civilian Defensive Training

Rare outside the United States, formal defensive firearm training for civilians focuses on handguns, with a few courses covering shotgun use. Such training costs several thousand dollars and lasts from one to 10 days. Trainers assume that participants are already familiar with the basics of their weapons, and focus on such topics as safely moving to and between cover, shooting from nonstandard positions (prone, seated, for example) and handling weapon malfunctions under stress.

Likely Firearms Rating: 2 to 3, with a Specialty in handguns.

CQB

Close Quarters Battle is the military term for gunfights in confined spaces such as buildings, airliners and buses. Some soldiers receive limited CQB training, but intensive instruction



in these tactics is limited to personnel who are likely to engage in such fights as a primary mission, such as police SWAT teams and military counter-terrorism and hostage rescue units.

CQB training commonly specializes in submachine guns and handguns as the primary weapons, with shotguns and assault rifles also receiving attention. Shooters trained in CQB also learn to move and fight in small teams in close quarters. As the rescue of hostages is often a concern in CQB operations, instantaneous shoot/no-shoot decision making is a major focus.

Likely Firearms Rating: 3 to 4, with a Specialty in submachine guns, close-range shooting or shooting into crowds. Police SWAT shooters tend to be less skilled than military ones due to lower training budgets, though some very large departments (LAPD, NYPD) are exceptions.

Sniper School

The CQB operator's polar opposite in temperament is the sniper. What differentiates a military- or police-trained sniper from a simple highly skilled rifleman is not marksmanship but supplementary skills. Snipers do learn to employ their rifles with incredible precision, but they are required to already be superlative marksmen before entering sniper school. This training teaches observation skills, stealth, wilderness survival and, perhaps most importantly, the patience necessary to remain motionless and hidden for days before taking a shot. Law enforcement snipers often go without this latter training at first, though the best are sent to military schools to hone their skills.

Likely Firearms Rating: 4, with a Specialty in rifles or aimed shots; Stealth 3 and Survival 2 for military-trained snipers.

Ninja Gun-Fu Assassin Clans of the Dark Future

Outside Hollywood action fantasy, professional marksmen trained by criminal organizations are nonexistent. The few serious assassins in the world most likely acquired their expertise through military or insurgent training before going pro. An individual psychopath might take on a protégé for her own deranged reasons, but the Mafia and yakuza simply don't have the infrastructure necessary to train legions or even handfuls of top-shelf shooters. Most organized crime hit men are moderately competent gunmen with healthy rations of tight-lipped loyalty to their employers.

Likely Firearms Rating: Per previous training.

Story Seed: The Guns of Elysium

A character who's highly skilled with contemporary weapons (Firearms •••• or better, preferably with some teaching ability as well) receives a lucrative offer from a prospective student who wants to learn to shoot. If the expert accepts, he finds his pupil to be an eager learner, but one who has difficulty putting lessons into practice. The expert also notices certain eccentricities of

behavior and archaic turns of phrase. How will he handle learning that his student is an elder vampire — or something even stranger and older — who's determined to master the arms of the modern world?

The Gun Locker

A complete catalog of all guns available to a character in the World of Darkness would require a larger book than this one and would be of little interest to most readers. Instead, the following selection focuses on guns that are either ubiquitous or unique, and provides enough mechanical information for interested parties to convert real-world performance to game numbers for a particular favorite gun that isn't listed here.

Ranged Weapon Traits

The following Traits appear on weapon tables throughout this chapter. In some cases, the Traits supplement or supersede the generic Traits given in the **World of Darkness Rulebook**.

Damage: The number of bonus dice added to a character's dice pool when using the weapon. A notation of "9 again" or "8 again" indicates that the appropriate system permutation applies (see p. 134, the **World of Darkness Rulebook**).

Ranges: These numbers are the weapon's short/medium/long ranges in yards. Attacks at medium range suffer a –2 penalty, while those at long range suffer a –4. A weapon with a notation of "Thrown" is a thrown weapon (see p. 67, the **World of Darkness Rulebook**). "Aero" indicates an aerodynamic thrown weapon. "Thrown" with a multiplier indicates that the weapon's range is calculated as for a thrown weapon, then multiplied accordingly.

Capacity: The amount of ammunition a gun can hold. A "+1" notation indicates that in addition to the gun's magazine capacity, the gun can be loaded with one additional round in the chamber, ready to fire (see "Topping Off," p. 96).

Strength: The minimum Strength required to use the weapon effectively. For ranged weapons, this factors in both the weapon's recoil and its physical bulk. If a character's Strength is lower than this requirement, she suffers the difference as a penalty to her attack rolls. For example, a character with Strength 1 trying to fire a gun with a minimum Strength 4 suffers a –3 penalty. Some guns are capable of automatic fire, which is harder to control than single shots. For such a weapon, a parenthetical set of three additional values indicates the weapon's Strength requirements for short, medium and long bursts — for example, 2 (2/3/4).

Size: The weapon's Size, per the **World of Darkness Rulebook** (see p. 135). As Size categories are fairly broad, an additional notation after the Size of each item with Size 1 or 2 indicates the amount of clothing under which a normal-sized character can conceal the gun: P (Palm/Pocket), S (Shirt), J (Jacket), L (Long coat) or N (Not concealable). See "Weapon Concealment" on p. 198 for more information about these categories.

Cost: The minimum dots in the Resources Merit usually required to purchase this weapon.

But — they're all the same!

Well, yes. The Storytelling System is admittedly designed to be a very granular support mechanism for verbal narratives, not a precise mathematical representation of the real world suitable for tactical simulations. The exact differences between the ballistic capabilities of a 5.56x45mm NATO bullet fired from an M16A4 and those of a .270 Winchester fired from a Remington Model 700 are insufficiently large to merit different numbers. Rather than spend page space on identical game Traits for weapons with near-identical performance, this chapter provides a single "generic" entry for each broad category of weapon and lists specific models that match those generic Traits, listing any mechanical differences in the individual weapon's profile. Additional weapons that are sufficiently unique to merit different Traits, or that have notable histories or non-mechanical features, are described separately.

Revolvers

A revolver is a handgun that eschews a single fixed chamber in favor of a rotating cylinder, which contains multiple chambers that align with the end of the barrel one at a time. A revolver was the first reliable repeating handgun to use a single barrel and firing mechanism. In the modern era, revolvers have largely fallen out of favor for combat applications due to the revolver's relatively low ammunition capacity, greater size and slower reloading when compared to autoloaders. However, revolvers are more durable and less sensitive to dirt and grime because of their simpler construction. They also don't jam, and most firing problems short of an actual broken gun will resolve themselves when the shooter pulls the trigger again.

Why choose a revolver?

First and foremost, reliability is a major reason for shooters to choose revolvers. A revolver can be shoved into a pocket, dragged through a swamp or buried in the desert for 50 years, and — provided the ammunition is still good — will still fire regardless of all but the most extreme accumulations of hair, lint, grease, mud, leeches, sand, spider nests or dust. Simplicity is another factor, as most revolvers have only two controls: a trigger and a catch for releasing the cylinder for reloading. Finally, image is a factor: some shooters consider revolvers to be a statement that the shooters only need six shots to end any fight.

Who uses revolvers?

Criminals who want a cheap sidearm, cops who need a reliable backup weapon, homeowners who want something simple to reach for in the middle of the night, cowboy ac-

tion shooting competitors, security guards, big-game hunters looking for a challenge — all use revolvers.

Generic .22 LR Revolver: The .22 LR round is not one that many professionals would choose for a gunfight, but this weapon is useful against small game, and this revolver's low price per round makes this gun ideal for training. Thus, many manufacturers make high-quality single- or double-action revolvers chambered for .22 LR. Such revolvers appear in many shooters' arsenals as practice weapons, squirrel guns or "plinking" pieces. Capacity may range from five to 10 rounds depending on the design, with six as the average.

Examples: Freedom Arms Model 83 Varmint Class (Capacity 5), Kora Detective (Capacity 8), Ruger Bearcat, Smith & Wesson Model 617, Taurus Model 94 (Capacity 9)

Generic .38 Special Revolver: From the 1920s to the 1960s, the six-shot revolver in .38 Special was the single most common police weapon in America. Patrol officers used weapons with relatively long barrels (increase Size to 1/J and Range to 25/50/100), while undercover personnel carried pistols with short barrels and rounded-off hammers that were more easily concealed. In the modern era, these revolvers are still exceptionally common. Many self-defense advocates consider the .38 Special round to be the lightest viable ammunition for combat use, and the round's relatively light recoil makes the .38 Special ideal for use in small guns or in guns carried by small shooters. Capacity may range from five to eight rounds depending on the design, with six as the average.

Examples: Cimarron Model P Jr., Colt Detective Special, Colt Police Positive, Rossi .38 Special (Capacity 5), Smith & Wesson Chief's Special (Capacity 5)

Generic .357 Magnum Revolver: The .357 Magnum revolver gradually (but never completely) replaced the .38 Special as the "default" American police weapon from the 1960s to the late 1980s. A few departments, as well as some private security companies, still use these revolvers out of tradition or for lack of funding for replacements. Many experts believe that the .357 Magnum round strikes the perfect balance between size, muzzle energy and recoil. Long-barreled .357 Magnums are available with similar Trait adjustments to .38 Specials: Size becomes 1/J, Range becomes 35/70/140.

Examples: Colt Python, Manurhin MR-73, Ruger GP100, Ruger Security-Six, Smith & Wesson Bodyguard, Taurus Model 608 (Capacity 8)

Generic .44 Magnum Revolver: Whereas .357 Magnum revolvers saw widespread use as police sidearms, the larger .44 Magnum cousins have always been primarily hunting and sporting weapons. The .44 Magnum round is considerably stronger than the .357, which makes the .44 unsuitable for use by weak shooters. The firing pressures this round generates are also much higher, which means that a revolver that uses .44 Magnum ammunition has to be a big, sturdy gun to survive. Any .44 Magnum revolver is a large, intimidating weapon, and most designers try to subtly accentuate this fact.

Examples: Colt Anaconda, Ruger Redhawk, Smith & Wesson Model 29 ("the most powerful handgun in the world"), Taurus Model 44

Hey, it's the same gun!

Many firearm manufacturers stick with a successful design for years, adapting it to many different calibers. Several of the examples of generic weapons given in these pages fall into this category, and may or may not appear as examples of every caliber in which they're available. These entries are representative, not exhaustive — we're not writing a catalog here.

Generic Low-Quality Variation: Dozens of handgun makers cut corners in manufacturing and quality control to put low-cost guns on the street. These weapons are perennial favorites of criminals on a budget, and usually top the FBI's list of the most common firearms used in crimes. Such a low-end weapon uses the Traits of any of the generic types detailed above, but has a Cost of only •. You get what you pay for, though: when attacking, do not re-roll 10s (or 9s or 8s, if applicable).

Revolvers

Type	Damage	Ranges	Capacity	Strength	Size	Cost
Generic Revolvers						
.22 LR	1	5/10/20	6	0	1/P	•
.38 Special	2	20/40/80	6	1	1/S	••
.357 Magnum	3	30/60/120	6	2	1/S	••
.44 Magnum	3 (9 again)	35/70/140	6	3	2/J	•••
Notable Revolvers						
Colt Single Action Army	3	20/40/80	6	2	1/J	••*
Freedom Arms Model 83	4	50/100/200	5	4	2/L	••••
NAA Black Widow	1	2/5/10	5	1	0/P	•
P&R Medusa Model 47	*	20/40/80	6	*	1/J	••
S&W Model 36 Ladysmith	2	20/40/80	5	1	1/S	••
S&W Model 500	4 (9 again)	50/100/200	5	4	2/L	•••
Taurus Model 22H	2*	40/80/160	8	1	2/L	••
Thunder-5	2 (9 again)*	15/30/60*	5	2	1/J	••

* See text for notes or special rules.

Colt Single Action Army (.45 Long Colt or .44-40): The most famous revolver in the world is better known by its nickname: *Peacemaker*. This gun, the original Colt .45, has been in continuous production since 1873, except for an eight-year hiatus after the end of World War II. The cost given is for modern reproductions; museum-condition originals may have Costs as high as ••••.

Freedom Arms Model 83 (.454 Casull): Apocryphally, the .454 Casull round originated with a wealthy big-game enthusiast who wanted a revolver that could kill a Cape buffalo. This monster single-action revolver is sold almost exclusively as a hunting handgun — at three pounds and over a foot long, it's too unwieldy for combat applications. The Taurus Raging Bull (Capacity 6) and the Ruger Super Redhawk are competing designs in the same caliber with identical Traits.

North American Arms Black Widow (.22 Magnum): With an overall length under six inches, the Black Widow can be concealed in the palm of a shooter's hand. This weapon and its companions in NAA's Mini-Revolver line are marketed as last-ditch self-defense weapons. An optional folding grip that rotates forward over the trigger guard enables the owner to clip the gun inside a pocket or waistband like a lock-back knife.

Phillips & Rodgers Medusa Model 47 (multiple calibers): This unique multi-caliber revolver was marketed as a post-apocalyptic survival gun in the pre-Y2K hysteria. The revolver is capable of accepting virtually any .38, .357 or 9mm ammunition in the world, from .380 ACP to 9mm Winchester Magnum, without modification. The Medusa Model 47's Damage trait depends on the ammunition with which the gun is loaded: 2 for most .38 or 9mm ammunition, 3 for .357 Magnum or similarly "hot" loads. This revolver's Strength is likewise ammo-dependent, always 1 lower than its Damage.

Smith & Wesson Model 36 Ladysmith (.38 Special): Smith & Wesson's Ladysmith brand originated in 1902 as a small revolver intended for ladies to defend themselves while bicycling or enjoying other outdoor activities. The Ladysmith was discontinued after company mogul Joseph Wesson learned that ladies involved in less-savory recreation favored it. In the 1980s, Smith & Wesson resurrected the imprint for a series of compact mid-caliber revolvers with carved rosewood grips sized for smaller hands, once again marketed to female shooters. The heavier Model 60 Ladysmith is chambered for .357 Magnum (Damage 3, Strength 2), and the original .22 LR Ladysmith is now a collector's item (Damage 1, Capacity 7, Cost •••).

Smith & Wesson Model 500 (.500 S&W Magnum): As of mid-2005, the king of the hunting revolver world is the Model 500. This handgun's proprietary ammunition makes .44 Magnum loads look underpowered in comparison. The Model 500 is an immense weapon: five pounds and 15 inches, completely unsuitable for concealment under anything less than a muumuu.

Taurus Model 22H (.22 Hornet): The "Raging Hornet" is built on the frame of the immense Raging Bull. Making a revolver this large for such small ammunition, even the ultra-high-velocity .22 Hornet cartridge, appears odd at best, but the result is a remarkably stable weapon with unique ballistics. This revolver's ammunition has Armor Piercing 1.

Thunder-5 (.410 gauge/.45 Long Colt): This revolver features an oddly elongated cylinder, making it look almost like a revolver flare gun. In actuality, the Thunder-5 is chambered for .410 gauge shotgun shells, and marketed as the ultimate home-defense handgun. The Damage and Range figures provided are for the recommended ammunition, but the Thunder-5 also accepts .45 Long Colt: Damage becomes 3 and Range becomes 20/40/80.

Autoloaders

The term *automatic pistol* is technically a misnomer, as "automatic" is shorthand for "fully automatic." To minimize confusion between semi-automatic handguns and fully automatic firearms, the term *autoloader* is commonly used for the former.

All autoloaders are semi-automatic and feed from detachable magazines held within the grips. An autoloader's action visibly cycles between shots: the *slide*, the top part of the gun, slams back and then forward. When the gun's magazine is empty, the slide locks in its rearmost position. After the shooter inserts a fresh magazine, he presses on the *slide release* to allow the slide to run forward again, chambering the first round from the magazine. If the gun is empty and the slide is forward, the wielder must pull the slide back manually and let it run forward (the familiar "cha-click" motion seen just before innumerable cinematic action sequences).

Why choose an autoloader?

Autoloaders are the *de facto* standard for defensive firearms. These guns are more concealable than revolvers with equivalent performance, have greater ammunition capacity and are faster to reload. Autoloaders are available in a dizzying array of sizes and calibers, from palm-sized .22 caliber holdout guns to massive hand cannons.

Who uses autoloaders?

Just about everyone. Semi-automatic pistols are the most common defensive firearms in the world. Specific subcategories of autoloaders, such as military service sidearms or subcompact holdout guns, appeal to specialized needs.

Generic Holdout Autoloader: Holdout autoloaders are small, pocket-sized guns in equally small calibers such as .22 LR, .25 ACP and .32 ACP. These guns sacrifice all other Traits — magazine size, accuracy, effective range, even reliability — for the sake of being small enough to be hidden virtually anywhere.

Examples: Autauga Welsch, Beretta 950 Jetfire (Capacity 8+1), Browning M1906, Colt Model 1908 Vest Pocket, North American Arms Guardian, Seecamp LWS-32

Generic 9mm Luger Autoloader: The 9mm Luger cartridge has been around for a century, but enjoyed only moderate success until the 1980s. Depending on whose opinion is loudest, this cartridge's recent popularity caused or was caused by a multitude of new autoloaders chambered for this ammunition. These weapons featured high magazine capacities and various "revolutionary" features, most of which were simply extra metal bits, the actual contribution of which to the gun's function was debatable. Today, 9mm Luger is the most common handgun caliber in the world, and any gun store in the world carries several models chambered for this cartridge. Capacity ranges from eight to 17 rounds, with 15 as the usual benchmark.

Examples: Ceska Zbrojoka CZ 75 (Capacity 16+1), Colt 2000, Daewoo DP-51, FN Browning Hi-Power (Capacity 13+1), H&K USP, Llama M-82, Ruger P89, Steyr GB (Capacity 18+1), SiG-Sauer P226, Walther P99 (Capacity 16+1)

Generic .40 S&W Autoloader: Introduced in the late 1980s, the .40 S&W cartridge was an attempt to bridge the gap in ballistic performance between 9mm Luger and .45 ACP. The .45 S&W cartridge quickly found its niche in the American law enforcement market, and is a popular caliber for both police and civilian autoloaders. Detractors view .40 S&W handguns as compromise designs without the capacity of a 9mm Luger or the punch of a .45 ACP, while proponents argue the reverse. Capacity typically ranges from 10 to 16 rounds, with 12 as the standard.

Examples: FN Browning Hi-Power (Capacity 10+1), H&K USP (Capacity 13+1), SiG-Sauer P229, Para-Ordnance 16•40 (Capacity 16+1), Ruger P94 (Capacity 11+1), Smith & Wesson SW99

Generic .45 ACP Autoloader: Prior to the explosion of the popularity of the 9mm Luger, .45 ACP was the dominant autoloader caliber. Literally hundreds of manufacturers produced weapons chambered for this round, many of which were loose or patent-bending copies of the archetypal Colt M1911A1. Many shooters still prefer .45 ACP over any other handgun caliber, and new .45 designs appear monthly. Capacity usually ranges from six to 12 rounds, with seven as the standard.

Examples: Beretta Cougar 8045, H&K USP (Capacity 12+1), Ruger P90, SiG-Sauer P220 (Capacity 7+1), Smith & Wesson 4500 series, Taurus PT945

Random Police Sidearm Table

Storytellers, need to know what the cops will shoot the players' characters with? Roll a die!

America:

1: Generic .357 Magnum revolver
2: Generic 9mm Luger autoloader
3: Beretta Model 92 or copy
4: Glock 17
5–6: Generic .40 S&W autoloader
7–8: Glock 22
9: Generic .45 ACP autoloader
10: Colt M1911A1 or copy

Eastern Europe:

1–6: RSA Makarov PM or copy
7–10: Generic 9mm Luger autoloader

Everywhere else:

1: RSA Makarov PM or copy
2–5: Generic 9mm Luger autoloader
6–7: Beretta Model 92 or copy
8-10: Glock 17

Generic Low-Quality Variation: As with revolvers, autoloaders are also available from manufacturers that put price before liability and product quality. Such a low-end weapon uses the Traits of any of the generic types detailed above, but has a Cost of only •. You get what you pay for, though: when attacking, do not re-roll 10s (or 9s or 8s, if applicable).

Beretta Model 92 (9mm Luger): The archetypal high-capacity 9mm autoloader debuted in 1976. In 1985, the United States military adopted it as its standard sidearm, an event that pundits widely regarded as the beginning of the 9mm Luger's market dominance. Beretta's Model 96 variant is chambered for .40 S&W (Damage 2 [9 again], Capacity 11+1); the Helwan Model 92, Taurus PT92 and Vector Z88 are all direct copies of the original Model 92 design.

Colt M1911A1 (.45 ACP): The iconic .45 ACP autoloader has been copied by hundreds of manufacturers since its 1911 introduction, and is the most produced firearm design in the world. This gun was the standard American military sidearm for most of the 20th century. Virtually any modification or refinement possible has been applied to an M1911A1 or a copy at some point, but many firearm enthusiasts regard the basic design as timeless perfection. Any shooting enthusiast will recognize the term "1911" as referring to a handgun built on this basic design, and 1911s are effectively a subcategory of the generic .45 ACP autoloader (above).

Examples of 1911 clones: AMT Government Model, Auto-Ordnance Pit Bull, Kimber Ultra Carry (Size 1/P), Para-Ordnance 14•45 LDA (Capacity 14+1)

FN Five-seveN (5.7mm FN): The companion to Fabrique Nationale's P90 submachine gun (see p. 68) is the only other gun in the world chambered for the 5.7mm FN cartridge. This handgun and its ammo are both rare and expensive, but well regarded by those few shooters fortunate enough to own or to be issued one. Normal 5.7mm FN ammo has Armor Piercing 2, making this cartridge illegal for civilian sale, though 5.7mm hollowpoints are available in limited quantities.

Glock 17 et al. (varies): The Glock family of handguns debuted in 1982 with the Glock 17, the first pistol with a polymer frame to achieve widespread commercial success. Initial furor over a "plastic" gun that was thought to be "invisible to metal detectors" was quickly dispelled when tests proved that the 17's metal barrel, slide and internal workings still tripped sensors. Stress tests showing the 17 being frozen in a bucket of ice, broken out with a sledgehammer, dropped in another bucket of mud, washed off with a fire hose, run over by a truck and still firing 10,000 rounds without a mechanical failure established the 17's reputation as an incredibly durable gun. Today, Glocks are, collectively, the most common police sidearms in the world, led by America's favorite Glock 22 (Damage 2 [9 again], Capacity 15+1).

Examples: .357 SiG Glock 31 (as Glock 22), 10mm ACP Glock 20 (Damage 3, Capacity 15+1, Strength 3), .45 ACP Glock 21 (Damage 3, Capacity 13+1, Strength 3)

Glock 26 et al. (varies): Once Glock GmbH had established its competence with full-sized designs, the company turned toward smaller weapons. Built on a scaled-down frame with a shortened barrel and grip, the "mini-Glocks" are ideal for concealed carry. The Glock 26, 27 (.40 S&W: Damage 2 [9 again], Capacity 11+1, Strength 3), 33 (.357 SiG: Damage 2 [9 again], Capacity 11+1, Strength 3), 29 (10mm ACP: Damage 3, Capacity 10+1, Strength 3) and 30 (.45 ACP: Damage 3, Capacity 10+1, Strength 4) are compact versions of the Glock 17, 22, 31, 20 and 21, respectively. Each design has its own smaller magazines that fit into its shortened three-finger grip, but can also accept the full-sized magazines from its parent design (though the reverse is not the case). This makes the compact Glocks ideal second weapons for individuals who carry both primary and backup sidearms.

H&K Mk. 23 "SOCOM" (.45 ACP): In 1991, the U.S. military's SOCOM (Special Operations COMmand) issued a request for a sidearm to replace all autoloaders currently in use with SOCOM's various special operations units. Heckler & Koch won the contract competition with the immense Mk. 23. This gun is designed from the ground up as an offensive, rather than defensive, handgun. The end of its barrel is threaded to accept a screw-on suppressor, and the shooter can lock the weapon's slide for silent single-shot operation (for more information on "Suppressors," see p. 167). The Mk. 23 is available on the civilian market, but neither the Mk. 23's silencer nor the military model's laser-aim module, which includes a tactical flashlight/laser combo with two lasers (one in visible red and one in infrared that is only visible through night vision gear) is available on the civilian market. If the Mk. 23 has a drawback, it's too much gun: at almost two-and-a-half pounds and 10 inches plus ammunition and accessories, few soldiers want to carry the Mk. 23 any longer than necessary. Adding the suppressor increases the gun's size to 2/L.

Luger Parabellum P08 (9mm Luger): The first handgun chambered for the 9mm Luger cartridge derived its name from a Latin aphorism: *Si vis pacem, para bellum* ("If you want peace, prepare for war."). Designed in 1898, the Parabellum was adopted by German forces in the 1900s in the gun's best-known P08 variation. The Parabellum is balky and inaccurate by modern standards, but was popular at its inception and served German and other forces through the first half of the 20th century. Some Parabellums were also manufactured in .32 ACP (Damage 1).

Magnum Research Desert Eagle (.50 AE): The ultimate handgun monument to overcompensation is as notorious as the handgun is deadly. Originally designed by Israeli Military Industries, the Desert Eagle is produced under license by Magnum Research. While accurate and powerful, the Desert Eagle is also a very high-maintenance design, prone to jamming at inopportune moments if not constantly babied. No militaries or police departments have adopted this gun due to its excessive size and cost: the gun's grip is too large for small shooters to get their hands around, and the gun's four-and-a-half-pound mass makes carrying it an adventure in masochism and concealing the gun an exercise in futility. In addition to the .50 AE for which the Desert Eagle is most famed, the Desert Eagle is also

available in .44 Magnum, (Damage 3 [9 again], Capacity 8+1), .41 Magnum (as .44 Magnum) and .357 Magnum (Damage 3, Capacity 9+1).

RSA Makarov PM (9x18mm Soviet): Produced by the Russian State Arsenals complex and built under license in more than 20 countries, the Makarov PM was the standard military sidearm of most former Soviet-bloc nations and still serves in many of them, with tens of thousands exported to every corner of the globe. The Makarov PM is mechanically reliable but relatively inaccurate. The Makarov was never officially issued to the KGB, but many KGB agents preferred it to their RSA PSMs (another Walther PP clone firing 5.45mm ammunition: Damage 1, otherwise identical). The Makarov PB is a rare purpose-built variant with a removable suppressor and a slide lock for silent single-shot operation (Size 1/J with silencer attached, Cost •••), which saw use with both the KGB and *Spetsnaz*.

Ruger Mark II (.22 LR): Modeled loosely on the Luger Parabellum, the Ruger Standard Model appeared in 1949 and was an immediate success. In 1981, the Ruger Standard Model was superseded by the more reliable Mark II, which instantly acquired a cult following among novice shooters and professional competitors alike. The Mark II's slim grip and virtually nonexistent recoil make this an ideal gun with which beginners can learn without being intimidated, and its simple construction allows for easy disassembly, maintenance and modification. Plans for suppressors for the Mark II are readily available online and at gun shows, and it has a reputation far exceeding its likely frequency of use as a close-range assassin's handgun. A suppressed Mark II is illegal for civilians and costs •••, and is the closest thing to totally silent thanks to the low signature of its .22 LR ammunition.

Walther PPK (.380 ACP): The PPK is one of the most famous small-caliber autoloaders in existence, thanks to its long-time service in the hands of Her Majesty's best-known secret agent. The PPK originated in the 1930s as a shortened ("*Kurz*") version of the less-common *Polizei Pistole* ("Police Pistol," Capacity 8+1). Both pistols are also available in .22 LR, .25 ACP and .32 ACP (Damage 1). Several manufacturers produce threaded barrels and suppressors for the PP and PPK, and these are widely available to buyers with the right permits — or enough cash.

Other Handguns

The past few centuries have seen a wide variety of handguns appear on the market that don't fall into the revolver and autoloader categories. Some of the more ubiquitous or noteworthy examples include the following:

Generic Derringer: The term "derringer" (a misspelling of the name of firearm designer Henry Deringer) describes any of a variety of styles of handgun designed to be as small as possible while still usable. These handguns were originally sold to gamblers, ladies of questionable morals and anyone else who might have need of a very small, short-range firearm for use as a last-ditch defensive weapon. In the modern era, derringers serve

Autoloaders

Type	Damage	Ranges	Capacity	Strength	Size	Cost
Generic Autoloaders						
Generic Holdout	1	5/10/20	6+1	1	1/P	•
Generic 9mm Luger	2	20/40/80	15+1	2	1/S	••
Generic .40 S&W	2 (9 again)	25/50/100	12+1	2	1/S	••
Generic .45 ACP	3	30/60/120	8+1	2	1/S	••
Notable Autoloaders						
Beretta Model 92	2	20/40/80	15+1	2	1/S	••
Colt M1911A1	3	30/60/120	7+1	2	1/S	••
FN Five-seveN	2*	30/60/120	20+1	2	1/J	•••
Glock 17	2	20/40/80	17+1	2	1/S	••
Glock 26	2	10/20/40	10+1	2	1/P	••
H&K Mk. 23	3	30/60/120	12+1	2	1*/J	••••
Luger Parabellum P08	2	15/30/60	8+1	2	1/S	•
Magnum Research Desert Eagle	4	50/100/200	7+1	3	1/L	••••
RSA Makarov PM	2	15/30/60	8+1	1	1/P	•
Ruger Mark II	1	15/30/60	10+1	1	1/S	•
Walther PPK	1	10/20/40	7+1	1	1/P	•

* See text for notes or special rules.

much the same purpose, though they are as much of collector's items and conversation pieces as serious firearms. Modern derringers are typically double-barreled break-action guns in small calibers. Traits given are for low-caliber designs (.22 LR, .22 Magnum, .25 ACP); mid-caliber guns (.32 ACP, .38 Special) have Damage 2 and Strength 3.

Low-caliber examples: American Derringer Model 1, Davis Derringer D-25

Mid-caliber examples: American Derringer M-6, Bond Arms Texas Defender, IAR Maverick

Generic Pen Gun: Spies have ostensibly been building single-shot low-caliber guns into pens for over a century. Pen guns are just what they sound like: a gun inside a thick-barreled writing utensil (which may or may not actually have an ink reservoir in addition to its single bullet). The wielder must spend a full turn readying a pen gun prior to firing it. Reloading takes five turns, which is time better spent grabbing the weapon of the enemy that the first shot hopefully killed. Pen guns are restricted or illegal in most nations because of their concealed nature.

Examples: American Derringer Model 2, MAC Stinger, Quicksilver Pen Gun

Generic Silhouette Pistol: Single-shot break-action handguns chambered for rifle calibers see use in both competitions and small-game hunting. Their collective name comes from the former application due to the type of targets used: metal silhouettes of animals. Some fiction also popularizes the silhouette pistol as valuable to an assassin because of the gun's combination of long range and relative concealability, but the silhouette pistol's rarity and limitation to one shot at a time offsets these factors.

Examples: Magnum Research Lone Eagle, Thompson/Center Contender, Wichita Silhouette

Generic Zip Gun: "Zip gun" is slang for a homemade pistol, almost always single-shot. Zip guns are commonly manufactured from whatever metal scraps are available: a tube of some sort for a barrel, a spring or elastic band to drive the firing pin and so forth. Constructing a zip gun requires an extended Intelligence + Crafts roll (eight successes needed; each roll equals one hour of work). A zip gun typically accepts any handgun-caliber ammunition from .22 LR to .38 Special, with a Damage trait one lower than the normal for that caliber (see sidebar, p. 85). Reloading a zip gun takes two turns, as the shooter must manually remove the empty casing. A zip gun is wholly unreliable: do not re-roll 10s, and subtract 1s from successes. A dramatic failure with a zip gun usually results in the shooter losing fingers.

American Derringer COP (.357 Magnum): The Compact Off-duty Police pistol was produced in the early 1980s and marketed, unsurprisingly, as a police backup weapon. The COP is unusual among pocket guns for its heavy caliber. It's a "pepperbox," a four-barreled break-action handgun.

Rodda .577 Howdah Pistol (.577 Snider): In colonial-era India, one of the most dangerous and exciting sports enjoyed by wealthy British gentlemen was tiger hunting. Conversely, one of the most dangerous and exciting sports enjoyed by the local tigers was Englishman hunting. The Englishmen rode on the backs of elephants and carried break-action hunting rifles, which were effective at long ranges but awkward in melees. Conversely, the tigers skulked in tall grass and used their teeth and claws to good effect in close quarters, often climbing the sides of the elephants to maul the Englishmen. In an attempt to even the odds, the humans developed "tiger tamers," double-barreled break-action pistols made from cut-down hunting rifles.

Sharps Model 1A (.22 LR): These Old West-vintage break-action pepperboxes were popular with gamblers, who found that these guns fit neatly in the watch pockets of well-tailored vests. The Model 1A is a single-action pistol: the firing pin is mounted on a circular pivot that rotates 90 degrees each time the shooter cocks the hammer, bringing

Generic Handguns

Type	Damage	Ranges	Capacity	Strength	Size	Cost
Other Generic Handguns						
Generic Derringer	1	2/5/10	2	1	1/P	•
Generic Pen Gun	1	1/2/5	1	2	1/P	••
Generic Silhouette Pistol	4	100/200/400	1	3	1/L	•••
Generic Zip Gun	*	1/2/5	1	1	1/P	-
Other Notable Handguns						
American Derringer COP	3	2/5/10	4	4	1/P	••
Rodda .577 Howdah Pistol	4	5/10/20	2	5	1/J	•••
Sharps Model 1A	1	2/5/10	4	2	0/P	•

* See text for notes or special rules.

the firing pin in line with each barrel in turn. The Model 1A has no safety or trigger guard, so carrying this gun fully loaded means that any causal bump could slam the firing pin into the cartridge underneath it. Savvy owners learned to carry this gun loaded with only three rounds, with the firing pin down over the empty barrel.

Submachine Guns

Submachine guns (SMGs) are compromises between handguns and assault rifles, fully automatic firearms using pistol-caliber ammunition. The result is a family of long-arms suitable for close-in fighting but inferior to rifles over distance. The relatively low weight of submachine guns makes them difficult to control in fully automatic fire, so experienced shooters tend to employ short bursts while inexperienced ones typify "spray and pray" combat styles.

The term "machine pistol" derives from *Maschinenpistole*, the German name for submachine guns. In modern usage, this term refers to a subset of submachine guns designed to be used one-handed, including some burst-capable or fully automatic versions of autoloaders. Light weight and one-handed operation make submachine guns wildly inaccurate, but their size renders them ideal as sidearms or concealed weapons.

Why choose a submachine gun?

Submachine guns are the smallest controllable automatic weapons, which makes them ideal for CQB applications. Submachine guns are lighter and shorter than assault rifles, which means the SMGs are easier to maneuver, and their lower-powered ammunition makes overpenetration less of a concern. Finally, SMGs' use of pistol-caliber ammunition makes them the automatic weapons best for use with suppressors.

Who uses submachine guns?

Law enforcement and military units engaging in CQB, bodyguards or criminals in need of concealable automatic weapons, rear-echelon soldiers, military security personnel, European police in high-threat assignments — all use submachine guns.

Full-Size SMGs

Generic 9mm Luger SMG: Most submachine guns are chambered for the 9mm Luger cartridge, a legacy of the early development of these weapons. Virtually every nation with an indigenous arms industry produces at least one model.

Examples: Beretta M12, Colt Model 635 (a cut-down M16 chambered for 9mm), H&K UMP (Capacity 30+1), IMI Uzi and Mini-Uzi (the original modern SMGs), Jati-Matic (Capacity 40+1), MP-40 (weapon of choice of Nazi minions), Sten Mk. II, Sterling L2A3, Steyr TMP (Capacity 30+1)

Generic .45 ACP SMG: A handful of submachine guns are chambered for the more powerful .45 ACP cartridge. These guns tend to be less elegant than their 9mm cousins and have lower rates of fire, but are no less capable.

Examples: General Motors M3 "Grease Gun," H&K UMP (Capacity 25+1)

American 180 (.22 LR): American Arms and several successors produced the American 180 through most of the 1970s and 1980s. The 180 was originally designed for police officers and prison guards, who needed controllable, fully automatic weapons. Feeding from a 275-round drum mounted flat against the top of the weapon, the 180 fires a blistering 1,500 rounds per minute. While the impact of a single .22 LR bullet is unlikely to kill anyone, 30 bullets striking within a hand span in just over a second are nothing to laugh off, and well-aimed automatic fire from an American 180 will chew straight through most soft body armor. When fired as a medium burst, the American 180 expends 20 shots; a long burst expends a minimum of 40 shots. Any burst that fires 20 or more bullets at a single target gains Armor Piercing 1.

FN P90 (5.7mm FN): The P90 was born from the concept of a personal defense weapon (PDW): a compact automatic weapon with better ballistic performance than a submachine gun, issued to rear-echelon military personnel who would find assault rifles too bulky while performing their daily duties. So far, the P90 has failed to gain acceptance in this role, but is in service with a few special operations units for CQB use against armored targets. A flat block of polymer about 20 inches long and six inches high, with its magazine lying horizontally atop and feeding downward into a bullpup action, the P90 barely looks like an actual gun. The P90 is an indisputably quirky weapon, but its comfortable ergonomics make it handle well. Its 5.7mm FN ammo has Armor Piercing 2.

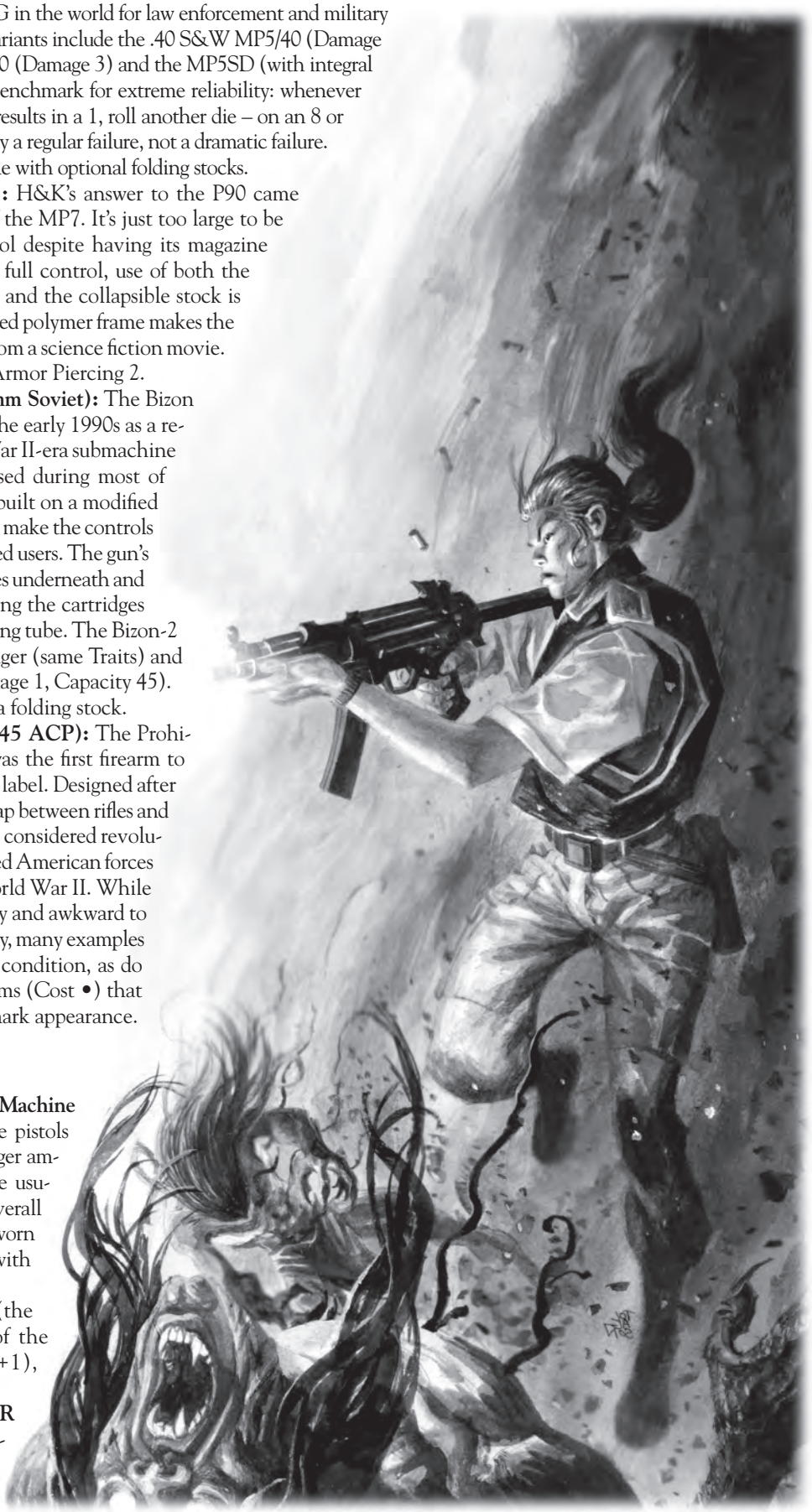
H&K MP5 family (9mm Luger): The iconic modern submachine gun is Heckler & Koch's flagship product, the MP5. Since its introduction in 1966, the MP5 has become

the single most popular SMG in the world for law enforcement and military use. The MP5's numerous variants include the .40 S&W MP5/40 (Damage 2[9 again]), the FBI's MP5/10 (Damage 3) and the MP5SD (with integral suppressor). The MP5 is a benchmark for extreme reliability: whenever a chance roll with an MP5 results in a 1, roll another die – on an 8 or higher, the chance roll is only a regular failure, not a dramatic failure. All MP5 models are available with optional folding stocks.

H&K MP7 (4.6mm): H&K's answer to the P90 came in 2001 with the release of the MP7. It's just too large to be considered a machine pistol despite having its magazine well in its pistol grip – for full control, use of both the fold-down vertical foregrip and the collapsible stock is recommended. A streamlined polymer frame makes the MP7 look like an escapee from a science fiction movie. The 4.6mm cartridge has Armor Piercing 2.

RSA Bizon-2 (9x18mm Soviet): The Bizon ("bison") was designed in the early 1990s as a replacement for the World War II-era submachine guns that Soviet troops used during most of the cold war. The Bizon is built on a modified AK-type assault rifle plan to make the controls more familiar to the intended users. The gun's cylindrical magazine attaches underneath and parallel to the barrel, holding the cartridges horizontally in a spiral feeding tube. The Bizon-2 is also available in 9mm Luger (same Traits) and 7.62x25mm Tokarev (Damage 1, Capacity 45). This gun's design includes a folding stock.

Thompson M1928 (.45 ACP): The Prohibition-era "Tommy gun" was the first firearm to bear the "submachine gun" label. Designed after World War I to bridge the gap between rifles and pistols, the Tommy gun was considered revolutionary at the time and served American forces with distinction during World War II. While the Tommy gun is too heavy and awkward to be commercially viable today, many examples still exist in good working condition, as do the 50- and 100-round drums (Cost •) that are part of the gun's trademark appearance.



Machine Pistols

Generic 9mm Luger Machine Pistol: Almost all machine pistols are chambered for 9mm Luger ammunition. These pistols are usually less than 10 inches in overall length, small enough to be worn as sidearms or concealed with minimal difficulty.

Examples: Glock 18 (the fully automatic version of the Glock 17: Capacity 31+1), Micro-Uzi

Beretta Model 93R (9mm Luger): Beretta developed the machine pistol variant of the Model

92 as a sidearm for police officers and soldiers entering CQB situations. The Model 93 is slightly longer than its parent design and features a fold-down grip hinged just in front of its trigger guard for two-handed operation. The Model 93 is limited to three-round bursts rather than fully automatic fire (no medium or long bursts). This pistol can be fitted with a detachable stock and can accept the standard 15-round magazines of the Model 92.

CZ Skorpion (.32 ACP): The vz.61 "Skorpion" is a popular machine pistol among Eastern European and North African security forces and criminals alike. The Skorpion's underpowered cartridge makes this gun more controllable than most machine pistols, especially with its folding stock extended, and this combines with the Skorpion's high rate of fire to render this pistol nightmarishly lethal at point-blank range. The Skorpion is also available in the vz.82 and vz.83 models (.380 ACP and 9x18mm Soviet, respectively: Damage 2, Strength 2 [3/4/5]).

H&K MP5K (9mm Luger): The machine pistol variant of the MP5 (the "K" stands for *kurz*, "short") is barely controllable, despite the vertical handle for a two-handed grip that hangs from the MP5K's stubby muzzle. The MP5K can accept its parent design's standard 30-round magazines, though this makes the gun quite awkward. H&K offers a unique security briefcase for the MP5, which has a blow-through patch, a set of internal clamps to hold the gun steady and a trigger linkage in the briefcase's handle. (Cost •••; while in the briefcase, the gun can only accept a 15-round magazine and firing it is always considered firing from the hip [see p. 50].)

Intratec TEC-9 (9mm Luger): The TEC-9 was the scourge of American streets in the 1980s, or so news reports of the time claimed. The original civilian-legal TEC-9s were autoloaders, but criminals quickly discovered that converting TEC-9s into fully automatic machine pistols was a trivial task. Critics never regarded the TEC-9 as a high-quality firearm, not without justification, and street gunsmithing exacerbated the problems of low production values. A civilian TEC-9 converted for full-auto fire (see p. 54) is highly unreliable: when attacking, do not re-roll 10s, and subtract any 1s from successes rolled. Civilian TEC-9s cost •.

MAC M10 (.45 ACP): The flagship of the now-defunct Military Armaments Corporation is more commonly known as an "Ingram," after its designer, or as a "MAC-10." The M10 has a painfully high rate of fire: 1,100 rounds per minute, or a full 32-round magazine in less than two seconds. This makes the MAC-10 nearly impossible to aim at any distance more than point-blank range, leading to a justified reputation as a "phone booth gun." It's also available in 9mm Luger (Damage 2). The M11, its .380 ACP cousin (also Damage 2), has an even higher rate of fire, at 1,600 rounds per minute. The M10 and M11 can be fired only in medium and long bursts — single shots and short bursts are not options.

Stechkin APS (9x18mm Soviet): These 1950s-era APS machine pistols were originally issued to armored vehicle crews and front-line officers, but quickly fell into disfavor for the weapons' underpowered cartridges and awkward handling. In the 1990s, this gun enjoyed a brief resurgence in the hands of Russian police tactical teams, who still favor the Stechkin as a sidearm over most available autoloaders. The Stechkin comes with a large rigid plastic — or, for early models, wooden — holster that clips onto the back of the grip to double as an awkward detachable stock.

Submachine Guns

Type	Damage	Ranges	Capacity	Strength	Size	Cost
Generic Submachine Guns						
Generic 9mm Luger	2	30/60/120	32+1	2(2/3/4)	2/L	•••
Generic .45 ACP	3	30/60/120	30+1	2(2/3/4)	2/N	•••
Notable Submachine Guns						
American 180	1*	20/40/80	275+1	1(2/2/2)	3	•••
FN P90	2*	40/80/160	50+1	2(2/3/3)	2/L	••••
H&K MP5*	2	30/60/120	30+1	2(2/3/3)	2/L	••••
H&K MP7	2*	40/80/160	20+1	2(2/3/3)	2/L	••••
RSA Bizon-2	2	30/60/120	64+1	2(2/3/3)	2/L	•••
Thompson M1928	3	25/50/100	30+1	2(2/3/3)	3	•••
Generic Machine Pistols						
Generic 9mm Luger	2	20/40/80	20+1	2(3/4/5)	1/J	•••
Notable Machine Pistols						
Beretta Model 93R*	2	20/40/80	20+1	2(3/-/-)*	1/J	••••
CZ Skorpion	1	15/30/60	20+1	1(2/3/4)	1/J	•••
H&K MP5K	2	20/40/80	15+1	2(3/4/5)	1/L	••••
Intratec TEC-9*	2	10/20/40	32+1	2(3/4/5)	1/J	•••*
MAC M10*	3	20/40/80	32+1	-(-/4/5)*	1/L	••••
Stechkin APS	2	20/40/80	20+1	2(3/4/5)	1/J	•••

* See text for notes or special rules.

Collapsible Stocks

Some longarms are available with folding or telescoping stocks. A stock normally allows the shooter to brace the gun against her shoulder to absorb the recoil. Removing this makes the gun shorter but harder to control. A folding-stock-equipped longarm being fired without the stock has its Strength requirement increased by 1, but Size 3 and 2/N weapons become Size 2/L with their stocks folded, allowing concealment under a long coat.

A few handguns and machine pistols are likewise equipped with folding or detachable stocks. These weapons are designed to be fired one-handed, and use of a stock is a luxury. Such weapons have their Strength requirements reduced by 1 and their Sizes increased by 1 when equipped with their stocks. Individual descriptions note which firearms come with folding or detachable stocks.

Collapsing or extending a folding stock is a free action. Attaching or removing a detachable stock requires two turns. For more information on "Collapsible Stocks," see p. 167.

Rifles

The broad category of "rifles" includes an array of firearms from bolt-action .22 caliber target guns to .50 caliber anti-material weapons. For game purposes, any longarm that uses rifle-caliber ammunition and is not capable of burst or automatic fire falls into this category, including bolt-action, lever-action, break-action, pump-action and semi-automatic weapons.

The primary differences between target, hunting and sniper rifles are durability, precision and price tag. Target rifles, especially those used for high-end competitions, defy plausibility in their precision but are extremely sensitive to even casual rough treatment. Hunting rifles, which must be affordable by their target markets, sacrifice extreme accuracy for simplicity and durability. Sniper rifles must be capable of enduring extreme abuse and retaining at least a moderate degree of precision, and are usually chambered for standard military calibers and built to accept standard military accessories.

Why choose a rifle?

Rifles have the longest effective ranges of any human-portable weapons short of guided missiles. Rifles are readily available in most nations if the buyers have the proper credentials (or cash substitute), and are likewise legal to transport with the proper precautions.

Who uses rifles?

Hunters, snipers, assassins, competition marksmen, casual recreational shooters — all use rifles.

Generic Plinking Rifle: "Plinking" is slang for casually putting bullets into improvised backyard targets. The best quality in a plinking rifle is low cost, both for the gun itself and for the ammunition, so .22 LR is the most common caliber for these weapons. Plinking rifles are also used for teaching new shooters, particularly children, the fundamentals of gun handling and marksmanship, and for hunting very small game such as squirrels. A plinking rifle typically feeds from an internal magazine and is largely inadequate for combat use.

Bolt-action examples: Cooper Model 57, CZ 452-2E (detachable magazine), Marlin Model 15YN (Capacity 1), Rogue Rifle Chipmunk (Capacity 1), Sako 75 Finnfire Hunter

Pump-action examples: Remington Model 572 (Capacity 15+1), Taurus Model 621 (Capacity 12+1)

Lever-action examples: Browning BL-22 (Capacity 15+1), Marlin Model 1897 Cowboy (Capacity 19+1)

Semi-automatic examples: Marlin Model 922M, Remington Model 597 (Capacity 10+1, detachable magazine)

Generic Varmint Rifle: Rifles in this general category are chambered for a variety of mid-range calibers, including the .223 Remington and .270 Winchester. In addition to "varminting," or eradicating pests and small predators, these rifles are also used for target practice and competition shooting. Rifles in this caliber range occasionally find combat applications when necessity dictates, but most serious sniper rifles use larger calibers for better range and lethality. Varmint rifles are almost always bolt-action and feed from an internal magazine.

Bolt-action examples: Anschutz Model 1740, Howa M-1500 Varmint, Sako 75 Varmint, Savage Model 10GY Youth (Capacity 4+1), Winchester Model 70 Coyote

Generic Hunting Rifle: The archetypal "deer rifle" is available in a wide array of calibers, of which 7mm Magnum, .300 Winchester Magnum, .308 Winchester and .338 Laupa are just a small sample. This is the most common type of rifle across the world, universally used for competition, hunting and murder. Many military and police sniper rifles are built on hunting rifle platforms as well. Hunting rifles, like varmint rifles, are almost always bolt-action with internal magazines.

Bolt-action examples: Colt Light Rifle, Dakota Model 97 Lightweight Hunter, Ruger M77R, Sako 75 Hunter, Savage Model 114 (detachable magazine), Steyr SBS Prohunter

Semi-automatic examples: Browning Bar Mark II Safari, Remington Model 7400

Generic Sniper Rifle: In many cases, the only differences between a hunting rifle and a sniper rifle are the materials involved in their construction and their respective price tags. Sniper rifles are almost always chambered for one of a very few calibers that militaries across the world have adopted as standard-issue: 7.62mm NATO or 7.62x54mm Soviet. In recent years, a few sniper rifles have appeared in civilian calibers such as .300 Winchester Magnum or .338 Laupa, though these have not yet gained widespread acceptance in the slow-adapting military procurement systems. Sniper rifles typically rely on detachable magazines.

Bolt-action examples: Accuracy International Arctic

Warfare (British and German standard; internal magazine), Enfield L42A1 (former British standard), FN Mini-Hecate (internal magazine), FR F2 (French standard), Mauser 86SR, SiG-Sauer SSG-3000 (Capacity 5+1), Steyr SSG

Semi-automatic examples: H&K MSG-90 (Capacity 20+1), IMI Galatz (Capacity 20+1), NORINCO QBU-88 (Chinese standard), Springfield Armory M21 (Capacity 20+1), Zastava M76

Generic Big-Game Rifle: Deer- and human-hunting calibers are insufficient for putting down large or dangerous game like bear, Cape buffalo, elk and werewolf. Big-game rifles are designed to handle the heavy-caliber magnum loads necessary for such sport: .375 H&H, .458 Magnum, .460 Weatherby and the like. These rifles are almost always bolt-action, with a few break-action models still in production, as semi-automatic actions are not strong enough to handle such high firing pressures. Big-game rifles feed from internal magazines.

Bolt-action examples: CZ 550 Safari Magnum, Dakota 76 African (Capacity 4+1), Ruger M77 Mark II Magnum, Winchester Model 70 Classic Safari Express

Break-action examples (*all Capacity 1*)*:* Dakota Model 10, Ruger No. 1-H Tropical Rifle

A big-game rifle must be properly braced for a shooter to manage its recoil. If a character fires a big-game rifle from the hip or in any other position in which the stock isn't securely tucked into his shoulder and he hasn't set himself to handle the gun, the rifle's Strength requirement increases to 5. Roll the rifle's Damage rating as an attack dice pool against the character that inflicts bashing damage and has the Knockdown effect (see the **World of Darkness Rulebook**, p. 168).

Generic Anti-Material Rifle: Anti-material rifles (AMRs) are chambered for heavy military calibers originally developed for anti-tank rifles during World War I and later applied to heavy machine guns: .50 BMG and 12.7mm Soviet. These rifles are usually between four and five feet long and weigh well over 40 pounds, making them completely impractical for use in firefights. When used for sniping, however, AMRs can kill a human-sized target at well over a mile away. As their name suggests, their primary official use is the destruction of material targets, such as land mines and light vehicles. In most nations, AMRs are available for civilian sale only with special permits, and these rifles have no legitimate hunting or self-defense applications. Most anti-material rifles are bolt-action with detachable magazines, though a few rare semi-automatic designs do exist.

Bolt-action examples: Accuracy International Arctic Warfare 50, FN Hecate II (Capacity 7+1), RSA KSVK, Steyr .50 HS (Capacity 1), Zastava M-93 Black Arrow, ZVI Falcon (Capacity 2+1)

All anti-material rifles have Armor Piercing 6.

An anti-material rifle's recoil is even stronger than that of a big-game rifle. The same recoil rules for firing from a bad position apply, but, with an anti-material rifle, the *only* position that is considered "good" is a prone stance with the rifle's bipod deployed.

Bolt-Action Rifles

The following bolt-action rifles are sufficiently unique or iconic to merit special attention. Unless otherwise noted, all feed from internal magazines.

AI AW Covert (7.62mm NATO): English-based Accuracy International developed its Arctic Warfare series of sniper rifles to satisfy a UK military requirement. As the name implies, all of the AW-series rifles are designed to handle extreme cold conditions in which many other weapons would fail to operate. The AW Covert is officially marketed for counter-terrorist teams that may need to move their weapons discreetly, though critics have observed that these same characteristics make these sniper rifles ideal for assassins. This rifle comes with a briefcase shielded against x-rays, and can be broken down into the weapon's component parts and stowed in this briefcase in about three minutes. The AW Covert is also equipped with an integral suppressor that runs the length of the rifle's barrel. Sales of the AW Covert are restricted to military and government clients, but rumors persist that a few of these guns have found their way to the international arms market.

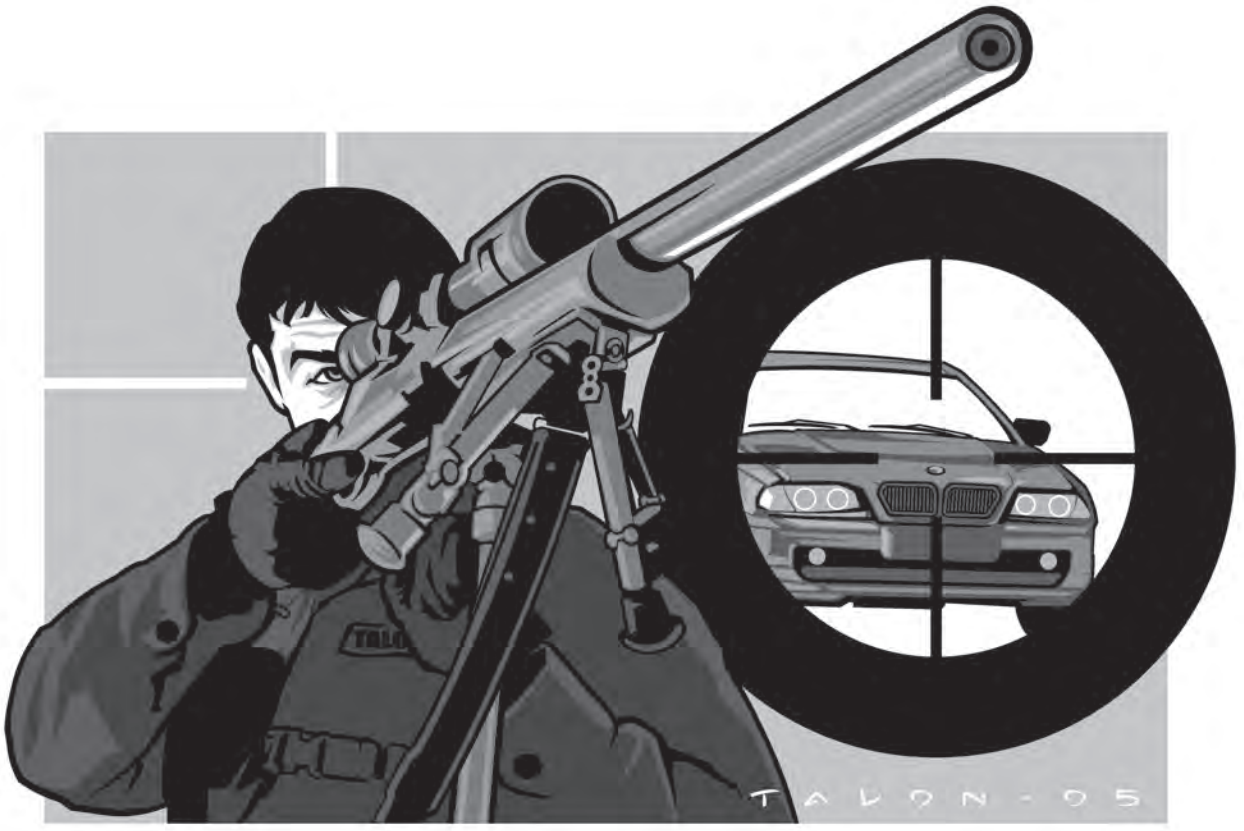
Mauser Model 1898 (8mm Mauser): This iconic German-built weapon has influenced the design of virtually every bolt-action rifle made during the last century. This rifle is legendary for its reliability, surpassing even most modern competitors. Germany issued these rifles to its military through the end of World War II and licensed production throughout the world. Countless thousands of Mauser '98s chambered for various similar calibers are still in circulation as collector's pieces, hunting rifles or insurgents' weapons.

Remington Model 700 (.308 Winchester): Remington's flagship gun, first offered in 1963, is *the* iconic hunting rifle of the Western hemisphere. This rifle is currently produced in close to 30 calibers, ranging from .17 Remington (Damage 2, Armor Piercing 1) to .375 Remington Ultra Magnum (Damage 5, Capacity 3+1), and at least a few examples can be found in any gun store in the Americas. Two sniper variants (with identical Traits) exist: the U.S. Marine Corps' M40A1 and the U.S. Army's M24 SWS (Sniper Weapon System).

Weatherby Mk. V (.460 Weatherby Magnum): The archetypal big-game rifle appeared in 1956 and has since become universally recognized as capable of handling anything that walks the surface of the Earth. The Mk. V is one of the strongest rifles in the world, virtually impossible to break through casual misuse. Production standards are consistently high, with precision to match the gun's power. In addition to its rhino-killing .460 Weatherby Magnum load, the Mk. V is available in many lighter calibers (Damage 4 and Capacity 5+1 for varmint calibers, Damage 4 [9 again] and Capacity 4+1 for hunting calibers). The Mk. V is subject to recoil as a generic big game rifle.

Lever-Action Rifles

Lever-action rifles are rare in modern use but carry an undeniable mystique for anyone who grew up on the cowboy movies of the 1930s through the 1970s.



Unless otherwise noted, all lever-action rifles feed from internal magazines.

Spencer Repeating Carbine (.52 caliber): The first rifle with a detachable magazine to be used by any military was the Spencer repeater. The United States adopted it in 1863 under the personal endorsement of President Lincoln, and over 100,000 Spencers saw service on the Union side of the Civil War. Spencers are museum pieces today, with their copper-cased cartridges long since out of mass production.

Winchester Model 1873 (.44-40): "The gun that won the West" was ubiquitous in post-Civil War America and still occupies a special place in the mythos of the Old West. Like many lever-action rifles of the period, this Winchester was chambered for a common pistol caliber so that frontiersmen could use the same supply of ammunition for all their weapons. Modern reproductions are still available through several manufacturers.

Semi-Automatic Rifles

Semi-automatic rifles are not as popular as bolt-action rifles in civilian use, and fell by the wayside in military service with the introduction of assault rifles, but semi-automatic rifles still find enough applications to be commercially successful. Unless otherwise noted, all semi-automatic rifles feed from detachable magazines.

Barrett M107 (.50 BMG): The Barrett "Light 50" brought the anti-material rifle to public prominence with its 1982 introduction under the original designation "Model 82." The first successful semi-automatic .50 BMG sniper rifle has attained infamy completely out of proportion to the rifle's actual production numbers, but with kills recorded at more than 1,800 yards, perhaps prospective targets have reason to be concerned. This rifle is in service with at least 30 national militaries, and is a favorite in civilian long-range shooting competitions in nations where the rifle is legal for purchase. The four-foot-nine-inch, 32-pound M107 is a monster to transport or wield, and is subject to recoil as a generic anti-material rifle. It has Armor Piercing 6.

H&K PSG-1 (7.62mm NATO): The deadly accurate PSG-1 is the performance standard against which all other mid-caliber sniper rifles are measured. H&K introduced this design in the early 1980s as a police and counter-terrorist rifle, but its $10,000+ price tag limited the rifle's accessibility to most prospective customers and the substantial 18-pound weight made the gun unacceptable for military service. Production was discontinued in the late 1990s, but the rifle is still a prized weapon for marksmen fortunate enough to have access to one.

KAC SR-25 (7.62mm NATO): This covert operations variant of the M16 design returns to the parent gun's original heavier caliber. The SR-25 is in use with Israeli special operations units and U.S. Navy SEAL teams as a tactical sniper rifle. It comes with a removable suppressor sleeve that slides around its entire barrel, dampening the sound of its fire without reducing the muzzle velocity of standard ammunition. Civilian sale of the SR-25 is heavily regulated, but M16 aficionados regard the SR-25 as a highly sought-after collector's piece.

RSA "Dragunov" SVD (7.62x54mm Soviet): During the early cold war, the Soviet Union examined the battlefield successes of its World War II snipers and decided that every infantry squad in the Red Army needed its own sharpshooter. The skeletal-looking SVD (Snaiperskaya Vintovka Dragunova — "Dragunov Sniper Rifle") debuted in 1963 as the rifle of these "designated marksmen." This rifle is still in widespread service (and licensed production) everywhere in the world that the

Soviet Union exerted its military influence, and civilian collectors will pay top dollar for an authentic Russian-built model. Contrary to popular belief, its standard-issue PSO-1 telescopic sight was not a night vision scope, but some later limited-production models did come with such equipment. The standard sniper-grade ammunition issued to SVD-equipped marksmen is a steel-core round with Armor Piercing 3, but civilian FMJ ammunition loses this benefit.

Ruger 10/22 (.22 LR): When Ruger introduced the 10/22 in 1964, the sport shooting community acclaimed it an "instant classic." Two generations of American boys grew up learning to shoot with 10/22s, and hundreds of thousands of examples are in circulation across the world. The 10/22 uses a unique semi-detachable revolving magazine: changing magazines takes two full turns, but can be reloaded while still in the rifle.

Ruger Mini-14 (5.56mm NATO): This popular "ranch gun" is a scaled-down copy of the military M14, with just enough design changes to avoid patent infringement lawsuits. The similar Mini-30 is chambered for 7.62x39mm Soviet ammunition (identical Traits), and the AC-556 (Cost •••) is a fully automatic Mini-14. Mini-14s and Mini-30s are common throughout rural areas of the Americas, and AC-556s can be found in the arms lockers of many small police departments.

Simonov SKS (7.62x39mm Soviet): The Samozaryadnyi Karabin sistemi Simonova ("Self-loading Carbine system, Simonov") was designed for World War II, but entered service just a few months too late for service during that conflict. The Red Army quickly phased the SKS out in favor of the AK-47, but the SKS was sufficiently popular that millions were exported and built under license across the Soviet sphere of influence. The SKS is typical of the Soviet weapon design ethos, which sacrifices extreme accuracy for durability, simplicity and low cost. Today, surplus SKS rifles are widely available on the civilian market at dirt-cheap prices. The SKS feeds from an internal magazine.

Springfield Armory M1 Garand (.30-06): The U.S. Army adopted the Garand in 1936 as the army's first semi-automatic rifle. With the outbreak of hostilities in 1941, production went into high gear, with over four million M1s coming off the assembly lines by 1945. The Garand proved consistently reliable under World War II's worst battlefield conditions, and is another legendary rifle whose popularity has far outstripped its official service record. Thousands are still in circulation worldwide. Cost given is for new copies or collector's editions; surplus models, including those sold through the U.S. government's Civilian Marksmanship Program, cost only •. The Garand uses a detachable magazine; when it's empty, the gun automatically launches it into the air with a distinctive "ping!" The Garand's .30-06 ammo gives it Armor Piercing 2.

Rifles

Type	Damage	Ranges	Capacity	Strength	Size	Cost
Generic Rifles						
Generic Plinking Rifle	1	30/60/120	5+1	1	2/N	•
Generic Target Rifle	4	150/300/600	5+1	2	3	••
Generic Hunting Rifle	4 (9 again)	200/400/800	4+1	2	3	•••
Generic Sniper Rifle	4 (9 again)	250/500/1000	10+1	2	3	••••
Generic Big-Game Rifle	5	250/500/1000	3+1	3*	3	••••
Generic Anti-Material Rifle	5 (8 again)*	300/600/1200	5+1	3*	4	•••••
Notable Bolt-Action Rifles						
AI AW Covert*	3	100/200/400	10+1	2	3	•••••
Mauser Model 1898	4 (9 again)	200/400/800	5+1	2	3	••
Remington Model 700	4 (9 again)	200/400/800	4+1	2	3	•••
Weatherby Mk. V	5	250/500/1000	2+1	3*	3	••••
Notable Lever-Action Rifles						
Spencer Repeating Carbine	3	75/150/300	7+1	2	3	••
Winchester Model 1873	3	125/250/500	12+1	2	3	•••
Notable Semi-Automatic Rifles						
Barrett M107	5 (8 again)*	300/600/1200	10+1	3*	4	•••••
H&K PSG-1	4 (8 again)	250/500/1000	20+1	2	3	•••••
KAC SR-25*	4 (9 again)	125/250/500	20+1	2	3	••••
RSA "Dragunov" SVD	4 (9 again)*	250/500/1000	10+1	2	3	••••
Ruger 10/22	1	30/60/120	10+1	1	2/N	•
Ruger Mini-14	4	150/300/600	30+1	2	3	••
Simonov SKS	4	200/400/800	10+1	2	3	•
Springfield Armory M1 Garand	4 (9 again)	225/450/900	8+1	3	3	•••*

* See text for notes or special rules.

Assault Rifles

The primary military weapons of the modern era, assault rifles are burst-capable or fully automatic firearms chambered for rifle-caliber ammunition and feeding from detachable magazines. The design philosophy behind the assault rifle is to give the individual infantryman an easily handled weapon with a large magazine capacity, fully automatic capability and lightweight, high-velocity ammunition. Modern assault rifles use lighter and shorter-ranged ammunition than older designs, a response to the decreasing average range of firefights since World War II. This has resulted in a gradual reduction of length and weight at the expense of long-range lethality.

Why choose an assault rifle?

Assault rifles typically sacrifice some of a rifle's range in favor of fully automatic capability, but without the weight or expense of a machine gun. Assault rifles' detachable magazines make these rifles as quick to load as they are to empty. In a large-scale fight, the ability to quickly lay down 30 randomly aimed rounds to keep an enemy's head down may be more important than a single well-placed shot that takes 15 seconds to line up.

Who uses assault rifles?

Soldiers, police tactical units, militias in lawless areas of the world, well-funded criminals with high-stakes agendas — all use assault rifles.

Generic 5.56mm NATO Assault Rifle: The vast majority of modern assault rifles are chambered for the 5.56mm NATO cartridge (which is essentially a .223 Remington round made slightly more powerful). Even former Soviet-bloc nations are adopting and producing rifles in this caliber. Critics have considered the 5.56mm round underpowered and inadequate since its introduction in the late 1950s, but this round weighs only half as much as a comparable amount of 7.62mm ammunition, which means soldiers can carry much more ammunition. Virtually all conventional-layout assault rifles can be fitted with collapsible stocks.

Examples: Beretta AR-70, FN FNC, H&K HK33, H&K G36 (German standard), HOWA Type 89 (Japanese standard), IMI Galil, Ishapore INSAS (Indian standard), SiG 550 (Swiss standard)

Generic 5.56mm NATO Bullpup Assault Rifle: Bullpup designs are most common in assault rifles, whose users often need the combination of compactness and lethality that the configuration provides. Critics complain that these rifles are difficult to mount accessories (especially grenade launchers) on, too short to use with bayonets and harder to maintain, but many militaries find bullpup assault rifles suitable for widespread deployment.

Examples: Enfield L85A1 (British standard), GIAT FAMAS G2 (French standard), IMI Tavor TAR-21 (Israeli standard), ST Kinetics SAR-21, Vektor CR-21

Generic 7.62mm NATO Assault Rifle: The early cold war saw the widespread adoption of the 7.62mm NATO cartridge (.308 Remington to civilians) by Western militaries, and export sales spread this cartridge across the globe. Assault rifles chambered for this caliber are older designs than their 5.56mm counterparts, and tend to be heavier and more rugged. Some sources apply the name "battle rifle" to these larger-caliber weapons, but this is usually a meaningless distinction. Most of these rifles are out of active service with First World militaries, but are globally ubiquitous.

Examples: CETME Model C, FN FAL (former standard for several NATO nations, common across Africa), H&K G3 (former German standard, common in South America), Springfield Armory M14

Generic Carbine Variation: Most assault rifles are available in carbine configurations, which reduce weight and barrel length. This tradeoff makes carbines harder to handle in fully automatic fire and reduces their effective range, but is considered acceptable for troops that need weapons that are easier to handle in confined quarters (vehicle crews, paratroops and so on). A carbine's Range is reduced by 25/50/75 and its Strength requirement for automatic fire increases by one, but its Size is reduced to 2. Many carbines are built with folding stocks.

Generic Civilian Variation: Almost all assault rifles are available in civilian "sporting" versions. These weapons are capable of semi-automatic fire only, but are otherwise identical to their parent designs. A generic civilian assault rifle has its Cost reduced by 1 (to a minimum of ••).

Colt M16 et al. (5.56mm NATO): In 1956, the U.S. Army solicited a proposal for a low-caliber rifle after analysis of battlefield data from World War II and the Korean War showed that most firefights happened within 300 yards. The prototype, the Armalite AR-15, was sent to Vietnam in 1962 for combat tests, then licensed to Colt for mass production under the military designation M16. Initial feedback

Assault Rifles

Type	Damage	Ranges	Capacity	Strength	Size	Cost
Generic Assault Rifles						
Generic 5.56mm AR	4	150/300/600	30+1	2(2/3/4)	3	•••
Generic 5.56mm Bullpup AR	4	150/300/600	30+1	2(2/3/4)	2/L	••••
Generic 7.62mm AR	4 (9 again)	200/400/800	20+1	3(3/4/5)	3	•••
Notable Assault Rifles						
Colt M16	4	150/300/600	30+1	2(2/3/4)	3	•••
Steyr AUG*	4	150/300/600	42+1	2(2/3/4)	2/L	••••
RSA AK-47*	4	125/250/500	30+1	2(2/3/4)	3	••

* See text for notes or special rules.

after widespread Army adoption in 1965 was discouraging. The original design did not perform well under battlefield conditions, and the flimsy construction of the all-plastic stocks led soldiers to criticize these guns as "made by Mattel" (a toy company that really was subcontracted to mold some of the plastic parts). Further development, resulting in the M16A1, solved most of the gun's reliability problems by the early 1970s. Post-Vietnam, studies showed that the M16A1's fully automatic capability led soldiers to forego marksmanship in favor of "spray and pray" shooting, so the M16A2 was introduced in 1981 with only semi-automatic and three-round burst capability. Today, the M16 family is in use as the standard assault rifle of the U.S. military and over 50 allied and moderately friendly nations.

The Traits given are for modern M16s (the M16A2 and A4, and the full-auto A3). Modern carbine versions have collapsible stocks and are designated M4 (three-round burst only) and M4A1 (full-auto). Original M16s are rare, but still available in some Third World countries (Cost ••, do not re-roll 10s). Other companies make licensed copies — the Canadian Diemaco C7 and its relatives are widely regarded as better than the original design. Some manufacturers also produce copies of the AR-10, a prototype that spawned the AR-15's design (treat an AR-10 as a generic 7.62mm NATO assault rifle).

Steyr AUG (5.56mm NATO): The *Armee Universal Gewehr* (Universal Army Rifle) is not a revolutionary design, but was distinctly evolutionary when released in 1977. The AUG was the first bullpup rifle to be commercially successful, despite looking like a refugee from a low-budget science fiction thriller (in which, ironically, it was later often used as a blaster rifle prop). The AUG's carrying handle includes a 1.5-magnification scope and the magazines are clear plastic so the shooter can tell at a glance how many rounds she has left. The AUG is also modular: with simple hand tools and a conversion kit (Cost •••), a user can break the gun down and re-assemble it into one of three variant configurations in about 15 minutes. These configurations include carbine, light machine gun (Range 175/350/700) and 9mm Luger submachine gun (Damage 2, Range 30/60/120, Capacity 30+1, Strength 2; requires different magazines).

RSA AK-47 (7.62x39mm Soviet): The most-produced firearm in the world is instantly recognizable even to observers who know nothing about guns. The *Avtomat Kalashnikova* 47's broken-nosed profile first appeared in the Red Army's ranks in 1949. Since then, countless variations have appeared across the world. A few of the more common include the AK-74 (the AK-47's replacement in Russian front-line service, chambered for 5.45mm Soviet: same Traits), the AK-101 (a 5.56mm NATO version intended for export sales: same Traits) and the AKS-74U-UBN (a 5.45mm special operations carbine with a removable suppressor: apply generic carbine variation, Cost ••••). All assault rifles built on the AK-47 platform are archetypal Russian weapons: slightly inaccurate, but able to still fire on demand after 30 years of abuse that would leave other guns rusted and fungus-eaten wrecks. Whenever a chance roll with an AK-47 or relative results in a 1, roll another die; on a 7 or higher, the chance roll is only a regular failure, not a dramatic failure.

Shotguns

Shotguns are the predatory reptiles of the firearm world, direct modern evolutions of centuries-old designs. Shotguns feature large-bore barrels (almost always smoothbore) and use heavy, low-velocity ammunition, making them brutal at close range but ineffective over distance. Shotguns' large ammo — a 12 gauge shell is 19.5mm wide and 70mm long, compared to a 9x19mm pistol cartridge — enables them to use a wide variety of specialty ammunition types, from the useful to the ludicrous (see p. 86). Unless otherwise noted, all shotguns feed from internal magazines.

Why choose a shotgun?

For close-range combat, a shotgun is the ultimate weapon, short of a flamethrower. Shotguns are ubiquitous worldwide, with ammunition readily available. Break-action and pump-action models are rugged and simple in construction, able to withstand harsh environments that would wreck semi-automatic firearms. Specialty ammunition allows shotguns to be adapted to many tactical situations. The intimidation factor of a gun with a bore large enough for the shooter's thumb is enough to end some fights before they begin.

Who uses shotguns?

Hunters, criminals with access only to civilian weapons, American law enforcement officers, civilians serious about home defense — all use shotguns.

Generic Break-Action: The archetypal farmer's weapon is the double-barreled break-action shotgun, invariably chambered for 12 gauge. Many sportsmen also use break-action shotguns for hunting. Break-action shotguns come in two basic configurations: over-under and side-by-side, which differ only in how the barrels are arranged. A basic double-barreled shotgun is dirt cheap, but presentation models can feature engraving, precious metal inlay and hand-rubber finishes that can drive prices all the way up to •••••. Single-barreled break-action shotguns exist as well (Capacity 1), but just aren't as cool.

Examples: American Arms Silver II, Beretta S682, Browning Citori, Browning Superposed (gold-inlaid presentation guns, Cost •••••), Charles Daly Diamond Grade (engraved and inlaid competition guns, Cost ••••), Franchi Alcione, Stoeger/IGA Coach Gun, Winchester Model 21

Generic Lever-Action: Lever-action shotguns were never common, as more reliable and higher-capacity pump-action designs supplanted them within a few decades of their introduction during the late 19th century. Only a few scattered designs are still in production.

Examples: Marlin Model 410 (.410 gauge, Capacity 5+1), Winchester Model 1887

Generic Pump-Action: Most hunters favor pump-action shotguns for their larger ammo capacity and high reliability. They are also common in law enforcement use due to their lower cost than semi-auto models. Many areas restrict the capacity of shotguns for hunting applications: 4+1 is normal for hunting deer and large game and 3+1 for birds and small game. This capacity reduction is provided via the insertion of a magazine plug, which can be removed in about 10 minutes, but most over-the-counter civilian shotguns are sold with 5+1, 4+1 or 3+1 magazine plugs installed. As with break-action guns, presentation models are available with higher prices corresponding to the quality of craftsmanship.

Examples: Benelli Nova (Capacity 4+1), Browning BPS (Capacity 4+1), Ithaca Model 37, Mossberg Model 590 (Capacity 9+1), Remington Model 870 (ubiquitous police shotgun), Winchester Model 1300

Generic Semi-Automatic: Semi-automatic shotguns have slightly less recoil than pump-action models and are capable of faster sustained fire, but are more likely to jam, especially if fired as quickly as possible. However, this faster rate of fire makes semi-automatic shotguns preferable for combat applications. As with pump-action shotguns, many civilian-market semi-autos are sold with magazine plugs installed.

Examples: Benelli M2 Practical (competition shotgun, Capacity 8+1, Size 4), Benelli M3 Super 90, Beretta Model 1201FP, Browning Auto-5 (first commercially successful semi-auto shotgun, introduced in 1903), Fabarm SAT8 (Capacity 7+1), Franchi 48 AL, Franchi SPAS-12 (Capacity 8+1), Franchi SPAS-15 (detachable magazine, Capacity 6+1), Remington Model 1100 (Capacity 4+1)

Generic Gauge Variations: The generic shotguns presented here all have Traits suitable for 12 gauge, by far the most common. Other gauges exist. Apply Damage, Range, Capacity and Strength adjustments as follows:

Generic Size Variations: The simple design of shotguns makes them easy to cut down in size for easier storage and concealment. Anyone with access to a hacksaw can cut off a shotgun's barrel and stock to make it easier to stick under a trench coat. For game purposes, the following options are available:

Gauge	Damage	Range	Capacity*	Strength
.410	2 (9 again)	–10/–20/–30	+2	–1
28	2 (9 again)	–10/–20/–30	+2	–1
20	3 (9 again)	–5/–10/–15	+1	–1
16	4	same	same	same
10	5	+5/+10/+15	–1	+1

* Break-action shotguns' Capacity does not change with different gauges. Duh.

Short Barrel: The minimum practical length for a shotgun barrel with any degree of useful performance is about 12 to 14 inches, while the legal minimum in the United States is 18 inches (with an overall weapon length of 26 inches). Cutting a shotgun's barrel down from the usual

standard of 21 to 30 inches decreases the size at the expense of effective range: apply a –5/-10/-15 reduction to Range and reduce Size to 2/N. This modification may be applied to any shotgun that feeds from an internal magazine.

Pistol Grip: Removing a shotgun's stock and substituting a pistol grip reduces the shotgun's Size to 2/N (2/L if it also features a short barrel) and increases its Strength requirement by 1. This is a common modification for combat shotguns in both police and military applications. This modification may be applied to any shotgun that feeds from an internal magazine.

Holdout Shotgun: Only a break-action shotgun can be cut down to a pistol grip and six inches of barrel. The resulting weapon is as dangerous to its wielder as to the intended target: Size 1/J, Range 2/5/10, Strength 5 and every 1 on an attack roll cancels a success.

Pump-Action Shotguns

KAC Masterkey (12 gauge): SWAT and special operations teams executing rapid entries often use shotguns to blow the hinges and locks off doors, usually with breaching ammunition (see p. 86). This tactic has the disadvantage of leaving the first man through the door with a mostly empty weapon. The Masterkey is the best-known example of a breaching shotgun, one designed to be mounted under the barrel of an assault rifle. The Masterkey is a cut-down pump-action shotgun, equipped with attachment brackets strong enough to keep it from tearing loose from the rifle to which it's attached. Mounting or removing a Masterkey on an assault rifle takes hand tools and 10 minutes. If a character is desperate enough to fire a Masterkey on its own, she suffers a –2 penalty (the shotgun has no grip at all) and the gun's Strength requirement increases to 6.

Winchester Model 1897 (12 gauge): The shotgun became an accepted military weapon upon American entry into World War I, when soldiers took hundreds of Model 1897s to Europe as "trench guns." They were so effective in the close confines of brutal trench combat that Germany tried (unsuccessfully) to have shotguns outlawed for use in war. Combat journals of the period record several instances of soldiers using these guns to shoot enemy hand grenades out of the air, which only added to the guns' appeal. Unlike most shotguns, the Model 1897 has a mounting lug for a bayonet.

Semi-Automatic Shotguns

Daewoo USAS-12 (12 gauge): The USAS-12 is a South Korean export designed by Daewoo Precision Industries as the ultimate CQB weapon. Civilian and law enforcement models are semi-automatic only, but the original military designs are capable of fully automatic fire. The USAS-12 feeds from a 20-round detachable drum or a 10-round detachable magazine (early versions were equipped with 28-round drums but suffered feeding problems). The USAS-12's recoil in full-auto mode is nigh-unendurable: the gun's Strength requirements increases to 4 for a short burst, 5 for a medium burst and 6 for a long burst. USAS-12s are considered destructive devices under U.S. law (see p. 192).

Reutech Striker (12 gauge): The South African-built Striker was born in the Rhodesian counter-insurgency operations of the 1970s, when urban and jungle combat required the most vicious close-range weapon possible. The Striker was originally produced by Armsel and exported under the "Streetsweeper" name, which quickly became a general appellation for any combat shotgun. The Striker is a fully automatic shotgun that feeds from a spring-driven revolver-style rotating cylinder. The shooter must wind the cylinder's spring before it will turn (2 full turns for Strength 3+ characters, 3 turns for Strength 2, 5 turns for Strength 1). The Striker's Strength requirement increases to 4 for a short burst; for a medium burst, which consumes all 12 shells, the Strength requirement increases to 5. Strikers are considered destructive devices under U.S. law (see p. 192).

RSA Saiga 12k (12 gauge): Proving that the AK-47's basic design can do *anything*, RSA engineers adapted it to fire 12-gauge shells in the early 1980s. The Saiga 12k is popular with Russian shooting enthusiasts, police departments and private security agencies. It feeds from a detachable magazine and is also available in 20 gauge and .410 gauge (see "Shotgun Damage by Caliber," p. 88).

Shotguns

Type	Damage	Ranges	Capacity	Strength	Size	Cost
Generic Shotguns						
Generic Break-Action	4 (9 again)	20/40/80	2	3	3	•
Generic Lever-Action	4 (9 again)	20/40/80	2+1	3	3	••
Generic Pump-Action	4 (9 again)	20/40/80	8+1*	3	3	••
Generic Semi-Automatic	4 (9 again)	20/40/80	5+1*	3	3	•••
Notable Pump-Action Shotguns						
KAC Masterkey*	4 (9 again)	5/15/30	3+1	3	1*	••••
Winchester Model 1897	4 (9 again)	20/40/80	6+1	3	3	••
Notable Semi-Automatic Shotguns						
Daewoo USAS-12*	4 (9 again)	20/40/80	20+1	3(4/5/6)*	4	••••
Reutech Striker*	4 (9 again)	20/40/80	12*	3(4/5/-)*	4	••••
RSA Saiga 12k	4 (9 again)	20/40/80	8+1	3	3	••

* See text for notes or special rules.

Machine Guns

Machine guns are fully automatic firearms designed for sustained periods of automatic fire. The first machine gun design is attributed to Leonardo da Vinci, but modern machine guns appeared during the late 19th century. Through the 1930s, most machine guns were water-cooled, with water-filled sleeves around the barrels to prevent overheating and catastrophic failure. World War II and later models are sufficiently robust to maintain their reliability with normal air circulation, and can fire hundreds or thousands of rounds without pausing more than a few seconds at a time.

Current machine gun designs are subdivided into three main categories: light machine guns or squad automatic weapons (SAWs), which are assigned to individual infantry squads; medium or general-purpose machine guns (GPMGs), which are mounted on vehicles or carried and served by a dedicated three-man crew and heavy machine guns (HMGs), which are not human-portable and are reserved exclusively for use on vehicles and in fixed defensive positions. Most SAWs and all GPMGs and HMGs are belt-fed. Unless otherwise noted, machine guns can be fired in bursts only.

Why choose a machine gun?

As long as a machine gun is supplied with ammunition, the weapon can lay down a veritable stream of lead (see "Suppressive Fire," p. 97). Individual bullets are usually the same as those fired by assault rifles, and thus no more deadly when taken singly, but machine guns put bullets out in streams. A machine gun is the best possible option for providing fire support from a stationary position and keeping an enemy's head down while allies get into position to do nasty things to the enemy.

Who uses machine guns?

Military personnel and their less-trained Third World equivalents. In any area with law, not even the most ruthless criminals favor machine guns, as use of one will draw instant police and military attention.

Generic SAW: Squad automatic weapons tend to use the same ammunition as the assault rifles alongside which the SAWs are deployed. In most cases, this ammunition is 5.56mm NATO or 5.45mm Soviet.

Examples: CETME Ameli, Enfield L86A1 LSW (bullpup SAW version of the L85; Capacity 30+1; Size 3; uses L85 magazines), FN Minimi ("M249 SAW" in American service; can also accept M16 magazines), H&K HK23E, H&K MG43, IMI Negev, Norinco QJY-88 (Chinese standard; bullpup; Size 3), RSA RPK and RPK-74 (SAW versions of AK-47 and AK-74; drum-fed; Capacity 75+1)

Generic GPMG: General-purpose machine guns are usually chambered for heavy rifle calibers, with 7.62mm NATO being the most common by far.

Examples: FN MAG ("M240" in U.S. service, standard for most NATO nations), H&K HK21E, MAS AAT-52, RSA PK (former Warsaw Pact standard), Vektor SS-77

Generic HMG: Heavy machine guns, usually over five feet long and several hundred pounds (plus ammunition) in

Machine Guns

Type	Damage	Ranges	Capacity	Strength	Size	Cost
Generic Machine Guns						
Generic SAW	4	175/350/700	200*	-(3/4/5)	3	●●●●●
Generic GPMG	4 (9 again)	250/500/1000	100*	-(4/4/5)	4	●●●●●
Generic HMG	5 (8 again)*	300/600/1200	50*	-(3/3/4)*	5	●●●●●
Notable Machine Guns						
Browning M1918 BAR	4 (9 again)*	200/400/800	20+1	3(3/4/5)	3	●●●●●
Browning M2HB	5 (8 again)*	300/600/1200	50*	3(3/3/4)*	5	●●●●●
Saco M60	4 (9 again)	250/500/1000	100*	-(3/4/4)	4	●●●●●

* See text for notes or special rules.

weight, are not human-portable by any stretch of the imagination. The Strength requirements of HMGs are for accurate fire *when attached to solid objects*. When the HMGs aren't permanently attached to vehicles, they're mounted on tripods and left in place, frequently behind sandbag or bunker walls. Most HMG calibers originated as anti-tank calibers during World War I, including .50 BMG and 12.7mm Soviet. Unless otherwise noted, all HMGs have Armor Piercing 6.

Examples: CIS .50, RSA NSV, RSA KPV (14.5mm Soviet: Damage 6, Armor Piercing 7)

Browning M1918 BAR (.30-06): Well before the term "SAW" originated, the Browning Automatic Rifle was filling that role in the trenches of World War I. In the 1920s and '30s, BARs were prized by gangsters who didn't want to settle for a Thompson gun, and a favorite of the police who opposed these gangsters. The BAR remained in American military service through the 1950s. The BAR feeds from a detachable magazine, which limits its utility in the SAW role. At a time when most infantry weapons had five-round internal magazines, though, the SAW was state of the art. Its .30-06 ammo has Armor Piercing 2.

Browning M2HB (.50 BMG): One of the oldest firearms still in military service, the "Ma Deuce" was first deployed in 1921. It's undergone dozens of upgrades, but the basic "M2, Heavy Barrel" design is still the same and serves over 30 nations with distinction. The M2HB has a slower rate of fire than most machine guns, sounding like the world's biggest and angriest woodpecker, and can be fired in single shots if necessary. Like all HMGs, the M2HB is not human-portable — it weighs 84 pounds without its tripod, and each 50-round belt of ammunition adds another 14 pounds. The M2HB has Armor Piercing 6.

Saco M60 (7.62mm NATO): Despite serving as the standard American GPMG through most of the cold war, the M60 was never considered more than marginally adequate by the soldiers assigned to carry and maintain the "Pig." It suffered from reliability and weight problems, and resolutions of these problems late suring the Vietnam era led to an "improved" model that overheated if it fired more than 200 rounds in rapid succession. After 40 years of development, late cold war-era M60s were finally considered reliable — just in time to be replaced by the FN MAG. Still, the M60s are iconic weapons of the era, and thousands of them found their way into the hands of insurgencies and Third World militaries across the globe.

Archaic Firearms

Firearms have had seven centuries of development to reach their current state of maturity. While no one in the present day carries an archaic firearm for personal protection or combat, both original historic pieces and modern reproductions are available throughout much of the world. The following broad categories of historic firearms provide an overview of the progress of the human-portable gunpowder weapon.

Unless otherwise noted, none of the following weapons can use any kind of specialty ammunition.

Hand Cannons (1300s-1450s): The first firearms that were technically human-portable — in the sense that a single human could carry and operate them — were scaled-down versions of cannons with few refinements other than size. Hand cannons are muzzle-loading weapons. That is, to load one, the gunner must manually pack raw gunpowder ("black powder") down the barrel, then insert a stone cannonball, a process that requires 30 turns (10 turns if another character assists). To fire, the gunner inserts a length of slow-burning fuse into a touch-hole at the end of the gun, bringing the flame into direct contact with the loaded gunpowder. Using a hand cannon in any kind of precipitation is an exercise in futility.

Black Powder

Modern "gunpowder" is actually nitrocellulose, more properly called "smokeless powder." Firearms built before the turn of the 20th century used "black powder" gunpowder, the traditional finely ground 2:3:15 mix of sulfur, charcoal and saltpeter. Black powder is much easier to ignite than smokeless powder, and any stray spark runs the risk of detonating. When a black powder weapon fires, it produces a massive cloud of obscuring smoke, characteristically smelling of sulfur.

Creating black powder requires eight hours and an Intelligence + Science roll. Each success yields a quarter-pound of black powder, or enough for 10 shots. See p. 115 for information on using black powder as a raw explosive.

Archaïc Firearms

Type	Damage	Ranges	Capacity	Strength	Size	Cost
Hand Cannon						
Hand Cannon	–2 (8 again)	40/80/160	1	4	5	••••
Matchlocks						
Pistol	–1 (8 again)	10/20/40	1	2	2/L	•••
Musket	0 (8 again)	40/80/160	1	3	4	••••
Flintlocks						
Pistol, single	1	15/30/60	1	2	2/J	•••
Pistol, double	1	15/30/60	2	2	2/L	•••
Pistol, pepperbox	0 (8 again)	10/20/40	9	2	2/N	••••
Musket	2 (8 again)	30/60/120	1	3	4	••
Musket, double	2 (8 again)	30/60/120	2	3	4	•••
Rifle	3	50/100/200	1	3	4	••
Rifle, double	3	50/100/200	2	3	4	•••
Percussion Cap Firearms						
Revolver, light	2	15/30/60	9	2	2/J	•••
Revolver, heavy	3	25/50/100	6	2	2/L	•••
Rifle, light	3	125/250/500	1	3	3	•••
Rifle, heavy	4	200/400/800	1	3	3	•••
Rifle, elephant gun	5	250/500/1000	2	4	4	••••

* See text for notes or special rules.

Matchlocks (1450s-1500s): The first *small arms* — firearms designed differently from cannon — were matchlocks. A matchlock is smaller than a hand cannon and incorporates an S-shaped mechanism that attaches to the side of the gun at a center pivot. The top half of the mechanism, or *lock* because it locks back, clamps a length of slow-burning fuse, or *slowmatch*. To fire, the shooter pulls back on the bottom half of the mechanism, which pivots forward to push the match through the touch-hole. Matchlocks are muzzle-loaders: reloading one requires eight turns for a pistol or 12 turns for a musket.

Flintlocks and Wheel locks (1500s–1830s): Flintlocks finally eliminated the requirement to keep a slowmatch burning at all times. In a flintlock, a clamp holds a piece of flint at the end of a hammer-shaped device. The hammer, much like a modern firing pin, cocks back and is held in place by a sear. When the shooter pulls the trigger, the sear releases the hammer, which drives the flint into a metal striking surface to generate sparks which, in turn, set off the gunpowder. A wheel lock is roughly contemporary technology in which a spinning metal wheel, rather than a piece of flint, impacts a striking surface to generate sparks. For game purposes, flintlocks and wheel locks function identically.

Both flintlocks and wheel locks are muzzle-loaders. They were the first repeating firearms, using multiple barrels. These usually have a separate action for each barrel, but a pepperbox pistol has multiple barrels mounted on a revolving plate, the forerunner of the revolver. Reloading a flintlock requires eight turns for a pistol or 12 turns for a rifle.

Percussion Cap Firearms (1830s–1860s): The first industrial-age firearms introduced percussion caps, a method other than direct fire or sparks for igniting gunpowder. In one of these weapons, pulling the trigger releases a sear to drive a hammer or firing pin into a percussion cap, which is a small metallic cup containing a small amount of an impact-sensitive explosive compound. The resulting explosion ignites a separate quantity of gunpowder.

In a percussion-cap firearm, the bullet and gunpowder are loaded into the firing chamber while the percussion cap is wedged down on a separate nipple connected to the chamber. A percussion cap enabled the first *breech-loading* firearm, which allowed the shooter to load the firing chamber directly rather than having to ram gunpowder and projectile into it from the other end of the gun. A percussion-cap firearm still requires the wielder to load each chamber and cap individually. Loading a single chamber and cap takes one turn.

Ammunition

Without ammunition, a firearm is little more than an awkward club. Apocryphally, the first murder weapon was a rock. In time, people learned to throw rocks rather than holding them, reasoning that it's better to hit the other guy from a distance so he can't hit back as easily. A bullet is simply a thrown rock, refined via modern science.

Today's cartridges place two distinct explosive charges within a metal cylinder, the end of which is sealed by the bullet itself. The resulting self-contained unit of ammunition is immune to casual spillage of gunpowder, resistant to short-term environmental hazards such as dust or moisture and easy to transport and to load into a gun.

The exterior portion of a cartridge, the *casing*, is a hollow metal cylinder, open on one end to accept a bullet. Casings are typically brass, though some manufacturers produce cases with steel (for extra durability) or aluminum (to cut costs). Before

firing, the casing serves to keep the entire round together and to protect the propellant from the outside environment. After firing, the casing is merely a small empty cylinder that must be removed from the weapon before the next round can be fired. However, most casings are durable enough to be re-used with new propellant and bullets, which helps cut ammunition costs for a shooter capable of reloading used brass (see p. 164 for more information on "Reloading").

The smaller explosive part of a cartridge is the *primer*. It is usually made of an explosive metallic compound and is located at the closed, flat base of the casing. The primer is sensitive to friction and impact – while not prone to spontaneously exploding if dropped, the primer will detonate if struck with a sharp, sudden blow.

The larger explosive part of a cartridge is the *propellant*. Smokeless powder, the usual propellant for modern ammunition, is made chiefly of nitrocellulose (cellulose treated with nitric acid). The propellant is intended to explode when subjected to the heat of the primer's detonation. However, the propellant is sensitive to high temperatures and can spontaneously combust if exposed to open flame.

The solid portion of a cartridge, which becomes the projectile when the round is fired, is the *bullet*. "Normal" bullets are made of lead covered in a thin sheath of copper. However, a wide array of special bullet types exists, and these are detailed in the following sections. A modern cartridge's case is crimped hard against the bullet, rendering it waterproof for short durations, but long-term submersion (or even brief immersion in oil or solvent) can ruin a cartridge's propellant or primer.

Handgun and Rifle Ammunition

Ammunition for handguns and rifles is manufactured using the same basic design described above. However, some fundamental differences exist because of different design objectives. Handgun ammunition has to be relatively short in order to fit into a revolver cylinder or a magazine that fits into an autoloader's grip. This means less propellant and a shorter bullet. In order to make up for this, a handgun round picks up some girth and sacrifices speed for mass in the kinetic energy equation.

By comparison, a rifle cartridge doesn't have to conform to a comfortable length. This allows for both a longer projectile and a longer propellant charge. The bullet gets both mass and speed from being built larger in that dimension, so the bullet can be slimmer — which gives an extra added bonus of a smaller cross-section, and thus less resistance from whatever it's passing through (air, Kevlar, people).

These differences in construction lead to a discrepancy between the performances of rifle rounds and pistol rounds. Pistol rounds move a *lot* slower than rifle bullets: compare a 9mm Luger handgun bullet (weight 115 grains, muzzle velocity 1,150 feet per second) to a .223 Remington rifle bullet (weight 55 grains, muzzle velocity 3,200 feet per second). The handgun round weighs about twice as much as the rifle round, but the speed of the handgun round is almost two-thirds lower. In addition, the handgun round has a wider cross-section, which means the round slows down faster; and, because it's moving slower, it loses stability and altitude over a much shorter distance.

All of these factors combine to make rifle rounds deadly and accurate at much longer ranges than handgun rounds. Additionally, higher velocities and lower diameters mean that rifle bullets tend to go through things that would stop many pistol bullets cold: thin metal, tree branches, body armor and so forth.

Handgun and Rifle Ammunition Types

Full Metal Jacket (FMJ): The *de facto* standard for rifle and handgun ammunition is the full metal jacket bullet ("ball" in military parlance). FMJ rounds, as the name suggests, are completely sheathed in metal. Their usual construction is a copper or steel sheath over a lead core.

Mechanics: None. FMJ is the default ammunition type with which all handguns and rifles are assumed to be loaded unless otherwise specified.

Acquisition: Resources • for a box of 50 handgun cartridges or 20 rifle cartridges. FMJ ammo is available in all calibers and is legal anywhere guns are.

Armor Piercing (AP): Militaries often require ammunition capable of punching through cover, body armor or light vehicles. Armor-piercing rounds perform poorly against unarmored targets, often drastically overpenetrating, but small holes are still better than no holes. Armor-piercing rounds share similar construction with FMJ rounds, but contain solid steel or tungsten cores ("penetrators") rather than lead innards. When an armor-piercing bullet strikes a solid object, this bullet's core retains its shape rather than deforming. This allows the penetrator to keep moving at something close to its original velocity even as the lead around it slows down.

Mechanics: Armor-piercing bullets are, obviously, armor piercing, per the **World of Darkness Rulebook** (pp. 138 and 167). The rating of an armor-piercing bullet depends on its caliber:

Bullet Type	Damage	AP Rating
Handgun	2 or less	1
Handgun	2 (9 again) or more	2
Rifle	4 or less	2
Rifle	4 (9 again) or more	3

Acquisition: Resources •• for a box of 50 handgun cartridges or 20 rifle cartridges. AP ammo is rare in non-military calibers and is illegal for civilians to possess in any nation with gun laws. Some calibers are innately armor piercing with their normal FMJ ammo and cannot be acquired as armor piercing for double effect (see "Handgun and Rifle Damage by Caliber," p. 85).

Blank: Used for entertainment and simulation purposes, blanks are cartridges without bullets. A blank is dangerous at point-blank range because the propellant still explodes, but is harmless past about 10 feet. Because the gas from a blank expands without a bullet's resistance, semi-automatic and automatic firearms will not work with blanks unless fitted with a *blank firing adapter*, a device inside the barrel that constricts the expanding gas — and causes catastrophic failure if a live round is fired from the gun.

Mechanics: A blank does normal damage within three yards. Otherwise, the blank goes "bang" and flashes with no other effect.

Acquisition: Resources • for a box of 50 cartridges. Blanks are readily available in all calibers.

Frangible: These expensive bullets are a partial answer to the problem of overpenetration. Frangible ammunition, also known as *Advanced Energy Transfer* (AET) or *prefragmented*, is designed to break up on impact with a solid target. This maximizes the bullet's transfer of energy to the object and minimizes the chances that pieces of it will exit at dangerous velocities. Frangible ammo comes in a variety of configurations, from hollow rounds filled with tiny metal beads (the well-known Glaser Safety Slug) to semi-solid bullets with grooves or notches to facilitate breakup. Frangible ammo has found acceptance in both military and law enforcement hostage rescue use and in civilian home defense.

Mechanics: Frangible ammo gains a one-die bonus to its Damage rating against unprotected living (or unliving) targets. However, against a target with a Durability or Armor rating, this damage bonus is lost and the Durability or Armor rating is *tripled*. An innately armor-piercing caliber loses this effect with frangible ammunition.

Acquisition: Resources •• for a box of 20 handgun or rifle cartridges. Frangible ammo is available in most handgun calibers (any with Damage of 3 or less and not listed as "Rare"), as well as some military rifle calibers (Damage less than 5). Frangible ammo is civilian-legal.

Hollowpoint: A hollowpoint bullet, as the name suggests, has a hollow point, usually taking the shape of a cone-shaped section scooped from its nose. When such a bullet strikes a target, the hollowpoint expands (or "mushrooms") more readily than a FMJ bullet. This results in more energy transferred to the target, and thus more spectacular wounds. The primary drawback of hollowpoints is that they do not discriminate between solid objects. For example, a Kevlar vest will serve just as well as a human torso for purposes of slowing the bullet down and making it expand. Still, against unarmored targets, hollowpoints are messily effective.

Various improvised types of expanding bullets, collectively known as "dum-dums," perform as hollowpoints. The most common method of creating a dum-dum is to carve some or all of the jacket off a FMJ bullet, notching the lead underneath.

Mechanics: Hollowpoint ammunition gains a one-die bonus to its Damage rating against unprotected living (or undead) targets. However, against any target with a Durability or Armor rating, a hollowpoint suffers a two-dice penalty instead. In addition, hollowpoints perform poorly over distance due to increased drag, and penalties for attacks at medium and long range are raised to –3 and –5, respectively. An innately armor-piercing caliber loses this effect with hollowpoint ammunition.

Acquisition: Resources • for a box of 20 handgun or rifle cartridges. Hollowpoints are available in all calibers except the largest military ones (.50 BMG and up). Hollowpoints are legal for civilian purchase. The Hague Convention prohibits the use of expanding ammunition in warfare, so militaries rarely use hollowpoints.

Match Grade: Competitive shooters demand precision from their ammunition. Match grade ammo is FMJ ammo produced to exacting tolerances. After production, randomly selected rounds from each lot are tested for ballistic performance, and a record of these tests is packaged with every box of ammo, showing its behavior at known ranges (typically 50, 100, 200, 300, 400 and 500 yards). Some professional shooters swear that only match grade ammo allows consistent peak performance, while others insist that this ammo is too sensitive to humidity and temperature to give any real benefit.

Mechanics: Match grade ammo provides significant benefits only if the shooter takes time to set up the shot. If the shooter has access to current weather information (wind, temperature, humidity) and the data sheet for the batch of match grade ammo, the shooter may spend 10 minutes calculating performance and adjusting the weapon's sights. This requires an Intelligence + Firearms roll (with a –3 penalty if weather information is unavailable). The number of successes is added to the maximum bonus the character receives from aiming (e.g., with four successes, the character may receive a maximum bonus of +4 from aiming, if he aims for seven turns). This bonus is lost if the weather changes significantly.

Acquisition: ••• for a box of 50 rifle cartridges. Match grade ammo is available in all rifle calibers, but it's especially difficult to acquire in quantities of more than a couple hundred rounds at a time due to low production numbers.

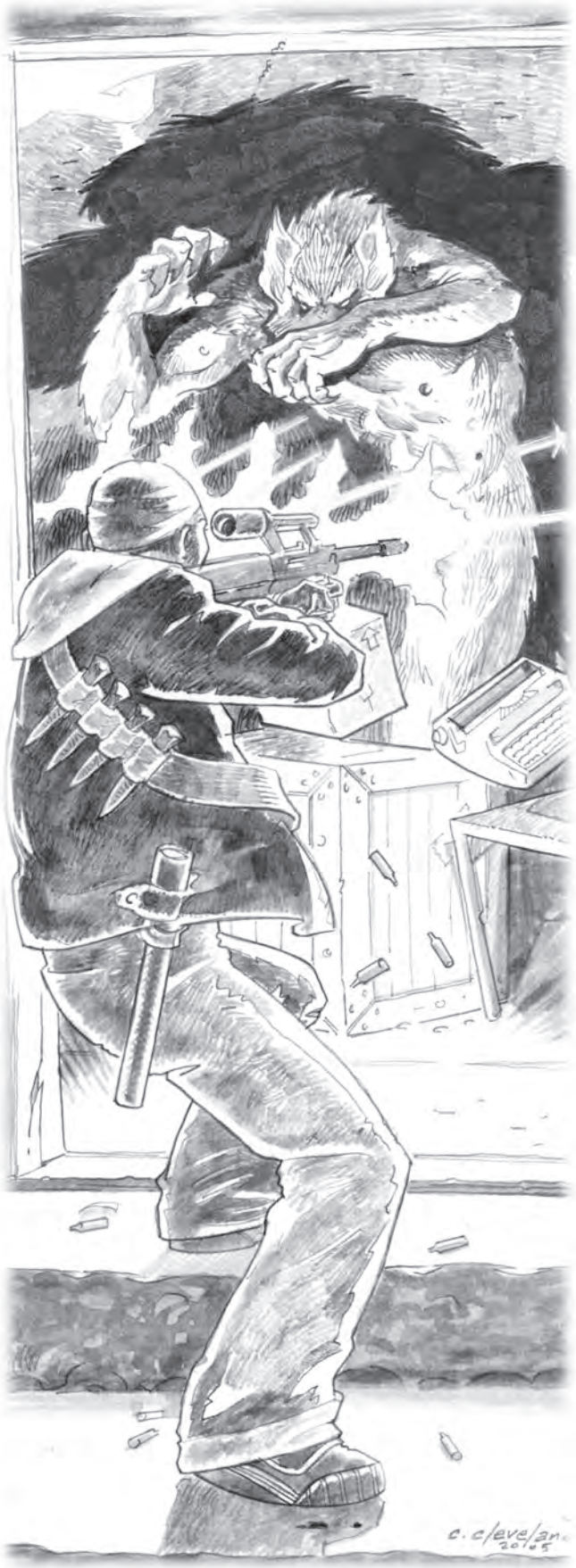
Riot Control: "Rubber bullets" are low-velocity rounds intended for non-lethal use against crowds that refuse to disperse peacefully. Rubber bullets are made of medium-hard rubber or plastic and are intended to be fired at the ground to ricochet into targets, as these bullets can still cause serious injury or death if used directly at targets.

Mechanics: Riot control ammunition does bashing rather than lethal damage unless the ammo is aimed at the target's head, in which case the ammo still does lethal.

Acquisition: Resources •• for a box of 20 handgun or rifle cartridges. Riot control ammunition is generally available only in common Western military calibers (5.56mm NATO, 7.62mm NATO, 9mm Luger, .45 ACP), as the vast majority of police weapons use these calibers. Riot control ammunition is technically legal for civilian use, but most vendors restrict sales. An innately armor-piercing caliber loses this effect with riot control ammunition.

Tracer: Tracer ammo is FMJ ammo with a small amount of combustible chemical compound (usually phosphorous or magnesium) on the back end of the bullet. When a tracer is fired, this chemical burns off over the course of a second or so (typically the bullet's entire flight). To the human eye, a small illuminated object moving at supersonic velocity appears as a bright streak and afterimage. This provides a visual reference for the bullet's track, which allows the shooter to adjust her point of aim when firing bursts. Because of the excessive chemical residue tracers leave in a gun, most shooters load one tracer round for every three to five normal rounds. Some shooters also load the last few rounds in a magazine as tracers as a visual reminder to reload during the heat of battle, though this also tells the enemy that the subject is vulnerable.

Mechanics: Tracers give no bonuses to single shots or short bursts. If a character uses tracers in a medium burst, she may add half her Wits (rounded down) to her dice pool. For a long burst, she adds her full Wits to her dice pool. In addition, while tracers are not hot enough to inflict fire damage (not even to vampires), the bullets can set targets (or scenery) on fire as a secondary effect. Whenever a combustible target is struck by tracers, roll a single die: if the result is less than the amount of damage inflicted by



the attack, the target catches fire and begins taking a single point of fire damage per turn until extinguished (see p.180, the **World of Darkness Rulebook**). Characters are not normally considered combustible, but their clothes are. Any attempt to spot a character who's just fired one or more tracers automatically succeeds if the observer has any degree of eyesight.

Acquisition: Resources •• for a box of 20 handgun cartridges, ••• for a belt or case of 100 rifle cartridges. Tracer ammo is technically legal, but rare, on the civilian market. Because tracer ammo is used almost exclusively in automatic weapons, it is produced only in common military calibers.

Who uses which ammunition?

Civilians: Hunters generally use FMJ or hollowpoint rounds. Competitive shooters use match grade ammunition whenever possible and FMJ when match grade is unavailable. Defensive handgun shooters typically load hollowpoint or frangible rounds. Gang members use whatever's cheap or trendy — almost always FMJ, though. Gun nuts use anything and everything.

Police (street officers): Most patrol officers and detectives use hollowpoint rounds, though some well-funded departments issue frangible ammunition.

Police (tactical units): SWAT teams usually use frangible rounds in their pistols and submachine guns and FMJ in their assault rifles. Police sharpshooters use FMJ, hollowpoints or match grade rounds according to personal preference and department policy.

Militaries (regular troops): Grunts invariably use FMJ rounds in their assault rifles, as required by the Hague Convention. Machine guns receive a 3:1 or 5:1 mix of FMJ and tracer rounds, with the occasional belt of armor-piercing rounds available for use against light vehicles.

Militaries (sharpshooters): Military snipers typically use match grade rounds or FMJ (when they can't get the premium stuff).

Militaries (special operations troops): "Special operations" covers a wide array of tasks performed by small, specialized units. The most common such missions that characters are likely to run afoul of are CT (Counter-Terrorist) operations. CT missions depend on an optimum mix of speed, stealth and killing power for success. Units performing such tasks use whatever is best for the job (read "whatever is best for killing the characters") — hollowpoints if the teams expect unarmored targets, frangible rounds for fights inside aircraft or FMJ and armor-piercing ammo for enemies known to have body armor.

Handgun and Rifle Damage by Caliber

The following Damage ratings are suggested for various common and uncommon calibers of handgun and rifle ammunition. When adapting a gun not covered in this book to the Storytelling System, use this information as a guideline for its Damage rating. If the weapon uses a caliber that isn't covered here, find the closest equivalent for ballistic performance and extrapolate.

Handgun and Rifle Damage by Caliber

Caliber	Damage	Notes
Handgun Calibers		
.17 HMR	1	Armor Piercing 1
4.6mm	2	Armor Piercing 2; rare
5.45mm Soviet	1	
.22 LR	1	
.22 Magnum	1	
.22 Hornet	2	Armor Piercing 1
.25 ACP	1	
.32 ACP	1	Also known as "7.65mm Luger"
7.62x25mm Tokarev	1	
.32 S&W	1	
5.7mm FN	2	Armor Piercing 2; rare
7.62x19mm Soviet	2	
.38 Special	2	
.380 ACP	2	
.38 Super	2 (9 again)	Rare; outdated and not in common use
.357 Magnum	3	
.357 SiG	2 (9 again)	
9x18mm Soviet	2	Also known as "9mm Makarov;" common Eastern European military caliber
9mm Luger	2	Also known as "9x19mm" and "9mm Parabellum;" world's most common handgun caliber
.40 S&W	2 (9 again)	Most popular caliber for American law enforcement
10mm ACP	3	
.41 Magnum	3	
.44 Magnum	3 (9 again)	
.44-40	3	Rare; archaic and not in common use
.45 ACP	3	Common military caliber until the 1980s
.45 Long Colt	3	Rare; archaic and not in common use
.454 Casull	4	
.50 AE	4	Used only in Desert Eagle .50
.500 S&W Magnum	4 (9 again)	
Rifle Calibers		
5.45mm Soviet	4	Standard for former Warsaw Pact assault rifles
.223 Remington	4	
5.56mm NATO	4	Standard for modern NATO assault rifles
.270 Winchester	4	
7mm Magnum	4 (9 again)	
.30 Carbine	3 (9 again)	
.30-30 Winchester	4	Rare; archaic and not in common use
.300 Winchester Magnum	4 (9 again)	
.308 Winchester	4 (9 again)	
7.62x39mm Soviet	4	Standard for older Warsaw Pact assault rifles
7.62mm NATO	4 (9 again)	Standard for older NATO assault rifles
7.62x54mm Soviet	4 (9 again)	Armor Piercing 3
.30-06	4 (9 again)	Armor Piercing 2
8mm Mauser	4 (9 again)	Rare; archaic and not in common use
.375 H&H	5	

Caliber	Damage	Notes
.458 Magnum	5	
.460 Weatherby	5	
.50 BMG	5 (8 again)	Armor Piercing 6
12.7mm Soviet	5 (8 again)	Armor Piercing 6
14.5mm Soviet	6	Armor Piercing 7

Shotgun Ammunition Types

Slug: The *de facto* standard for shotgun shells is the slug, a thumb-sized lead cylinder with no subtlety or finesse whatsoever. Slugs are used for hunting large game and humans.

Mechanics: None. The slug is the default ammunition type with which all shotguns are assumed to be loaded unless otherwise specified.

Acquisition: Resources • for a box of 25 shells. Slugs are universally available anywhere ammunition is sold.

Buckshot: Shot ammunition is the source from which shotguns derive their names. A shot shell contains multiple lead or steel spheres that travel in an expanding cone from the muzzle of the gun when fired. Buckshot is the largest type of shot. A #00 ("double-ought") buckshot shell, the type most commonly used for combat applications, contains nine 0.33-inch pellets. This shot is brutal at close range, and, at longer ranges, the spread of the shot makes it likely that a well-aimed blast will catch at least part of the target in its pattern. Firing shot in close proximity to a friendly subject is dangerous at range — a shot pattern typically expands one inch for every yard the shot travels.

Mechanics: At short range, buckshot gains a one-die bonus to its Damage rating against unprotected living (or unliving) targets. At medium and long range, buckshot loses this bonus, but suffers only half the normal range penalties, and any other character in physical contact with the target (e.g., grappled or grappling) also suffers damage equal to half the damage the primary target receives (round down). At all ranges, any target's Durability or Armor rating is doubled.

Acquisition: Resources • for a box of 25 shells. Buckshot is universally available anywhere ammunition is sold.

Birdshot: Intended for hunting birds and small game, birdshot is similar to buckshot but composed of much smaller pellets: 0.05 to 0.18 inches. It quickly disperses over range, and is barely dangerous to human-sized targets over most distances.

Mechanics: All of birdshot's ranges are halved and its Damage rating is reduced by 1. At medium and long range, any other character in physical contact with the target (e.g., grappled or grappling) also suffers damage equal to half the damage the primary target receives (round down). At all ranges, any target's Durability or Armor rating is *tripled*.

Acquisition: Resources • for a box of 25 shells. Birdshot is universally available anywhere ammunition is sold.

Breaching: Breaching ammunition is specialized ammo developed for law enforcement use when a door has to be opened *right now*. A breaching shell contains granular or powdered metal. This payload strikes as hard as a slug at point-blank range, but rapidly disperses, losing all significant force within 20 feet of the gun, ensuring that the ammo will not penetrate walls or doors or ricochet to strike bystanders. Typically, a SWAT team's entry man carries a pump-action shotgun loaded with breaching shells, and can blow the lock and hinges off a door in under six seconds.

Mechanics: At close combat range, a breaching shell does normal damage. At short range, a breaching shell does bashing damage. A breaching shell has no effect at medium or long range. When a character chambers a breaching shell in a semi-automatic or automatic shotgun, roll a die: on a 1–5, the gun jams, requiring one turn to clear.

Acquisition: Resources • for a box of 25 shells. Breaching ammunition is technically legal for civilian sale, but almost all suppliers are law enforcement retailers that will not sell to clients without credentials. Breaching ammunition is available only in 12 gauge.

Flamethrower: The pinnacle of exotic shotgun ammunition is the flamethrower shell. Sold under various brand names ("Dragonsbreath" being the most infamous), these shells use low-explosive propellant charges to expel burning powdered zirconium. The volume of the shell limits the amount of incendiary material that the shell can contain, but the tongue of flame can reach as far as 75 yards and lasts two to three seconds. Flamethrower shells are of limited value for direct attacks, but can flash-blind anyone looking in the direction of the blast (especially at night) and are likely to ignite flammable substances such as dry leaves, wood or clothing. Flamethrower shells are advertised to not damage guns out of which they're fired, but they do leave a greater than normal amount of chemically unique residue in the barrel.

Mechanics: A flamethrower shell attack is resolved as a long burst of autofire with a base Damage 0: the shooter gains a +3 bonus to her attack roll, and may attack multiple targets if she's willing to suffer the required penalties (see the **World of Darkness Rulebook**, p. 160). "9 again" and "8 again" do not apply to this attack. All damage from a flamethrower shell is fire damage. The flame emitted by a flamethrower shell is the size of a bonfire (Damage 2) and burns with the intensity of a Bunsen burner (+2 Damage bonus). Thus, an attack with a flamethrower shell will never inflict more than four points of damage. On an exceptional success, combustible items on the victim (hair or clothing, for instance) will catch fire, and, the following turn, he'll begin taking two points of lethal damage per turn until extinguished (see p. 180, the **World of Darkness Rulebook**).

Because a flamethrower shell burns for up to three seconds, using it in any shotgun that ejects spent shells automatically is hazardous to the shooter and everyone around her. Using a flamethrower shell in a semi-automatic or automatic shotgun means that the shell will be ejected while it's still spitting fire. Everyone within 20 yards of the shooter, as well as any significant target (e.g., anything whose destruction could have interesting story effects) is subjected to a separate chance roll attack from the shell as it flips end-over-end. The shooter suffers the effects of *all* dramatic failures caused by these chance rolls.

Acquisition: Resources • for a blister pack of three shells (about $5/shell on average). Flamethrower shells can be ordered online, but over-the-counter sales are usually limited to sporting goods stores in rural areas, where it's rare to find more than four or five packs in stock at a time. They are illegal in some regions — laws vary. Where available, these shells are sold as novelty items ("Hey, y'all, watch this!") or used by forestry services for starting controlled burns. Flamethrower shells are manufactured in limited

quantities and only in 12 gauge, and mass purchases *will* arouse attention.

Flare: Shotgun flares are intended for emergency signaling use. When fired into the air, a flare round is visible for up to a mile in daylight and up to 10 miles on a clear night. Shotgun flares are available in a wide variety of colors, with red, white and green being the most common.

Mechanics: When fired at a specific target, a flare's ranges are halved and its Damage becomes a flat –1, also losing any "8 again" or "9 again" effects. The flame emitted by a flare is the size of a torch (Damage 1) and burns with the intensity of a chemical fire (+3 Damage bonus). Thus, an attack with a flare will never inflict more than four points of damage. On an exceptional success, combustible items on the victim will catch fire, and, the following turn, he'll begin taking one point of lethal damage per turn until extinguished (see p. 180, the **World of Darkness Rulebook**).

Acquisition: Resources • for a blister pack of three shells. Flares are legal for civilian sale and are available in most large sporting goods stores. Flares are available only in 12 and 20 gauge. Large quantities are hard to acquire due to limited production, and mass purchases may draw attention.

He Was Comin' Right For Me!

Breaching, flamethrower, flare and gas shotgun shells are not considered viable combat ammunition. Using any of these ammunition types on living targets will provoke an immediate and intensive investigation, even if the shooting was justifiable self-defense ("So, let's get this straight . . . you were just watching television when this guy kicked in your door . . . and you just happened to have a shotgun loaded with Dragonsbreath rounds stashed under your couch in case of just such an emergency?"). The usual reaction of police officers to finding an apparent crime scene where any of this ammunition was fired at a human will not be "Huh, the vampire-hunters must be getting busy again." It'll be closer to "Hey, there's a sick fuck on the loose, better get ready for another weird murder and start up a serial killer task force."

Flechette: A flechette shell replaces buckshot with about 20 small metal darts. Flechettes individually pack less kinetic energy than shot pellets, but are less likely to deflect off scenery or body armor.

Mechanics: Flechettes function as buckshot, but body armor does not provide double protection against them (though Durability does).

Acquisition: Resources • for a box of 25 shells. Flechettes are legal for civilian sale, but produced in limited numbers.

Gas: A "CS penetrator" shell features a steel end cap over a reservoir filled with tear gas. Gas shells are designed for police use against barricaded suspects — a gas shell will penetrate reinforced safety glass, a car door or up to two inches of hardwood before expelling its gaseous payload. Police generally try to gauge what they're firing through before taking the shot in order to ensure that the round ends up on the *other* side of the barrier.

Mechanics: A gas round's ranges are half normal. If fired at a character, the gas round does normal damage. If fired at a solid object (or a character wearing rigid body armor), the gas round gains the Armor Piercing 2 trait. The shell's tear gas payload is enough to fill a 10-foot radius (see p. 128 for the effects of tear gas). On an exceptional success, the gas round lodges inside the target, inflicting one additional point of fire damage at the end of the next turn from heat and the pressure of spewing tear gas. When a character chambers a gas shell in a semi-automatic or automatic shotgun, roll a die: on a 1–5, the gun jams, requiring one turn to clear.

Acquisition: Resources •• for a package of five shells. Gas shells are restricted to law enforcement and military sale, and are available only in 12 gauge.

Riot Control: Less-lethal shotgun ammunition is available. Some riot control rounds are solid rubber, while others fire vinyl beanbags full of lead shot.

Mechanics: Riot control ammunition does bashing damage rather than lethal damage unless the ammo is aimed at the target's head, in which case the ammo still does lethal damage. Riot control ammunition can be acquired in both buckshot and slug equivalents.

Acquisition: Resources • for a box of 25 shells. Riot control ammunition is legal for civilians, though rare. It is available only in 12 gauge.

Rock Salt: Rock salt ammunition is not sold commercially, but is handmade by many a rural resident by replacing an ordinary shot shell's contents with chunks of rock salt. The irregularly shaped chunks of salt strike with enough force to embed themselves in the victim's skin, causing superficial but excruciatingly painful wounds.

Mechanics: Rock salt functions as birdshot, but does bashing damage at any distance greater than close-combat range. However, any character struck with rock salt suffers a penalty to all rolls equal to the amount of damage she took until she has a chance to pluck the salt chunks out of her flesh and rinse out her wounds.

Acquisition: Resources • for enough rock salt to convert a couple hundred shot shells. Rock salt is not a controlled substance.

Sabot: A sabot round consists of a small, dense core surrounded by a lightweight jacket (the sabot itself). When the round is fired, the sabot falls away within a few yards of the muzzle, leaving the projectile to travel on at extremely high velocity. In a shotgun, this provides no additional damage effect, but increases the effective range of the slug.

Mechanics: A sabot functions like a slug, but all ranges are increased by half again.

Acquisition: Resources • for a box of 25 shells. Sabot slugs are available in 20, 16, 12 and 10 gauge.

Shotgun Damage by Caliber

The following Damage ratings are suggested for various common and uncommon gauges of shotgun ammunition. When adapting a shotgun not covered in this book to the Storytelling System, use this information as a guideline for the shotgun's Damage rating. If the weapon uses a gauge that isn't covered here, find the closest equivalent for ballistic performance and extrapolate.

Caliber	Damage	Notes
.410 gauge	2 (9 again)	Rare outside United States
28 gauge	2 (9 again)	Rare outside Europe
20 gauge	3 (9 again)	Commonly used for birds and small game
16 gauge	4	
12 gauge	4 (9 again)	Universally preferred for combat and hunting
10 gauge	5	

But What About . . . ?

Thanks to popular entertainment and dedicated monster-hunters, many nonstandard ammunition types are available to enterprising characters. None of the following ammo is commercially available. Characters must load their own using the reloading rules on p. 164. An innately armor-piercing caliber loses this effect with any of the following custom ammunition types.

Cold Iron: Folklore from across Europe speaks of the vulnerability of fairy folk to cold iron, and monster-hunters faced with inexplicable child abduction cases may prepare for combat by applying this ancient remedy to modern ammunition. Loading cold icon is a tricky proposition due to its melting temperature and solidity. However, iron bullets are unlikely to de-form for these same reasons.

Mechanics: A solid iron bullet functions as an AP round. An iron hollowpoint functions as a normal (FMJ) bullet. Iron shotgun slugs and buckshot function normally.

Gold: Gold is much denser than lead, which makes for a heavier bullet. Some legends place a few supernatural creatures as being vulnerable to gold, but the softness of this metal makes it impractical for ballistic use.

Mechanics: Gold ammunition suffers a –1 penalty to its Damage rating and ranges are reduced to three quarters of their standard.

Ice or Meat: According to some television shows, firing a meat slug or ice bullet into a target will confuse forensic investigators, who won't be able to pick the shredded hamburger out of the shredded victim. In actuality, meat isn't solid enough to have good ballistic properties, even when frozen, and ice will just sublime to water vapor in the heat of the propellant's detonation . If the gun is close enough for such a round to actually kill someone, the autopsy still will show the powder tattooing, stellate blow-out, and other signs of a close-range gunshot.

Mechanics: Ice or meat ammunition functions as a blank.

Mercury: "Drilled and filled" rounds are FMJ bullets to which a gunsmith has taken a tiny power drill, excavating a cavity in the nose of the bullet, then filled with mercury and sealed with a dab of wax. Contrary to popular belief, this is not because of the chances of inflicting mercury poisoning on the target. A shooting victim is much more likely to die of his gunshot than of belated mercury poisoning. However, mercury's density roughly equals that of the lead that was removed to make the cavity, and this liquid metal tends to fragment into hundreds of tiny droplets when the bullet comes to a sudden stop.

Mechanics: Mercury-filled bullets function as frangible ammo. Mercury-filled shotgun slugs disintegrate on firing, functioning as birdshot. Mercury-filled buckshot is a waste of time and mercury.

Silver: The traditional cure for werewolf problems is a silver bullet. Silver and lead are slightly different in density, so a silver bullet is weighted roughly the same as an FMJ round. Silver is a softer metal than copper, though, which means that a silver bullet will leave a lot of itself on the inside of the barrel and will deform more from the initial stress of firing.

Mechanics: Silver ammunition suffers a –1 penalty to its Damage rating.

Stone: Arcane scholars with gunsmithing ability may attempt to create stone bullets for some obscure ritual use. This process, while time-consuming and inefficient, may be effective to a limited degree.

Mechanics: Soft stone (sandstone, limestone) bullets or shotgun slugs function as frangible ammunition. Hard stone (marble, granite) bullets function as FMJ ammo. Hard stone shotgun slugs function normally, as does all stone buckshot. In all cases, stone ammunition reduces all Range brackets to three quarters of their standard distance.

Teflon: Teflon and other lubricants do nothing to enhance a bullet's armor-penetrating capabilities. Lubricants do reduce the amount of metallic residue that a bullet leaves on the inside of a gun's barrel when fired, which makes maintenance slightly easier.

Mechanics: No effect.

Wood: Wood bullets are historical curiosities now, last seeing use in World War II when German ammunition manufacturers attempted to save metal and create bullets that would splinter on impact to produce greater wounds. Some desperate vampire-hunters, aware that driving a wooden stake through a Kindred's heart will paralyze the creature, may attempt to make wooden bullets in the hope of scoring that lucky heart shot. However, wood is even less dense than silver, and much less likely to survive being fired.

Mechanics: A wooden bullet acts as a frangible round, but a wooden bullet's ranges are halved and it suffers a –1 penalty to damage. A wooden shotgun slug splinters on firing, acting similar birdshot. Shooting a vampire in the heart with wooden ammunition does absolutely nothing special. The heart must be completely transfixed with a single shaft for "staking" and paralysis to occur. A bullet simply isn't long enough (and neither is a toothpick, so don't bother with the toothpick-filled shotgun shells).

Other Ranged Weapons

Firearms aren't the only implements that humans use to kill each other at range. Firearms are just the most recent developments. This section presents a selection of other options.

Flinging Things

With sufficient strength, anyone can throw a solid object with the intent of causing injury. The **World of Darkness Rulebook** presents the basics of throwing on p. 67.

Using melee weapons as improvised thrown weapons is difficult because swords and axes aren't balanced for throwing. If a character throws a melee weapon, the attack suffers a –2 penalty.

Archaic Ranged Weapons

The first ranged weapons were thrown directly from the hand. Later innovations included several simple mechanical devices to amplify the power of the thrower's arm. Unless otherwise noted, a Dexterity + Athletics dice pool applies to attacks with all of the following weapons. All thrown weapons are one-handed weapons, and all propelled weapons are two-handed.

Thrown Weapons

Dart: A dart used for combat is about twice the size of an average barroom dart. Such weapons are most often used to carry poison, rather than to inflict damage on their own. Do not re-roll 10s for dart attacks.

Hatchet: Throwing hatchets or throwing axes are balanced better than ordinary chopping tools. A character can "pull his throw" with a hatchet, timing the weapon's spin so that its haft strikes the target and inflicts bashing damage.

Javelin: A javelin is a spear balanced for throwing rather than thrusting. Modern javelins used in track and field competitions are made of fiberglass and metal. Classic javelins such as the Roman pilum had wood shafts and iron heads, heavier and shorter-ranged but also more damaging. Javelins are between four and seven feet in length; their low Size comes from their narrow width.

Knife: A throwing knife is weighted differently than a normal tool or weapon. Throwing knives are usually smaller than combat knives as well.

Shuriken: The infamous "ninja throwing stars" enjoy an inflated reputation thanks to martial arts films. Shuriken lack the mass and speed to penetrate deeply enough to cause internal trauma. Similar to darts, these stars' primary use is to deliver poison. Do not re-roll 10s for shuriken attacks.

Propelled Weapons

Atlatl: The "throwing stick" was an early Paleolithic-era implement for getting more range out of javelins. It's a shaft with a cup or hook on the end into which the butt of the spear goes. To throw the javelin, the wielder holds the atlatl at the end opposite the cup and whips it forward in an overhand throw. This applies more leverage to the javelin than a human arm can provide, resulting in increased range and power. Modern reproductions of atlatls are available but rare. An atlatl is a one-handed weapon.

Blowgun: A blowgun is a tube used to fire darts via lung pressure. A blowgun's short Range is equal to twice the shooter's Size + Stamina + Athletics. A blowgun is a one-handed weapon.

Bows: Bows can be built to fit any human physique (a combination of Strength and Size). A bow's base Damage is equal to its minimum Strength. A bow's short Range is equal to triple the shooter's Strength + Size + Athletics. A bow's Size is one less than the Size of the user for which it's built. Penalties for insufficient strength are doubled for bows. A character versed in primitive woodcraft may make her own bow with an extended Dexterity + Survival roll (successes required are equal to 10 times the bow's minimum Strength; each roll equals four hours' work). A character may use either Athletics or Firearms to fire a bow. "Reloading" a bow takes one action.

A compound bow employs a set of pulleys rather than the raw tensile strength of the bow itself. A compound bow's Traits are the same, save for its range, which is equal to *quadruple* the shooter's Strength + Size + Athletics. A character may not make her own compound bow.

Arrows

The Damage traits of bows assume that the wielder is using standard target arrows: wooden or fiberglass shafts tipped with simple metal cones. Such projectiles are not designed for combat and inflict minimal injury. Standard target arrows have Cost •.

Broadhead hunting arrows are tipped with an X-shaped razor-edged point designed to drive deep into flesh and sever arteries. A bow firing such an arrow gains +1 Damage and Armor Piercing 2 against a target with no or soft ballistic armor. Against a solid target or a character with rigid armor, the arrow instead suffers a –2 penalty to Damage. Broadhead arrows have Cost •.

Archaic flint or obsidian arrowheads gain +1 Damage against a target with no armor but a –2 penalty against a hard or armored target. A character may make archaic arrows with six hours' work and a successful Dexterity + Survival roll: each success yields one arrow.

Bodkin points appeared in the Middle Ages in response to the proliferation of metal armor among archers' intended targets. These were needle-pointed arrowheads with square cross-sections that could drive through plate armor or six inches of oak. A bow firing a bodkin arrow gains Armor Piercing 4 and its Ranges are increased by half again. Bodkin points disappeared with the obsolescence of the bow as a primary battlefield weapon, and all surviving examples are museum pieces today. A character who wants bodkin points must buy them on the antiquities market (Cost ••• for a dozen) or have them custom-made by a blacksmith (Intelligence + Crafts roll, each success yields one bodkin point).

Story Seed: Elfshot

During an encounter with unidentifiable adversaries, one of the characters (or a closely allied Storyteller character) is apparently struck with a well-placed shot — an arrow is traditional, though a shotgun slug might be appropriate for some stories — and immediately falls unconscious, despite the lack of an apparent injury from the attack. The rest of the characters have only one clue to the cause of their friend's malaise: the oddly intact projectile that felled him.

Crossbows: Crossbows come in varying sizes, from one-handed hand crossbows that fold down to Size 1/J to heavy arbalests capable of piercing a metal plate. A character may use either Athletics or Firearms to fire a crossbow. Reloading a crossbow takes a number of turns equal to twice its minimum Strength.

Repeating crossbows saw use in China as siege weapons from the Han dynasty through the Sino-Japanese War of 1895. A repeating crossbow uses lightweight arrows instead of heavy crossbow bolts and is operated by rapidly cranking a lever, which pulls back the string as the next arrow drops into place from a gravity-fed magazine atop the weapon. The repeating crossbow is capable of short and medium bursts of automatic fire and is reloaded as a firearm with an internal magazine.

Every crossbow has the Armor Piercing effect: 2 for a normal crossbow, 1 for a hand crossbow or repeating crossbow and 4 for an arbalest.

Sling: A sling is a length of cloth or leather with a cup at its midpoint for holding a stone or metal projectile. To fire the sling, the wielder holds both ends in the same hand and whips it around her head, then lets go of one end to release the bullet.

A stave sling nails one end of the sling to the end of a six-foot wooden stave. The other end is tied into a loop and slipped around the same end. To fire a stave sling, the wielder whips it over her head. The loop slips off, releasing the bullet. The stave gives the thrower more leverage, much like an atlatl assists a spear throw. Unlike a normal sling, a stave sling is a two-handed weapon.

Archaic Ranged Weapons

Type	Damage	Ranges	Capacity	Strength	Size	Cost
Thrown Weapons						
Dart	-1*	Aero	-	1	0/P	•
Hatchet	1*	Thrown	-	2	1/J	•
Javelin, combat	3	Aero	-	2	2/N	••
Javelin, competition	2	Thrown x4	-	2	2/N	••
Knife, throwing	1	Aero	-	2	1/S	•
Shuriken	–1*	Aero	-	1	0/P	•
Propelled Weapon						
Atlatl	4	Thrown x5	1	2	3	•••
Blowgun	0	*	1	1	2/N	•
Bow*	Strength	*	1	*	*	•
Bow, compound*	Strength +1	*	1	*	*	••
Crossbow	3	40/80/160	1	2	3	•••
Crossbow, hand	1	15/30/60	1	1	2/N	••
Crossbow, arbalest	4	75/150/300	1	4	4	••••
Crossbow, repeating	2	35/70/140	15	3	5	•••••
Sling	2	Thrown x3	1	2	0/P	-
Sling, stave	3	Thrown x5	1	2	4	-

* See text for notes or special rules.

Modern Ranged Weapons

Modern science hasn't confined itself to guns. Many other ranged weapons exist, from the useful and non-lethal to the dangerously ridiculous. Unless otherwise noted, all of the following weapons rely on the Firearms Skill.

Ballistic Knife: The ballistic knife is a fighting knife with a surprise for overconfident opponents: a trigger that allows the wielder to fire the knife's blade with a steel spring concealed in the knife's hilt. Ballistic knives were originally developed for Soviet *Spetsnaz* troops and are rare curiosities. The Traits given are for a ballistic knife when fired; in close combat, treat it as a combat knife. A ranged attack with a ballistic knife relies on the Athletics Skill (stabbing still relies on regular old Weaponry). Once the ballistic knife is fired, its s hilt is useful only as an improvised sap, and the blade has an insufficient hilt for independent use. Re-assembling a fired ballistic knife takes five turns.

BB Gun: A pellet gun or BB gun uses compressed air to fire a .177-caliber metal ball or pellet. A successful hit can kill a Size 1 creature, but on anything larger a BB gun inflicts a maximum of one Health level of bashing damage and cannot reduce the target to fewer Health levels than her Size. A called shot to the eye (see p. 165 of the **World of Darkness Rulebook**) can cause temporary blindness, or the permanent loss of the eye if the attacker achieves exceptional success. Most BB guns resemble actual firearms superficially, if at all.

Most BB guns are semi-automatic. In the late 1980s, a variant type called *airsoft* originated in Asia. Airsoft guns are full-scale replicas of real firearms that use electric motors driving pistons to power fully automatic fire. These "weapons" are rare outside of Japan, Hong Kong, the UK and the United States, where owners use them in sporting competitions similar to paintball (see below). Airsoft guns cost •• and have Traits identical to regular BB guns, save for their full auto capability and their potential for bluffing.

Dart Gun: Dart guns use compressed air to fire tranquilizer or radio tracking darts. All dart guns are quiet weapons and have the effective benefits of suppressors (see p. 167). A successful dart gun attack does no significant damage (unless the target is Size 2 or smaller, in which case a dart gun inflicts one Health level of lethal damage). Instead, a dart gun delivers the dart's payload into the target's bloodstream. Darts are commercially available with tranquilizer solution only. See p. 127 for information on knockout drugs and other poisons. A tracking dart has a 12-hour battery life and appropriate RDF (radio direction-finding; Size 4, Cost •••) gear can detect it up to 20 miles away.

Fire Extinguisher: In addition to its primary effect of putting out burning property and characters, a fire extinguisher makes a halfway decent improvised blinding weapon at point-blank range. An attack with a fire extinguisher uses Dexterity + Athletics. A successful attack inflicts no actual damage, but the target suffers the effects of pepper spray (see p. 128) for one full turn. The Traits given assume a dry chemical or carbon dioxide fire extinguisher; Damage is –4 for an extinguisher using ordinary water.

Fire Hose: A stream of water at a pressure of 300 pounds per square inch is enough to knock a grown man off his feet, making a fire hose a dandy improvised defensive measure — and ideal for riot control. A fire hose attack uses Strength + Athletics. A successful attack inflicts bashing damage and has the Knockdown effect (see p. 168, the **World of Darkness Rulebook**), in addition to blinding the target for one full turn. The average fire hose mounted in a building can reach up to 50 feet from its wall socket. Double all range and insufficient Strength penalties for a fire hose.

Flare Gun: Break-action flare pistols are standard survival equipment for boaters, military aviators and other individuals whose travels may lead them to be lost at sea or in desolate wilderness areas. The intended use of a flare launcher is to fire a signal flare into the air to alert rescuers to the user's loca-

tion, and most flares can reach an altitude of at least 500 feet. Chances are good that World of Darkness characters won't be using flares for signaling, though, and effective combat ranges for flares are much shorter because of their irregular flight paths. Flares launched from flare guns use the same mechanics as flares launched from shotguns (see p. 87).

Hairspray Flamethrower: A can of hair spray and a lighter is all it takes to harness the power of projectile fire. Attacks made with a hairspray flamethrower require a Dexterity + Athletics roll. The flame emitted from a hairspray flamethrower has a range of one yard, is of Torch size (Damage 1) and burns with the intensity of a gasoline fire (+2 Damage bonus). Thus, an attack with a hairspray flamethrower will never inflict more than three points of damage. On an exceptional success, combustible items on the victim will catch fire, and, the following turn, he'll begin taking one point of lethal damage per turn until extinguished (see p. 180, the **World of Darkness Rulebook**). A full can of hairspray holds enough flammable material to make 10 attacks. For cans characters just find lying around, the Storyteller should roll a die; the result is how many attacks worth of fuel the can contains.

Alternately, the can could be made to explode by punching a hole in it and applying a spark. This produces an explosive with Blast Area 2 and Force 1(L). See p. 101 for more information on explosives.

Paintball: Paintball guns, also referred to as "markers" to avoid negative connotations, are recreational "weapons" that use compressed air to fire .68 caliber plastic spheres filled with water-soluble paint. Paintball players usually wear face masks, goggles and padded protective gear, as paintball hits leave spectacular bruises at close range. A successful hit with a paintball gun does a maximum of one Health level of bashing damage and cannot reduce a character to fewer Health levels than her Size, but targeted shots to the face (see p. 165, the **World of Darkness Rulebook**) can cause temporary blindness. Paintball guns feed from internal magazines like firearms. A paintball gun's carbon dioxide tank is replaced separately (three turns to change tanks) and has enough pressure for 100 shots. Most paintball guns are capable only of semi-automatic fire, but fully automatic versions are available (Cost •••).

Pepperball guns are police variants of paintball guns that fire ammunition filled with pepper spray instead of paint. These guns and their ammunition are restricted to law enforcement sales only, and pepperball guns use slightly lower firing pressures. Attempting to use pepperball ammunition in a paintball gun results in the ammo rupturing as it's fired. See p. 128 for information on pepper spray.

Holy Water Paintballs!

Inevitably, players will see the potential in refilling tranquilizer darts or paintballs with hazardous substances. This is technically feasible, but probably a waste of resources, as neither of these projectiles is designed to be emptied of its original contents and filled with something else

Modern Ranged Weapons

Type	Damage	Ranges	Capacity	Strength	Size	Cost
Modern Ranged Weapons						
Ballistic Knife	1 (9 again)	2/5/10	1	1	1/J	••
BB Gun, pistol	0B*	5/10/20	50	1	1/S	•
BB Gun, rifle	1B*	10/20/40	300	1	2/L	•
Dart Gun, pistol	0*	10/20/40	1	1	2/L	••
Dart Gun, rifle	1*	25/50/100	1	1	3	•••
Fire Extinguisher	–2*	1/2/3	5	1	2/N	•
Fire Hose	2B*	10/20/30	*	4	4	N/A
Flare Gun	–1L*	20/40/80	1	1	1/S	•
Hairspray Flamethrower	–1L*	1*	10*	1	1/S	N/A
Paintball Pistol	0B*	15/30/60	20	1	2/J	•
Paintball Rifle	1B*	30/60/120	120	1	2/N	••
Ranged Stun Gun	–1*	1/3/7	1	1	1/S	••
Slingshot	0B*	5/10/20	1	1	1/S	•
Spear Gun	3	15/30/60	1	2	2/L	••

* See text for notes or special rules.

while remaining usable. Refilling a single dart or paintball projectile takes 15 minutes and requires a successful Dexterity + Crafts roll with a –2 penalty for the fine detail work. With failure, the substance *and* the projectile are ruined. Use of a filler material that is actively dangerous in a workbench environment — white phosphorus, nitric acid, the refined ichors of a spirit of corruption — increases the penalty to –5, and a dramatic failure leads to even bigger problems.

Ranged Stun Gun: Ranged stun guns, commonly known as "Tasers" after the best-known product line, use a compressed nitrogen charge to fire a pair of metal probes at a target. These probes trail insulated wires through which the weapon delivers an electrical shock like that of a stun gun (see p. 36). These wires are seven yards long in police-only models and five yards long for civilian-legal versions.

A character may use a ranged stun gun as a normal stun gun. If she fires it as a ranged weapon, success on the attack indicates that the probes have lodged in the target, inflicting one Health level of bashing damage regardless of the number of successes rolled. Every subsequent turn until the probes are removed, the character may use the stun gun to make an additional stun gun attack that automatically succeeds with a fixed three successes.

Removing a ranged stun gun's probes from a target without inflicting injury requires an extended Dexterity + Medicine roll (one minute per roll, requiring a number of successes equal to those achieved on the initial attack). Tearing the probes out is a free action that inflicts one additional level of bashing damage. If the victim attempts to tear out the probes himself, he must score more successes on a Resolve + Composure roll than the attacker gained on the initial attack.

Slingshot: A slingshot is a Y-shaped piece of wood, plastic or metal with an elastic band stretched between its arms. Most slingshots are children's toys suitable only for firing pebbles at empty cans. A high-end hunting slingshot (or "wrist rocket") firing ball bearings can kill small game or put out larger targets' eyes, and is also effective for silently destroying streetlights and security camera lenses. A slingshot cannot inflict more than one Health level of bashing damage unless fired at a target's eyes (see p. 165, **World of Darkness Rulebook**), in which case the slingshot inflicts lethal damage. An attack with a slingshot relies on the Athletics Skill.

Spear Gun: This underwater relative of the crossbow uses either compressed air or an elastic band to propel a two-foot metal spear. A spear gun is designed for underwater use and suffers no penalties in such an environment. Reloading a spear gun takes two turns. Out of the water, a spear gun is useless beyond about a yard.

Practical Considerations

Game rules don't cover a lot of the normal issues that come with owning a gun. This section addresses some of the concerns that real-world gun owners have to deal with, as well as other miscellaneous items that didn't fit anywhere else in this chapter.

Maintenance

Guns, like any other mechanical devices, need periodic maintenance to function properly. Simple cleaning involves stripping the gun down to its major components, scrubbing off any accumulated gunk, checking everything for cracks or stress fractures, oiling the major contact points and re-assembling the gun. This maintenance should also take place after every time the gun is fired. A gun carried or concealed on a daily basis quickly builds up dust, lint, body oils, hair and skin flakes, and

once a month is a good minimum schedule for cleaning. For something that sits in the bedside table waiting for a burglar, an owner can probably get away with cleaning once every three or four months. The cleaning process typically takes an experienced shooter 15 minutes or less and requires only a cleaning kit (gun oil, a circular metal bore brush for the barrel, a toothbrush for the other parts, fabric patches for wiping off dirt; Cost •).

Harsh environments quickly take their toll, especially if a gun's being used in them. High humidity allows more particulate matter to settle on a gun and clog its inner workings (a problem with early model M16s in Vietnam, for example). Extreme cold leads to plastic growing brittle and chipping or metal becoming fatigued quickly. In desert environments, even a gun left alone inside a tent or vehicle quickly attracts dust and sand buildup. Sea air, with the salt it carries, can quickly corrode or rust a weapon. In any of these environments, a character who wants her gun to be reliable when she needs it should clean it at least daily.

Simple actions take less maintenance than complicated ones. Revolvers, break- and pump-action shotguns and bolt-action rifles are the most tolerant of poor maintenance. Fully automatic weapons are the worst, with machine guns being notorious maintenance hogs. Some manufacturers make guns with specific finishes or alloys to resist cold or sea conditions. Russian-made guns have a particular reputation for being indifferent to poor treatment and lousy weather.

Handedness

For most of the world, the handedness of a gun isn't an issue. This is because they're in the right-handed majority. For left-handed shooters, using most firearms can be a painful experience. This is because most pump-action, semi-auto and automatic firearms are designed to fling their empty casings away from the shooter – which means to her right. If a character is holding a gun in her left hand, it ejects the empty brass across her line of sight, or occasionally into her face — not usually a damaging experience, but certainly a distracting one. In addition, safeties and magazine release buttons are usually located in places convenient for right-handed shooters, which may be inaccessible to southpaws without some forearm contortions.

Revolvers don't have the problem of ejecting brass, but most modern ones do swing their cylinders out to the left so a right-handed shooter can reload with his left hand while continuing to hold the gun with his right. In recent years, many handgun manufacturers have recognized the problems inherent in a right-hand-biased design and have introduced guns with ambidextrous controls. Ruger, in particular, as the company founder was himself left-handed, leads the pack in these designs. Many assault rifles can be configured for either right- or left-handed control and ejection, though this requires tools and about an hour's work. A handful of shotguns are offered in left-handed configurations. Finally, a rare few weapons like the FN P90 and the American 180 are built to be truly ambidextrous, ejecting spent casings straight down.

Most bows are made for right-handed archers. Crossbows and spear guns are usually ambidextrous, as are blowguns and all thrown weapons.

Underwater Bullet Ballet

Most guns will fire underwater — once. Modern ammunition is sealed against short-term immersion, and guns themselves don't start to exhibit problems from a swim until they've had a chance to corrode. The difficulty comes with the additional resistance that the denser fluid medium of water puts on the gun's mechanism. Revolvers, pump-action shotguns and other guns with manually operated actions don't have too much trouble with this, but semi- and fully automatic actions frequently encounter too much resistance to cycle properly, resulting in jams. Whenever a character fires such a gun underwater, the Storyteller should roll a die: on a 1 or 2, the gun jams. Increase this to 1–3 for a short burst, 1–4 for a medium burst and 1–5 for a long burst. Even when a gun does fire properly underwater, the bullet quickly loses speed: reduce an attack's Damage by 1 for every three yards or fraction thereof of range.

Cook-Offs

Extreme heat can cause ammunition to *cook off* as the propellant within it spontaneously explodes. This can occur in an automatic weapon that has been fired continuously for several minutes, as the metal of the firing chamber reaches temperatures greater than 500ºF, but it's not a problem for most shooters.

Ammunition exposed to open flame (at least the heat of normal combustion, such as burning wood or clothing) can also cook off. Every turn that the ammunition is exposed to the fire, roll a die. If the result is less than the total number of turns that the ammo has been heated, it explodes. However, this is more distracting than actually dangerous. A bullet depends on the *compressed* release of its propellant's explosion to direct it. When a cartridge cooks off outside a gun's firing chamber, there's no resistance to its explosion, which therefore expands in every direction. Such a cook-off is noisy and may pepper everyone in the area with bits of metal, but is unlikely to cause any real injury. A character whose ammunition cooks off because he's on fire himself does not sustain any additional damage.

Burning Out the Barrel

Every bullet fired through a gun's barrel inflicts a miniscule amount of wear and tear. Over time, this adds up. Most firearms have barrels that are good for tens of thousands of rounds before their performance starts to suffer. This is caused by the barrel's rifling wearing down and not putting as much spin on outgoing bullets as it should. Sharpshooters may change barrels every few thousand rounds to maintain pinpoint accuracy, but this isn't a major concern for most characters.

Fully automatic weapons' barrels wear out much faster than those of other guns. In addition to the sheer number of bullets going through fully automatic weapons, they run a much greater risk of overheating because of sustained rapid fire. When a machine gun's barrel starts glowing white-hot, it's time to let it cool off for a while. In extreme cases, metal expansion can lead to a bullet getting stuck in the barrel, which bursts the next time the gun is fired. For this reason,

machine guns are built with barrels that can be changed in about a minute, rather than an hour for most weapons (though a set of asbestos gloves is recommended for changing barrels in the middle of a firefight).

Muzzle Blast

Firearms are not perfectly efficient machines. Whenever a gun fires, it wastes a certain amount of the energy released. The majority of this waste occurs in the gun's *muzzle blast*, which is the expanding gas that follows the bullet out the end of the barrel. Because particles of propellant are still burning as the gas reaches the end of the barrel, the muzzle blast is visible as a gout of yellow-orange flame. Guns with short barrels have more muzzle blast because the explosion reaches the end of the barrel sooner, while more propellant is still unburned and the gas is under greater pressure.

In daytime firing, muzzle blast is usually invisible against a well-lit background. The shockwave that propagates through the air feels like a gust of hot wind against a bystanders's skin. A rifle being fired from a prone position makes grass and leaves wave up to several yards away, which can expose a sniper who's otherwise perfectly hidden.

At night, each muzzle blast is a small momentary eruption of fire that highlights the shooter and ruins her night vision and that of anyone else looking at the gun. Large-caliber handguns can have blinding muzzle blasts as large as pumpkins, while fully automatic weapons display a continual stuttering tongue of flame. Some machine guns are equipped with *flash suppressors*, conical attachments that shield the shooters' eyes from the muzzle blasts to preserve their night vision. These suppressors do nothing to hide the muzzle blasts from other observers.

Pistol-Whipping

In the Old West, the fine art of using a revolver to knock some sense into a fool without shooting him was called *buffaloing*. Nowadays, it's *pistol-whipping*, or *butt-stroking* if the character is using the stock of a longarm to get his point across. When using a firearm as an improvised melee weapon, the most important thing to remember is the all-important gun safety commandment: keep your finger off the trigger if you aren't ready to fire. A firearm used as a melee weapon does bashing damage equal to its Size.

Most firearms can handle casual rough treatment, but their optics are another story. Whenever a character uses a gun with an attached scope or laser sight as a melee weapon, roll a die. On a 1, the device is knocked out of alignment and no longer functions. If the shooter doesn't know it's misaligned, its normal bonus becomes a penalty instead.

Magazines

When a weapon feeds from detachable magazines, many shooters think of them as systems that are separate from the gun. Just slap one in, fire it dry, drop it and

move to the next one. A magazine is a simple device — basically just a box with an open end, a spring and a plastic or metal piece called a *follower* at the end of the spring to push the ammo up — but a magazine can still malfunction. Old springs lose their elasticity, which can keep them from feeding the gun as well. A magazine whose open end is bashed against something solid can get a bent *feed lip*, which keeps the ammo from getting out (a good reason never to tape two magazines end-to-end, no matter how many fractions of a second it shaves off reloading time). If too much gunk and debris gets into a magazine, the debris can clog or corrode the spring or bind the follower against the side of the magazine, which again can cause a misfeed. Magazine maintenance isn't quite as critical as weapon maintenance, but it still doesn't hurt to disassemble a magazine and clean out the dust and lint at least annually, or more frequently if it's spending a lot of time in the field, and as soon as possible if it encounters water or mud.

High-capacity magazines are available for most firearms (Cost •). These function just like normal magazines, but are larger. Typically, "hi-cap" handgun magazines hold two to four extra rounds (smaller calibers get more extra capacity). Submachine gun and rifle hi-caps hold 30, 40 or 50 rounds, and drums hold 50, 75 or 100.

Topping Off

Weapons that feed from external magazines have a "+1" notation in their Capacities. This means that a character can seat a full magazine in the magazine well *and* have an additional cartridge in the chamber and ready to fire. Normally, when a character "tops off" a gun, loading it to this capacity, he chambers the first round in the magazine, drops the magazine, loads one round into it from a separate ammunition source to bring it up to full capacity, then reinserts it into the gun. During combat, characters don't usually have time to fiddle with this procedure — if a character reloads an empty autoloader with a 15-round magazine, the gun contains 15 rounds, not 16.

Some experts advise against topping off, arguing that keeping a magazine loaded to full capacity all the time puts stress on the spring, which eventually leads to reliability problems because the spring is no longer strong enough to push its entire load up into the gun's action. Others state that modern magazines are designed to handle their full capacity all the time, manufacturers know what they're doing and warnings would be present on magazines that weren't intended to be loaded to full capacity.

A character *can* top off in combat if she ejects a partially fired magazine while there's still a round in the gun's chamber, then reloads with a fresh magazine. This technique, called a *tactical reload*, is recommended practice for shooters who find themselves in a lull in a gunfight and don't want to get caught reloading while lead is being exchanged later.

The Right Gun for Your Character

So now it's time for your character to go to the gun store. What to equip her with? Here are some points to consider before you dive straight for the Damage column to see if a Stodola & Mertz .725 Magnum revolver loaded with Stealth Rhino armor-piercing frangible subsonic hollowpoints is better or worse than that 3.2mm Herculean Firearms submachine gun and its case-less hyper-velocity depleted-uranium incendiary carcinogenic flechette tracer ammo.

• **Is the gun part of her job?** If so, stop right there. She probably doesn't have a choice in the matter. Most private security companies and all police departments and militaries have standard-issue weapons that all armed personnel must carry. Police departments have a short list to make some allowances for personal preference and hand size; militaries don't go even that far. Deviation from these regulations can cause problems ranging from disciplinary action if the character fails an inspection to jail time if her excessively powerful and unauthorized handgun bullet goes through a criminal to strike a suspect.

• **What's legal?** Obviously, this may not be a concern for some characters, especially in the World of Darkness, but others will do their best to be law-abiding citizens, even in the face of hungry zombies. For more information on legal issues, see Chapter Six.

• **What can she handle?** Strength requirements are just dice pool inconveniences in game terms, but that penalty for using too strong of a gun represents a world of hurt for a character who persistently uses such a weapon. Excessive recoil leaves sore wrists and bruised shoulders, and a shooter who doesn't have a good grip on her weapon can lose teeth if it flips up into her face. There's such a thing as too much gun.

• **How experienced is she?** Novice shooters are better off with simple guns. Revolvers and pump-action shotguns are point-and-click simple. A gun whose safety is too awkward for your character to undo in the middle of a fight may as well not be there at all.

• **What can she afford?** This isn't just a reminder to check your character's Resources Merit. Ammunition can be costly in larger or obscure calibers. A box of 50 .50 AE cartridges costs $30, while that same money will get 250 rounds of 9mm Luger or 500 rounds of .22 LR. That's an expensive practice session for larger guns. Specialty ammunition in large calibers can quickly run up prices of multiple dollars a shot, if it's available at all.

• **Will she carry it concealed?** If so, anything larger than Size 1/J probably isn't an option. See p. 198 for more information on carrying concealed weapons.

• **What's the gun for?** Self-defense firearms are usually different from hunting guns, and assassins have needs of an entirely different type. Choose a gun that fits the purpose to which the character intends to put it.

• **What's her background?** Shooters can get into a groove (or a rut) and become accustomed to a certain weapon, no matter what its negative qualities are. If a character has former police, military or competition experience, chances are good that she's already well-acquainted with a certain model of gun, and may buy her own because she knows how it will feel and shoot.

• **What's the gun's background?** Just as important as the shooter's history is the gun's history. What have they been through together? Did the character take the gun from a fallen foe after a decade-long feud or snatch the gun out of a dusty antique cabinet just in time to shoot the vampire attacking her husband? Was the gun a trusty companion that never left the holster in 30 years of walking the beat, always ready but never tested? Has the character been around, this gun at her side, since the nights of the Manifest Destiny?

• **Tradition.** Particularly in rural families, firearms can be heirlooms passed down through three or four generations, handed off to the eldest son as the household hunting rifle or the sidearm that Great-Great-Great-Great-Grandpa Charlton carried in the War of Northern Aggression. This is an excellent justification for giving a character a cool but obsolete firearm — or one with a history that could prove troublesome later.

• **Brand loyalty.** Many firearm pundits swear by a certain manufacturer, design or caliber. Some hold the Colt M1911A1 up as the Holy Grail of handguns and flatly refuse to own any pistol not built on that plan. Others collect examples of every H&K firearm they can legally own. Still others spend hours on Web forums arguing the relative merits of .357 SiG over .40 S&W. Does your character have any favorites? If so, why?

• **Idiosyncrasy.** Some decisions come down to intuition. Maybe a given handgun's grip fits her hand perfectly. Perhaps the hand-rubbed finish on the stock was too beautiful to pass up. Sheer cool factor is always an issue, particularly for characters who like technical minutiae. Maybe the serial number repeats the character's lucky number three times over. Some weapons just *feel right*.

Suppressive Fire

Suppressive fire is a shooting technique involving rapidly unloading a lot of shots to deny an enemy the ability to move into or out of a certain area. Unlike a direct attack, whose point is to hit and kill the target, suppressive fire's primary goal isn't accuracy. Rather, the goal is to sufficiently saturate an area with bullets that no one is willing to pass through that hail of lead and risk getting shot. Machine guns are favored for this task because of their ability to sustain automatic fire for long periods of time, but any firearm (or other ranged weapon) capable of rapid fire is suitable.

To perform suppressive fire, a shooter designates a specific area that he wants to suppress: "the front door of the house," "the black Lincoln Continental," "the area around the oil drum that the lawyer is using for cover" and so forth. The maximum width of area that the character may suppress depends on his gun's capabilities:

Gun can fire . . .	Max width
Single shots	1 yard
Short bursts	2 yards
Medium bursts	3 yards
Long bursts	5 yards
Gun is a machine gun	10 yards

As a single action, the character fires at least three rounds for every yard of coverage. (He may elect to fire more than three rounds per yard.) If his gun doesn't have enough ammo, he can't cover his entire designated area.

As suppressive fire isn't really an attack so much as a vague prayer to hit something, no attack roll occurs when the action occurs. Instead, whenever *any* target enters the suppressed area before the end of the turn, make an immediate attack roll against that target. If a target is in the suppressed area when the action begins and is still in the area at the end of the turn, make an immediate attack roll against the target as well. No bonuses apply to these attacks except the gun's Damage rating. All penalties apply normally, and each attack suffers an additional –2 if the weapon used is not a machine gun. The character may not spend Willpower to add dice to this roll.

The drawback to suppressive fire is that the character must fully concentrate on suppression for a few precious seconds. Until the end of the turn, the character cannot use his Defense against any attack, and must expose himself from behind cover enough to see and fire at the entire suppressed area. If he is disarmed, incapacitated or otherwise rendered unable to continue shooting, the suppression effect ends immediately.

I'm done
lettin' them fuck with me
and mine.

It's been damn near four years, now,
and you never know when they're gonna come.
Sometimes months go by.
Sometimes only a few nights between their visits.
I sit here on my porch and I can see my cows.
Off to the right, the goats. I find them from time to time, dead.
Hardly a wound on them but a little pucker-hole somewhere under their necks,
and they never have a drop of blood left inside.
The flies won't touch them, either.
I look down at Maureen, resting in the shade of the rocker,
but she's not napping because she's scared.
I can still see the three little x's they carved into her ear that one night.

Poor dog.

Me, I found a diamond-shaped sliver of metal under my pinky nail one day.
I took the sliver into town, and nobody knew what it was.
The fellow at the RadioShack said it wasn't a microchip,
but that it had some kind of writing or etching on it.
Another fellow up in Collbran sold me some of those Bouncing Betty mines
like my Pop saw in Vietnam.
I buried them all over the place.
The fellow said about three-quarters of them probably still worked,
which is good enough for me.
I also bought a few hand grenades,
and I have a Ruger revolver under my one pillow.
Maureen whines in the back of her throat,
and I know they're coming *tonight*.

As I said,
they're done fuckin' with me
and mine.

Chapter Three: Tactical and Heavy Weaponry

"I know not with what weapons World War III will be fought with, but World War IV will be fought with sticks and stones."

– Albert Einstein

Some targets are too much for one human to attack. Some targets are too risky and would cost the lives of many a good human. Some targets are too well protected; some targets aren't even present at the time but will be there at a later date. These targets need special weapons and methods in order to be successfully assaulted. Explosives, fire, chemicals and so on deployed tactically and effectively are the best options to use against such targets.

Tactical weapons, by their very nature, are designed to give their users an advantage over their opponents. This advantage can come in the form of more destruction or it could be that the location of battle can be chosen ahead of time. Whatever the form of the advantage, tactical and heavy weapons have played a part in every major conflict since the earliest recorded histories. From medieval siege weapons to ancient Chinese firework rockets, from Roman artillery to the Tartar army catapulting plague victims into the city of Kaffa in the 14th century, tactical weapons have allowed armies to attack bigger and tougher opponents with both a minimum force and with suffering minimal losses and will continue shape the future of modern conflicts.

Tactical Deployment

What sets tactical weapons apart from other categories of weaponry is how these weapons are meant to be used. They gain their destructive powers from intelligent deployment. Each type of weapon has a unique and distinct deployment method that, when used properly, maximizes the weapon's offensive or defensive effectiveness.

One problem with any of these types of weapons is that they do not discriminate, they don't know which team they fight on and they don't recognize any boundaries. Even laser-guided smart bombs will only hit whatever targets they detect as being "lit up" by the laser designators. The laser could be aimed incorrectly or the bomb could be picking up a reflection off another target.

Another problem is the weapons' inherent complexity. Most tactical and heavy weapons require that more than one button or trigger be pushed for their use. When deploying tactical weapons, a setup or preparation period is generally required before the weapon can be used properly, and improper use of a weapons system carries risk. While each weapon has the potential for causing large amounts of casualties among an enemy, the weapon could just as easily do the same for the people trying to use it.

Some of the weaponry in this chapter is *military grade*. Militaries require weapons far more powerful than those necessary for civilian hunting and self-defense applications. Military weapons are not sold for commercial use, and most are unavailable even to permit-holding collectors or police departments. Military-grade weapons haven't been given Cost traits, and are available for sale only through the black market (see p. 194).

Explosives

Legend has it that a Chinese cook accidentally mixed saltpeter, sulfur and charcoal (all common kitchen ingredients at the time), and, by doing so, created gunpowder. He discovered that this mixture burned when ignited. It was later discovered that, when placed into a container (bamboo tubes) and ignited, the mixture would explode — thus creating the world's first firecracker. The Chinese believed that the loud bang created by the explosion would scare away evil demons and thus began using firecrackers to celebrate every special occasion, such as weddings, births, the New Year and coronations.

Li Tian Versus the Prime Minister's Demon

During the Tang Dynasty, Prime Minister Wei Zhou defeated an evil dragon only to have it return to haunt him. Nobody knew of a way to rid the kingdom of this evil spirit. Li Tian, a Chinese monk, ignited a bamboo tube filled with gunpowder, and the resulting explosion and loud bang drove the spirit away. Li Tian continued using this method in driving away evil. He was eventually honored with a temple and the Chinese celebrate April 18th by offering sacrifices to Li Tian.

By the 10th century, the Chinese began creating bombs, fire arrows and "ground rats" (a type of firework designed to scare and disorient). Sometimes these "ground rats" would briefly launch themselves into the air. Soon afterward, the Chinese first used exploding rockets. The first rockets used bamboo tubes to propel objects into the air, though these tubes were fragile and unsafe for practical use. Next, the Chinese used metal to form crude cannons. This practice quickly spread across Asia into the Middle East and, by the 13th century, had reached Europe.

Soon, every country had to have an artillery division in its army if the country had any hope of winning major conflicts. Factories called "powederworks" mixed and ground gunpowder. Crude cannons led to more advanced cannons, mortars and then muskets, which ushered in the end of the medieval world (as bullets could easily penetrate a knight's armor).

During the 17th century, gunpowder evolved into commercial use, for blasting rocks and clearing paths for roads. The 1800s brought about greater demand for commercial demolitions and even more powerful explosives such as nitroglycerine. Albert Nobel, founder of the Nobel Prize, developed dynamite, which stabilized nitroglycerine and made it relatively safe for commercial applications.

The 20th century brought with it huge leaps in explosive technologies. Shapeable explosives or *plastique explosives* allowed for explosions that could then be shaped and aimed. Their destructive power was focused directly at the target rather than partially at the target and partially at everything else. Then, as the world was plunged into conflicts using the deadliest weapons yet to be seen, larger and more powerful explosives were developed, culminating with the harnessing of the power of the atom to create devastation on an epic scale.

Most of the weapons presented in this chapter are explosive in nature. Explosive weapons have some or all the following Traits:

Type: This is the name or descriptor of the weapon.

Damage: This is the number of dice added to or subtracted from attempts to attack enemies with the explosive. Attacks using different types of explosives use different rolls; for example, attacks with hand grenades are Dexterity + Athletics, while attacks with howitzers are Intelligence + Firearms and require an Artillery Specialty. See the descriptions of specific types of explosives for more details. As with attack rolls for other weapons, successes on the attack roll add to the damage done. In addition, all explosives use the extra successes rule. On a successful attack, a number of extra successes are added to the roll to determine the damage inflicted — this is expressed as a value after the Damage trait and damage type (B: bashing, L: lethal), and is *usually* equal to the Force of the explosive.

Example: A heavy fragmentation grenade has a Damage of 0(L)+3; this means attacks with the grenade add zero dice to the attack roll (Dexterity + Athletics), the attack does lethal damage and, assuming the roll is successful, three successes are added to the successes scored on the roll to determine the amount of damage done.

Stationary explosives have a Damage of "N/A" because they're left in place, not used to attack specific targets. When hidden, such explosives use the system for traps on p. 184 to determine how well hidden they are, and the damage they inflict on anyone or anything nearby is determined solely by the Blast Area and Force of the explosion.

Blast Area: The diameter of the explosion in yards. The number listed is for the primary blast area; the secondary blast area is twice this number. A blast area of 0 yards is considered to affect only the person the area is in contact with, though the blast Area have a secondary Blast Area of 1.

Force: How much damage the explosion inflicts on anyone or anything *not the subject of a direct attack with the*

weapon. Bystanders caught in the primary blast area take the explosive's Force rating as automatic points of damage, and the bystanders also suffer the explosive's Force in damage dice.

Characters outside of the primary blast area but within the secondary blast area take damage differently. They simply take the Force rating of the explosive as damage dice.

Example: John is 15 yards from a one pound C-4 bomb when it goes off. Instead of taking 4 points of lethal damage automatically and taking an additional 4 dice of damage, he suffers only the 4 dice of damage.

Explosives without a Damage trait have the type of damage they inflict (B: bashing; L: lethal) noted under Force, instead.

Ranges: The short, medium and long ranges of the weapon. Attacks in the short range are made at no penalty, attacks at medium range are made at –2 and attacks at long range are made at –4.

Cost: The minimum dots in the Resources Merit usually required to purchase the weapon. An "N/A" entry indicates that the item is a military device and is not available to the general public. Military devices are for sale only on the black market (see p. 194).

Size: The size of the explosive. Items of Size 1 can be hidden within a hand, items of Size 2 can be hidden inside a coat and items of Size 3 cannot be hidden anywhere on a person. See p. 198 for "Weapon Concealment" rules.

Effects: Any other effects pertinent to the behavior of the explosive, such as the 9 again or 8 again rules, Armor Piercing or Knockdown.

An explosive with the 9 or 8 again rule applies that rule to both attack rolls and to damage rolls using the explosive's Blast Area and Force.

Armor Piercing is expressed as "AP" followed by a number, and armor piercing explosives apply their Armor Piercing value only to their primary target. The exception is white phosphorus and thermite ordinance, which apply their Armor Piercing values to *everything* caught within the blast area.

See p. 168, the **World of Darkness Rulebook**, for more information on the Knockdown effect.

Heavy Weaponry

It takes more than a machine gun to destroy a tank. The armies of the world have developed heavy weaponry, suitable for eliminating targets that exist on a scale far greater than human beings. Enemy APCs, fighter jets and hardened bunkers all fit this description, but so do other, hidden things, things that exist in isolated caverns and below the ocean's waves. Characters may believe they need large-scale destructive solutions to such threats, but don't forget that any use of heavy weaponry by persons other than the military is likely to attract attention far beyond the means of most characters to escape.

This section covers heavy weaponry used to attack enemies at short range, whether it be grenade launchers, artillery over-the-shoulder disposable rocket launchers and flamethrowers.

Grenades

A grenade is a fist-sized bomb filled with an explosive or chemical material and detonated by a delayed ignition system. The earliest grenades were simple hollow shells filled with gunpowder. The user lit a wick and tossed the grenade as far from himself as possible. Today, grenades are filled with a variety of substances, depending on their purpose, and use an internal chemical delay system for ignition.

Hand Grenades

A hand grenade has a handle and a safety pin that prevents the handle from coming off. After removing the pin and releasing the handle, the grenade will explode in three to five seconds. Hand grenades are usually thrown immediately after the lever is released to either give the attacker enough time to exit the area or throw it far enough to reach the target.

Mechanics: Hand grenades are thrown weapons. See p. 67, the **World of Darkness Rulebook**, for how to calculate the Range of thrown weapons. All grenades are considered aerodynamic except for Molotov cocktails and pipe bombs.

Grenade Myths

For anyone who would like to remove the safety pin with his teeth, note that it requires between

10 to
35 pounds of force to
remove it. It's likely that a character would pull his teeth out before he even budged the safety pin.

Grenades do not bounce. Most grenades weigh about a pound and have steel or aluminum casings. Grenades might ricochet off door frames in computer games, but, in the real world, grenades will just drop to the floor.

After the safety pin is removed, it can be replaced only so long as the handle has not been released. Even the slightest movement of the handle is enough to start the fuse. Once the handle is released, there is no way to reset the grenade. Whether the safety pin has been reinserted or not, the grenade will explode.

Hand grenades can be "cooked." Cooking a grenade is a technique that attempts to limit a target's ability to throw the grenade back or escape from its explosion. Once the user releases the handle, he holds the grenade for one or two seconds before throwing it.

Optional Grenade Rule

Grenades do not explode immediately after being thrown or even once they land. It takes 3 to 5 seconds after the grenade is primed before it will explode. Generally, a character will throw a grenade immediately after pulling the pin. If the grenade is not thrown too far, this might give an enemy ample time to throw the grenade back or simply escape the blast area.

Grenades are unpredictable, and there is no true method for a character to know how much time there is left before the grenade will explode. Storytellers who wish to add a little danger to grenade use can use the following rules to mimic a grenade's delay:

Once the grenade has been primed, the Storyteller secretly rolls a d10. The grenade is given an Initiative of the thrower's current Initiative minus the roll result. On the grenade's Initiative during the current turn, the grenade will explode. If this puts the grenade's Initiative at less than zero, then the grenade explodes after the first action of the following round. Characters may attempt to intercede, escape or even try to throw the grenade back before it explodes.

A character who is "cooking" a grenade releases the grenade's lever. The Storyteller rolls to determine the grenade's "secret" Initiative. The player states for how long (at what Initiative) his character will hold the grenade before

Grenades

Type	Damage	Blast Area	Force	Size	Cost	Primary Effects
Frag, standard	2(L)+3	10	3	1/S	N/A	Knockdown
Frag, heavy	0(L)+3	5	3	1/J	N/A	9 again, Knockdown
Frag, stick	3(L)+2	10	2	1/J	N/A	Knockdown
Pipe Bomb	0(L)+2	5	2	2/J	•	Not aerodynamic
Stun	1(B)+2	5	2	1/S	••	Knockdown, Stun
Thermite	–2(L)+4	5	4	1/J	N/A	AP 8, fire damage*
White Phosphorus	–2(L)+4	5	4	1/J	N/A	AP 3, fire damage*, Concealment**
Molotov Cocktail	–1(L)+2	3	2	2/L	•	Not aerodynamic, fire damage*
Smoke	–1	10	-	1/J	••	Concealment**
Tear gas	–1	10	-	1/J	••	Concealment**, Tear Gas

* **Fire Damage:** Each turn after the first, anything still in the blast area continues to suffer fire damage equal to the explosive's Force.

** **Concealment:** The blast area is filled with concealing smoke. See p. 105 for more information on smoke-concealed targets.

Cost Note: Items with a Cost of "N/A" are available for non-military sale only through the black market (p. 194).

throwing it. If the character holds the grenade past its Initiative, the grenade will explode in his hand. The character may attempt to perform any other actions normally allowed during the time he is "cooking" the grenade.

If you are using this rule, grenades are treated as stationary explosives — use the attack roll to determine if the grenade lands where the thrower wants it to, but, afterwards, the grenade does damage to anyone nearby according to its Blast Area and Force, and is not considered to have a primary target.

Example: Jim has an Initiative of 10. At the beginning of his turn, he decides to "cook off" a grenade. Jim declares that he will throw it at an Initiative of 6. The Storyteller rolls for the grenade and gets a 6, which means the grenade will explode at an Initiative of 4 (Jim's Initiative of 10 minus 6 equals 4). Jim throws the grenade just in time to see it explode.

Fragmentation Grenades: A fragmentation (or "frag") grenade is designed to spew shrapnel in all directions upon detonation. Frag grenades are generally made from hard plastic or steel, and flechettes or nicked wires provide the anti-personnel shrapnel fragments. Some grenades even contain small metal balls in the explosive compound to augment the destructive capabilities. Most weigh about a pound but contain only one to three ounces of explosive; a few heavier models exist, as do lighter models with protruding handles ("stick grenades") for better throwing range. The destructive power of the frag grenade comes more from its deadly fragments than from its blast.

Examples (normal): Chinese Type 86P, Russian RGN, German DM51, Austrian HGR 79, British L109A1, French LU 213, American M67

Examples (heavy): North Korean D-9, Swiss HG85

Examples (stick): German Stielhandgranate 24 (the "potato masher" of World War II fame), Chinese Type 73, Russian RGD-5

Pipe bombs are not technically grenades, but are more properly preconfigured explosive devices (see p. 116). However, pipe bombs are listed here for convenience's sake as the most common use of a pipe bombs is to light the fuse and throw the bomb at a target. Ease of manufacture, low expense and simplicity of use make the pipe bomb a favorite tool of insurgents, terrorists and backyard pranksters. The pipe bomb's design is simple: gunpowder in a pipe, a handful of nails, screws or other small pieces of metal and a time fuse at one end. Igniting a pipe bomb's fuse is a roll of Wits + Crafts; the pipe bomb is considered ready to throw the following turn on the same Initiative count at which the pipe bomb was lit.

Stun Grenades: Stun grenades, sometimes referred to as "flashbangs," are not designed to do serious bodily harm. Instead, they are used to disorient, distract or incapacitate targets. When detonated, a stun grenade gives off a blinding light and deafening loud bang but produces no fragments. Stun grenades are commonly used in assault entries, and SWAT and counter-terrorist teams train to enter a room and neutralize targets as soon as the flashbangs go off. A stun grenade typically has a very short fuse, and, if the "Alternate Grenade" rules above are in use, detonates on the Initiative after the grenade's handle is released.

Examples: Chinese JYS-1 and JYB-1, American T470 and M84, French ALSETEX

Incendiary Grenades: Incendiary grenades are filled with chemicals that produce extreme temperatures once set off. Once ignited, an incendiary grenade will burn (in much the same way a road flare burns) at extremely high temperatures for 30 to 45 seconds, burning or melting through most materials very quickly. Two subtypes of incendiary grenades exist:

Thermate and *thermite grenades* are designed to quickly destroy durable equipment such as engine blocks and other heavy machinery, and do not explode, though the burning metal can sputter and threaten a small radius. Thermate and thermite are both combinations of flaked aluminum and iron oxide (rust). When ignited, a portion of the thermate mixture is converted into molten iron and burns at around 4,000 degrees Fahrenheit. This reaction will cause metallic parts to become fused if they come into contact with the molten iron mixture. The fire from a thermate grenade covers its entire blast area, does 4(L) points of damage per turn and has the Armor Piercing 8 effect.

Example: American AN-M14

White phosphorus grenades are used to start fires and provide obscuring smoke, and have a small bursting charge to spread their cargo. White phosphorus (WP or "Willy-Pete") is a waxy material with a garlic-like odor produced from phosphate rocks.

The fire from a WP grenade covers its entire blast area, does 4(L) points of damage per turn and has the Armor Piercing 3 effect. In addition, a white phosphorus grenade also functions as a smoke grenade (see below).

Examples: Dutch NR-12, German DM24, American M15

Molotov cocktails, like pipe bombs, are preconfigured explosive devices (see p. 116), primed by the user and then thrown, and so are treated as grenades here. These Hollywood favorites of rioters, punks and gang members first appeared during the Finnish-Russian War prior to the onslaught of World War II, and were used so regularly that the Finnish government had Molotov cocktails mass-produced and even included matches. Pour gasoline in a bottle, add a rag for a wick, light and throw. Molotov cocktails must be lit before they can be thrown. They use the same rules as pipe bombs in this regard. Molotov cocktails never use the optional grenade rule described above, as they explode when the glass of the bottle breaks upon impact with the target.

Smoke Grenades: Smoke grenades are filled with chemicals that give off thick smoke when ignited. White smoke grenades typically are used to hide one's approach or departure, while colored smoke (typically yellow, red, green or violet) serves to mark specific locations for other observers. A cloud of smoke typically lasts a minimum of 2 minutes (40 turns). One mistake people sometimes make is in believing that smoke grenades should be thrown at the enemy troops in order to confuse and disorient them. All this really does is hide the enemy from friendly troops.

Examples: Dutch NR-16 (white) and JNS 62-65 (colored); German DM15 (colored); Russian RDG-1 (colored); Chinese SC-2 (colored), American M8 (white) and M18 (colored)

Smoke grenades fill their blast area with dense smoke that completely obscures line of sight, but don't inflict any damage. Treat a character hidden by smoke as *substantially covered* (see p. 162, the **World of Darkness Rulebook**) from targets outside the smoke. Treat any characters inside the smoke as if they were *fighting blind* (see p. 166, the **World of Darkness Rulebook**). Large munitions that produce smoke, such as smoke mortar shells, work the same way.

Tear Gas Grenades: The primary market of tear gas grenades is police departments, which use these grenades for riot control and to extract barricaded suspects. A tear gas grenade looks and functions exactly as a white smoke grenade, except that a tear gas grenade emits tear gas instead of smoke: see p. 128 for the effects of tear gas.

Examples: American M25A2, Russian RDG-2Kh

Grenade Launchers

Hand grenades have a limited range, and sometimes it becomes necessary to hit targets at distances greater than an arm's throw. Enter grenade launchers, which fire large projectiles with the same basic effects as some types of hand grenade. These grenades have low muzzle velocities and may have several seconds of "hang time," so they use impact fuses rather than time delays.

Mechanics: Grenade launchers are fired with Dexterity + Firearms. A grenade launcher's Damage is effectively zero, because a grenade launcher does not add to the accuracy of its users' attacks; however, successes on the attack roll still add to damage inflicted on the primary target, and grenade launcher ammunition still adds extra successes equal to the ammo's Force to successful attack rolls to determine the amount of damage inflicted.

Rifle Adapters: The earliest grenade launchers, introduced in the 1940s, were rifle attachments used in conjunction with blank cartridges. An adapter mounted on the muzzle of a soldier's rifle enabled him to attach a rifle grenade to the rifle, then fire a blank to propel the grenade up to several hundred yards. Rifle adapters had significant drawbacks, though: an adaptor decreased the accuracy of the rifle while attached, took too much time to use on the battlefield and generated spectacular self-immolation if a soldier accidentally used regular ammunition and detonated the grenade on firing. A rifle fitted with a rifle adapter grenade launcher suffers –2 to its Damage trait when firing regular ammunition, and if a user attempts to launch a grenade with a regular bullet rather than a blank cartridge, the grenade explodes.

Stand-Alone Launchers: Stand-alone grenade launchers typically resemble oversized (35mm to 40mm in caliber) single-barrel break-action shotguns. Stand-alone launchers operate like any other firearm, except for the fact that they fire four-inch-long exploding rounds. Stand-alone launchers were prevalent during the 1960s and '70s, but fell out of military use with the introduction of under-barrel launchers. Police departments still use stand-alone launchers to deliver non-lethal ordnance against mobs or barricaded suspects.

Grenade Launchers

Type	Ranges	Capacity	Strength	Size	Cost
Rifle Adapter	75/150/300	1	+1*	-	•••
Stand-Alone Launcher	75/150/300	1	3**	3	••••
Under-Barrel Launcher	75/150/300	1	2**	2/N	N/A
Grenade Machine Gun	400/800/1600	50	–(3/3/4)***	4	N/A

* When fired, a rifle adapter has a Strength requirement one greater than that of the rifle on which it's mounted.

** Stand-alone and under-barrel launchers suffer from the same high recoil that afflicts big-game rifles (see p. 72).

***See "Recoil," p. 52.

Cost Note: Items with a Cost of "N/A" are available for non-military sale only through the black market (see p. 194).

Grenade Ammunition

Type	Blast Area	Force	Size	Cost	Primary Effects
HE	10	4(L)	1/S	N/A	Knockdown
HEDP	10	3(L)	1/S	N/A	Knockdown, AP 4
Stun	5	3(B)	1/S	••	Knockdown, Stun
WP	10	4(L)	1/S	N/A	AP 8, fire damage*, Concealment**
Smoke	10	-	1/S	••	Concealment**
Tear gas	10	-	1/S	••	Concealment**, Tear Gas
Illumination	500***	-	1/S	N/A	Illumination***
Baton	-	5(B)	1/S	••	Knockdown, Stun, no explosion
Buckshot	10	4(L)	1/S	N/A	Knockdown, directional*****

* **Fire Damage:** Each turn after the first, anything still in the blast area continues to suffer fire damage equal to the grenade's Force.

** **Concealment:** The blast area is filled with concealing smoke. See p. 105 for more information on smoke-concealed targets.

*** **Illumination:** The blast area is illuminated to twilight levels of visibility for one minute.

**** **Directional:** This munition does its listed Damage as a normal explosion, but only in a 30-degree cone originating from the muzzle of the weapon that fires the munition.

Cost Note: Items with a Cost of "N/A" are available for non-military sale only through the black market (p. 194).

Examples: American M79 (the "Thumper" of Vietnam fame), German HK69, Singaporean CIS 40 GL, Taiwanese T85

Under-Barrel Launchers: Combat experience with stand-alone launchers proved that they were too bulky and unwieldy for a riflemen to carry along with their primary weapons, and grenadiers needed more self-protection than smaller firearms. The under-barrel launcher solved these problems by removing all of the nonessential parts of a launcher and clamping it securely under the barrel of an assault rifle. Some under-barrel launchers have optional shoulder stocks that allow them to function as stand-alone launchers (Cost ••).

Examples: American M203, Belgian F2000 GL, German AG36 and HK79, Russian GP-25 and GP-30, Turkish MKE MOD 2000

Grenade Machine Guns: As their name suggests, GMGs (also known as automatic grenade launchers or AGLs) are scaled-up machine guns capable of firing grenades in fully automatic mode. During the 1970s, GMGs were developed for use from gunboats and helicopters and still see use in these roles today, as well as being mounted on tactical trucks and APCs for infantry support. GMGs weigh several hundred pounds and may be fired only when mounted securely on a vehicle or tripod.

Examples: American Mk. 19, Chinese QLZ-87, Russian AGS-17, Singaporean CIS 40 AGL

Ammunition

A wide variety of ammunition types are available for grenade launchers. Many of these grenades — including smoke, white phosphorus, tear gas and stun — function exactly as their hand-thrown counterparts. Additional types unique to grenade launchers include high explosive (HE), high-explosive dual-purpose (HEDP), illumination, baton and buckshot. HE rounds produce a blast effect designed to suppress or kill enemy targets, serving the same basic purpose as fragmentation hand grenades. HEDP rounds sacrifice a little of their blasting power in exchange for up to two inches of armor penetration. Illumination rounds fire parachute flares. Baton rounds are non-lethal semi-soft projectiles. Buckshot rounds act like giant shotgun shells, providing devastating point-blank firepower. All launched grenades except baton and buckshot rounds have a minimum arming distance of 15 yards: inside this range, a launched grenade will not explode, instead functioning like a shotgun slug with damage 4(L).

Artillery

Artillery provides long-range fire support. Throughout the history of war, more deaths have resulted from artillery than by any other means — hence its nickname, "the King of Battle."

Artillery weapons are indirect-fire weapons. In indirect fire, a weapon cannot be sighted at the target and must be aimed using distance and bearing (direction). An indirect-fire weapon is most often used when the target is not visible, such as when it is behind a mountain or other object that blocks line of sight. Indirect fire can also be used when the target is well out of range for small arms attacks but is still visible to the *battery* (a group of artillery pieces).

Artillery weapons serve several different roles in combat operations: close fire support, counterfire and interdiction fire.

Close fire support missions are used to target enemy forces that are well beyond the range of conventional weapons but threaten or are poised to threaten friendly forces. This mission occurs in conjunction with *forward observers*, personnel who call in and guide fire from a position where they may observe the points of impact of each round.

Counterfire missions are used against enemy artillery units, which can include mortar teams, air defense, missile systems, etc. The goal of counterfire actions is to suppress enemy artillery to allow friendly forces uninhibited freedom of movement — and to kill the enemy artillery in self-defense before it can return the sentiment.

Interdiction fire missions are intended to deny enemy access to a specific area. This type of mission can be used either to redirect enemy forces away from a particular area or clear an area for later friendly forces' use.

Artillery

Artillery Shell	Blast Area	Force	Size	Primary Effects
51mm Mortar Shells				
High Explosive (HE)	10	4	3	9 again, Knockdown
Illumination	1,000	-	3	No secondary blast area, Illuminate
Smoke	10	-	3	No secondary blast area, Concealment
60mm Mortar Shells				
High Explosive (HE)	10	4	3	8 again, Knockdown
Illumination	1,000	-	3	No secondary blast area, Illuminate
Smoke	15	-	3	No secondary blast area, Concealment
105mm Artillery Shells				
High Explosive (HE)	15	5	3	9 again, Knockdown
Fragmentary	15	5	3	8 again, Knockdown
HERA	15	5	3	9 again, Knockdown
Illumination	1,500	-	3	No secondary blast area, Illuminate
Smoke	20	-	3	No secondary blast area, Concealment
122mm Artillery Shells				
HE	20	6	3	8 again, Knockdown
HEAT-FS	10	6	3	8 again, Knockdown, AP 4
Incendiary	15	4	3	fire damage, Concealment
Illumination	1,500	-	3	No secondary blast area, Illuminate
Smoke	25	-	3	No secondary blast area, Concealment
3" Solid Shot	5	3	3	Knockdown

Cost Note: These weapons are available for non-military sale only through the black market (see p. 194).

Mechanics: Attacks with artillery are made with an unmodified Intelligence + Firearms roll. Firing artillery is a specialized skill, because it often involves firing at targets outside of the artillery team's visual range, using coordinates provided by a map and a spotter communicating over the radio. Characters without an Artillery Specialty in Firearms cannot use their Firearms Skills to attack, and must instead default to Intelligence with a –2 untrained penalty.

Unlike with direct-fire weapons, successes on the attack roll for indirect-fire weapons do not contribute to damage. Instead, assuming a successful hit, the target simply takes damage according to the artillery shell's Blast Area and Force traits. The 8 again and 9 again rules do not apply to the attack roll, but only to damage. All artillery shells with Force traits inflict lethal damage.

Mortars

A mortar is simple mobile indirect-fire weapon, consisting of a smoothbore tube attached to a base with a sighting and an elevation adjustment device. A mortar shell is similar to a round of grenade launcher ammunition, consisting of propellant, casing, fuse and explosive payload. When dropped into the mortar, the shell makes contact with a firing pin, which sets off the propellant instantly. No complicated trigger mechanism exists. This simple construction makes mortars a favorite of forces with limited technical capabilities, such as insurgency movements. Mortars can weigh between 50 and 300 pounds (not counting ammo) and can be broken down into several pieces for ease of travel. Most mortars employ a team of three to four people to operate and transport.

Most modern mortars fire a shell ranging in width from 60mm to 120mm and are effective against targets at ranges of more than 1,000 yards. Historically, however, mortars have been as large as 36 inches. Traits are given for the smaller mortars that characters might encounter in the hands of infantry units.

Examples: American M224, British L-16a2, Israeli C-03 Commando Mortar

Howitzers

Howitzers (modern-day cannons) are larger than mortars and fire rounds with no internal propellant — gunners must load one or more bags of propellant ("powder charges") separately before firing. "Howitzer" is derived from *Haubitze*, a German word that means an explosive shell. Howitzer can also be used to describe a brutal, merciless attack.

Howitzers can either be towed by vehicles or self-propelled (usually as tracked vehicles). Howitzers are designed for indirect-fire missions, and most howitzers are limited to a 60-degree firing arc. Their munitions range from 75mm upwards to over 200mm, with 120mm to 155mm being the most common. Some World War II era guns were even smaller, ranging from 35mm to 47mm. Because of their power, these guns have ranges listed in kilometers.

Examples: US M59 "Long Tom" 155mm (towed), Russian 2S3 Akatsiya 155mm (self-propelled), Chinese Type 59-1 130mm (towed)

Unlike mortars, which have a limited range of ammunition types, howitzers have a multitude of available munitions: high explosive (HE), smoke, illumination, high explosive rocket-assisted, high explosive anti-tank fin-stabilized (HEAT-FS), incendiary, chemical and nuclear. High explosive, smoke and illumination rounds are big brothers to the versions fired by mortars but perform the same function. A high explosive rocket-assisted (HERA) shell is a high explosive shell that, once fired from the gun, uses an onboard rocket to propel the shell farther than a conventional shell, but otherwise has the same effects as an HE shell. The HEAT-FS shell is an anti-tank shell that, when launched, sprouts several fins to help control its flight path and provide for a more accurate shot. Incendiary shells are intended to start fires and produce obscuring smoke.

Larger shells (155mm and above) have the ability to carry mass destruction payloads such as chemical (see "Chemical Weapons," p. 124) and even nuclear weapons (see "Nuclear Weapons," p. 121). Howitzers also have a large variety of payload-carrying munitions available, none of which will be discussed here, such as mines, grenades, fragmentary, radio jamming equipment and flechette.

Rocket & Missile Launchers

Type	Damage	Blast Area	Force	Ranges	Strength	Size	Primary Effects
Rocket Launchers							
Anti-Tank, HE	–1(L)+5	10	5	500/1000/2000	3	3	9 again, Knockdown
Anti-Tank, HEAT	–1(L)+10	5	3	500/1000/2000	3	3	Knockdown, AP 17
Disposable, Light HEAT	–3(L)+8	3	3	125/250/500	3	2/N	Knockdown, AP 14
Disposable, Heavy HE	–2(L)+5	5	4	250/500/1,000	3	2/N	9 again, Knockdown
Disposable, Heavy HEAT	–2(L)+14	5	4	250/500/1,000	3	2/N	Knockdown, AP 20
Missile Launchers							
SAM	2(L)+10	15	3	2,000/4,000/8,000	3	4	Knockdown
ATGM	0(L)+20	5	5	500/1000/2000	3	4	Knockdown, AP 30

Cost Note: These weapons are available for non-military sale only through the black market (see p. 194).

Rockets and Missiles

The next step in military heavy weapons evolution after the introduction of artillery was the development of rockets and missiles, which provide the same basic damage profile but with greater range and, in the case of guided missiles, enhanced accuracy. In military terms, the primary difference between a rocket and a missile is that the latter has a guidance system that enhances its accuracy, rather than relying purely on operator skill, ballistics and luck.

Due to the limited accuracy of unguided rockets, they have two main uses. Characters are most likely to encounter small, man-portable anti-vehicular rocket launchers designed to disable tanks or destroy lighter ground vehicles. Bombardment rockets are a cheaper alternative to howitzers, possessing equivalent range and striking power at the expense of accuracy and overall efficiency.

Mechanics: Attacks with rockets and missiles require a Dexterity + Firearms roll. Characters without a Heavy Weapons Specialty in Firearms suffer a –2 penalty to this roll. Attacks against targets smaller than Size 10 suffer a penalty equal to the Size differential, and some weapons require targets to be even larger (see individual descriptions).

Rocket Launchers

Man-portable rocket launchers are the primary means by which infantrymen even the scales when facing armored vehicles or fortified positions. Rocket launchers fire unguided rockets with two main types of warheads. HEAT (High Explosive Anti-Tank) warheads are shaped charges designed to punch through vehicular armor with explosive force and a jet of molten metal, while HE (High Explosive) warheads have normal omnidirectional blast effects.

Anti-Tank Rocket Launcher: Despite the name, few "anti-tank" rocket launchers have a chance of destroying a modern main battle tank (though a lucky tread hit can immobilize one). However, lighter armored vehicles are easy prey for a well-placed hit. Most rocket launchers are sufficiently unwieldy that a soldier assigned one has one or more assistants to carry extra ammunition — and to protect him from threats too close to safely engage.

Examples: South African FT-5, Israeli B-300, Russian RPG-7 (the iconic Rocket-Propelled Grenade), Swedish Carl Gustav, German Panzerfaust 3

Military Vehicle Armament

Weapon	Damage	Blast Area	Force	Ranges	Capacity	Special Effects
Automatic Cannon						
Light	2(L)+2	-	-	600/1,200/2,400	400	AP 8, Tracer (see p. 83)
High-Speed	1(L)+2	-	-	800/1,600/3,200	300	Tracer (see p. 83)
Heavy	2(L)+2	-	-	500/1,000/2,000	200	AP 18, Tracer (see p. 83)
Tank Gun						
Sabot	3(L)+25	-	-	1,200/2,400/4,800	1	8 again, AP 40
HEAT	2(L)+5	4	5	1,000/2,000/4,000	1	AP 30
Air-to-Air Missile						
Short-range	2(L)+3	10	3	5,000/10,000/20,000	1	
Long-range	2(L)+4	15	4	9,000/18,000/36,000	1	

Disposable Rocket Launcher: Rather than design an expensive reloadable launcher system for an infantryman who may only get off one or two shots before being killed, many militaries favor lightweight one-use systems. A disposable rocket launcher consists of a single rocket packed into a telescoping tube. When collapsed, the tube protects the rocket and the sighting and firing mechanism. When extended (which takes one full turn and increases the launcher's Size by 1), the launcher is ready to fire. Once fired, the empty tube is useless and can be discarded.

Examples (*light*): American M72 LAW (Lightweight Anti-Tank Weapon), Russian RPG-22, Chinese PF-89

Examples (*heavy*): British LAW-80, Swedish AT-4, Russian RPG-27

Missile Launchers

Missile launchers are more sophisticated than rocket launchers, as missile launchers incorporate electronic targeting and guidance systems to control the missiles fired. Two main types of guided missiles exist. Self-guided missiles have onboard sensors (such as radar or heat sensors) that take over from the launchers' targeting systems after launch to steer the missiles toward their targets. Terminally guided missiles, by comparison, require some form of remote control after launch, be it direct steering instructions transmitted through a wire or a laser dot held steady on the targets until impact.

For the sake of simplicity, these rules ignore the extensive flight time (possibly as long as several turns, at extreme range) and assume that all missiles strike within the same turn as they're fired. A character firing a missile launcher must aim for at least one turn before firing or the attack loses the benefit of the 10 again rule and every 1 rolled cancels a success. Reloading a missile launcher takes three turns.

SAM Launcher: The Surface-to-Air Missile is the bane of the helicopter's existence, and is equally effective against fixed-wing aircraft that overconfidently fly too low and slow. Both the United States and the Soviet Union exported SAMs widely during the 1980s, and, today, SAMs are in the hands of insurgents and black marketeers around the world. SAMs use thermal sensors that detect the heat of the target's engine, exhaust or moving parts. Most SAMs are proximity-fused, exploding when they get close enough to the targets to have a good chance of inflicting fragmentation damage. Because SAMs require that targets to be silhouetted against a uniform background for best effect, SAMs perform poorly against ground targets, and any such attack of desperation *always* rolls just a chance die, with a "successful" attack inflicting only half damage.

Examples: Chinese HN-5, American FIM-92 Stinger, British Javelin, Russian SA-7 "Grail"

ATGM Launcher: An Anti-Tank Guided Missile is the one weapon with which a single character can hope to destroy a tank. Some advanced ATGM launchers use radar or laser guidance, but most ATGMS are TOW (Tube-launched, Optically-tracked, Wire-guided) systems, in which the missiles trail steering wires behind them through which the gunner sends steering commands. ATGMs carry HEAT warheads, which gives them immense armor penetration capability but limits their utility against area targets. Against targets smaller than Size 15, attacks with ATGMs suffer a penalty equal to the Size differential.

Examples: French Eryx, American M47 Dragon, Israeli NT-S Spike, Russian 9M131

Military Vehicle Armament

Military vehicles (see Chapter Three) carry weaponry far more powerful than the personal-scale items detailed in this book's other chapters. The following is by no means a complete catalog but rather a set of generic rules and descriptions sufficient for use when ancient horrors and modern military forces collide.

Mechanics: Vehicle-scale weaponry attacks are resolved using the system for firearms conflict — Dexterity + Firearms + the weapon's Damage trait. Characters without a Heavy Weapons Specialty suffer a –2 penalty to this roll.

Automatic Cannon: Also known as an *autocannon* or *chain gun*, an automatic cannon is a machine gun scaled up to calibers of 20mm or larger. Ground vehicles and helicopters use the same basic light designs. Air superiority fighters carry Gatling-type rotating cannons, needing the high rate of fire to ensure hits while moving at 500 miles per hour or faster (weapon Traits already reflect the accuracy balance between a 1,200-RMP rate of fire and the assumed high speed of the shooter). Ground attack fighters, which need both speed and power to kill enemy armored vehicles, carry the heaviest models possible. All automatic cannon are capable only of autofire, not single shots. Most carry a mix of ammunition types, which is reflected in the "Special Effects" column of the following table.

Tank Gun: A modern tank gun is the closest thing to a death ray on the modern battlefield, able to kill anything the weapon's gunner can see. A typical tank carries a 40-round mix of two common ammunition types: depleted uranium sabots, 38-pound metal darts that travel at more than 5,000 feet per second and kill other tanks and HEAT (High Explosive Anti-Tank) shells, which kill everything else. Reloading a tank gun requires three full actions, which a tank's gunner and loader can both perform to get the job done faster. A tank gun is designed to target vehicles — against a target smaller than Size 15, all attacks suffer a penalty equal to the Size differential.

Anti-Tank Missile: The anti-tank missiles carried by IFVs and ground attack aircraft have Traits identical to those of the ATGM launcher (see p. 109). In fact, they're usually the same models, adapted for vehicle launch.

Air-to-Air Missile: Two basic kinds of air-to-air missiles exist. A short-range model locks onto the heat of a target's engine exhaust or wing edges. Other strong heat sources in the missile's sensors' field of vision, such as magnesium flares or the setting sun, can divert the missile, inflicting a –5 penalty to attacks. Long-range missiles use radar guidance. A target that hides in "ground clutter" (e.g., below treetop or rooftop level) or deploys *chaff* (explosive packets of aluminum strips) likewise inflicts a –5 on such attacks. Air-to-air missiles are only accurate against large airborne targets. An attack against a target smaller than Size 20 suffers a penalty equal to the Size differential, and an attack against a target that isn't flying suffers an additional –5 penalty.

Aerial Bombs

Aerial bombs, in all their simplicity, are nothing more than really large explosive devices dropped from planes. While in any given game session, there probably isn't much need for an aerial bombardment, these types of weapons make perfect backstories or potential threats.

2,000-Pound Bomb: Only about half of the 2,000-pound bomb's weight is explosives. The other half is the arming mechanism and steel casing. These massive bombs are designed to provide a large blast effect followed by fragmentary effects from the nearly one-inch-thick steel casing. The blast area of one of these weapons is 80 yards, the Force is 8(L) and anything within the primary blast area suffers from Stun and Knockdown.

US GBU-43/B MOAB: So big, at 30 feet long and weighing in at 21,000 pounds (18,700 pounds of the total being explosive material), that this bomb has to be dumped out of the back of a C-130 cargo plane, the GBU-43/B MOAB (pronounced MOE-ab) is officially called a Massive Ordnance Air Blast Bomb but has been nicknamed the "Mother of All Bombs" because of its size and destructive capabilities. While not the biggest conventional (non-nuclear) weapon that the U.S. military has in its arsenal (that distinction would fall to the T12 "Earthquake" bomb) it certainly ranks in the top four or five.

Other than utter destruction, the MOAB has one important function: to generate fear or otherwise terrorize enemy troops who witness the mass explosion this weapon produces. Beyond the physical damage, the psychological damage this weapon creates is immeasurable. The primary blast area alone is 1,000 yards. For game purposes, when dealing with this amount of explosive and the nature of the explosion itself, consider anyone inside the primary blast effect dead, and characters within the secondary blast effect all but dead (1 Health point left).

Rushed through development in order to see use in Operation Iraqi Freedom, the MOAB never saw use due to the quick resolution of major fighting. The MOAB has yet to be fielded against an enemy target. Because of this and the rarity of the MOAB, no amount of Resources, Contacts or Status will allow a character to purchase one of these weapons. Theft, on the other hand, is not out of the question.

Vehicles and Explosions

Basic physics forces an explosion to expend its energy evenly in all directions, which results in most of this energy being wasted in empty air. Because a vehicle has more surface area than a character does, the vehicle receives a proportionally larger amount of this energy when an explosive goes off next to the vehicle. To simulate this increased destruction, whenever a vehicle suffers damage from an explosive, increase the damage dealt (after all rolls and modifiers) by either the vehicle's Size –5 *or* the explosion's Blast Area, whichever is less. For example, if a sports car (Size 10) suffers 2 points of damage from a nearby explosion with a Blast Area of 8, the damage dealt is increased by 5, to a total of 7 points. At the Storyteller's discretion, this rule may also apply to other targets of Size greater than 5. For more information on vehicles, see Chapter Four.

Flamethrowers

Flamethrowers are not a modern creation. The 5th century Byzantine army would pump "Greek fire" through brass tubes at enemy forces. Since a flamethrower continued to burn even on water, this was a particularly effective weapon against naval forces. Modern-day flamethrowers are more advanced but still function the same way. They have three components: the fuel reserve, the gun housing and the ignition system.

The fuel reserve contains a fuel mixture that produces almost the same effects attributed to the "Greek fire" used centuries ago. The fuel reserve also holds a pressure tank that pushes the fuel through the system. The gun housing controls the rate at which the fuel flows. The ignition system is at the end of the spray nozzle and ignites the fuel as it leaves the weapon. Some of the earliest flamethrowers were called Zippos, because the ignition systems were so unreliable that soldiers would have to use their cigarette lighters to light the fuel.

Type	Ranges	Capacity	Strength	Size	Cost
Military	10/20/40	5	3	4	N/A
Civilian	2/5/10	10	3	4	•••

Cost Note: Items with a Cost of "N/A" are available for non-military sale only through the black market (see p. 194).

By strictest definition, flamethrowers do not shoot fire; they shoot liquid set aflame. This liquid can even be bounced off walls, so it can reach unseen areas. Flamethrowers are primarily used to attack fortifications such as bunkers. Grenades can be thrown back, but liquid fire can't.

Flamethrowers are available in both civilian and military models. The only real differences between the two are range and fuel capacity. Civilian-market flamethrowers are used to clear brush, start backburns against forest fires and, in dense jungle areas, fight dangerous insect infestations.

A flamethrower attack is resolved as a long burst of autofire with base Damage 0: the user gains a +3 bonus to his attack roll, and may attack multiple targets if he's willing to suffer the required penalties (see the **World of Darkness Rulebook**, p. 160). Characters without a Heavy Weapons Specialty in Firearms take a –2 penalty to this roll. The burst of fuel emitted by a flamethrower is the size of a bonfire (Damage 2) and burns with the intensity of a gasoline fire (+2 Damage bonus). Thus, an attack with a flamethrower will never inflict more than 4 points of damage. Any character struck by a flamethrower attack is automatically set alight, and on the following and subsequent turns, he'll continue to take as much damage as he took from the initial attack per turn until extinguished (see p. 180, the **World of Darkness Rulebook**).

Demolitions

While some explosives are weapons fired at an enemy, the majority, and especially most of the explosives player characters will potentially have access to, are not. Instead, these explosives are used to destroy stationary targets, whether a bridge, an open mine tunnel or the reinforced gated door at the base of an ancient Cyclopean statue rising out of a desert. These explosives are demolitions.

Types of Explosives

Explosives can be broken into two basic classifications, low explosives and high explosives. Low explosives ignite slower and create less pressure. (Most low explosives burn rather than explode.) The most common low explosives are propellants and black powder. High explosives detonate almost immediately and create huge amounts of force. Common high explosives are Composition 4 (C-4) and TNT.

Explosive effects come in five general types: blast, cratering, shaped-charge penetration, fragmentation and incendiary. Each type has its own advantages and disadvantages against a target.

Blast effects are created by the rapid release of energy in the form of heat, pressure and sound. Every explosive device creates at a minimum a blast effect. When a character is exposed to blast effects, the character may have internal injuries from the rapid change in pressure without having external evidence of the damage.

Cratering effects create huge holes or depressions: craters. Cratering charges can either be laid on the surface or placed inside a hole in the ground (for the most effective

use). Surface laid charges are primarily used to hastily create obstacles when time does not allow for proper placement.

Shaped-Charge Penetration is a focused explosion designed to apply the maximum force of the explosion toward a given target. Generally, these types of explosive devices are designed for armor penetration, as in anti-tank weapons. The explosion creates a minimal area effect and leaves very little outward evidence. Armored vehicles and reinforced structures (such as bunker complexes) present the best targets for shaped-charge attacks.

Fragmentation effects are created by the breaking apart of the casing housing of a blast effect explosive. These types of devices create hundreds or thousands of tiny fragments that shower an area, killing or injuring lightly armored targets. The most common type of fragmentation explosives are grenades and anti-personnel mines.

Incendiary devices create intense heat designed to ignite nearby combustible materials. Incendiary devices are best coupled with other explosive effects, such as blast and fragmentation, to ensure the complete destruction of targets.

All explosives listed in this section create blasting effects. The other effects come from specific technical applications of the explosives, such as with grenades or land mines.

Nitroglycerin

Developed in 1847, nitroglycerin (commonly called "nitro") was one of the first high explosives. Nitroglycerin is a highly unstable liquid. Even the slightest impact or friction can detonate the mixture. When handling nitroglycerin, a character must make a Dexterity + Composure check every five minutes. Failure causes the nitroglycerin to detonate prematurely. Due to safety concerns, nitroglycerin is no longer used in liquid form. However, it is the basic ingredient for dynamite and other explosives.

Dynamite

In 1867, Alfred Nobel, who would later create and fund the Nobel Prizes, invented a method to safely transport and handle nitroglycerin. He combined nitroglycerin with kieselguhr, a fossilized, clay-like substance. This created a viscous substance that he then shaped into rods, which allowed for the relatively safe use and transportation of nitroglycerin without the loss of destructive power.

TNT

Trinitrotoluene (TNT), one of the most common explosives found in both military and civilian applications, is extremely stable, reliable and safe for transport. In order to detonate, TNT requires a great amount of both heat and pressure; neither of these alone will cause detonation. This offers significant battlefield protection as TNT is safe against small-arms fire and casual mishandling.

C-4

Composition 4, commonly referred to as C-4, is a plastic explosive that is soft and moldable with a claylike texture. C-4 has been popularly characterized as similar to Silly Putty, when, in fact, C-4 is white in color and more like modeling clay. Unlike dynamite and TNT, C-4 is almost solely used by the military. Like TNT, C-4 also requires both heat and pressure in order to detonate. C-4 comes packaged in two forms, either a one-and-a-quarter- pound block or half-pound sheet, each with pressure sensitive adhesive tape on one side. C-4 is primarily used for cutting and breaching metal and concrete.

ANFO

While technically classified as a blasting agent, ammonium nitrate fuel oil (ANFO) requires TNT or an equivalent explosive in order to detonate. Since ANFO is relatively cheap to produce and cannot be detonated by mere blasting caps, it has replaced dynamite for most commercial rock-blasting applications. ANFO is the homemade explosive of choice for rural insurgents, who have access to the fertilizer and fuel oil necessary to synthesize this blasting agent.

Semtex

Semtex is a Czech-made plastic explosive that is odorless, stable and highly destructive — almost twice as powerful as TNT. As little as three pounds of Semtex can level a two-story building, and, as a result, Semtex has become a favorite of well-funded terrorists. Exported heavily by the Czech and Slovak Republics during the 1980s and recently stolen in large quantities, Semtex is one of the most common explosives found on the black market today.

Gunpowder

Gunpowder has been in constant use since its invention by Chinese accident, with only minor changes to the formula over the intervening 1,000 years. Gunpowder is a low explosive because it explodes only when under pressure (when ignited, gunpowder only burns). Gunpowder originally produced a black smoke when fired, but at the end of the 19th century, a smokeless version was invented.

Flash Powder

When ignited, flash powder gives off a bright flash and a puff of smoke, burning so fast that it seems to disappear. Flash powder is a common item used in theatrical and magical performances and was used in the infancy of photography.

Accessories

Time-Delay Fuses (or **Time Fuses**) contain black powder inside flexible tubes. When ignited, the fuse burns at a constant rate. To determine how fast each spool of time-delay fuse burns, a three-foot section is cut, ignited and timed; the results are marked on the spool. A time fuse can be initiated by either a time fuse igniter (common in demolition kits) or simply lit by a match or some other source of heat.

Det Cord resembles a time-delay fuse but contains a high explosive core instead of black powder. Once detonated, det cord explodes at an almost instantaneous rate. Det cord is essentially

explosive rope and can be used for minor demolition needs such as felling trees or blowing locks out of doors.

Blasting Caps, finger-sized mini-explosives detonated only by either heat or pressure, are the primary method of detonation for most modern explosives. The heat from an electrical current or from a burning segment of a time-delay fuse is enough to set a blasting cap off. If thrown, blasting caps will detonate on impact.

Blasting Machines come in many different sizes and are categorized by how many blasting caps they can set off at once. Most handheld blasting machines are 10-cap machines, which can initiate 10 blasting caps connected in a series.

Radio Detonators are miniaturized blasting machines with radio receivers that attach directly to a blasting cap. A separate transmitter sends the detonation signal, but stray signals can also set off the detonation prematurely. Radio detonation systems have a range from a few hundred feet to several miles.

Countdown Detonators are digital timers with built-in blasting caps. A countdown detonator is placed into an explosive (preferably a plastique explosive such as Semtex or C-4), set to count down a specific amount of time before detonating. A countdown detonator is easy to use, but once set, the operator no longer has any control over the device. Disarming a countdown detonator is also easy: simply pull the detonator out of the explosive. Anti-tampering devices can be used to prevent disarming, but such devices negate the ease and speed of arming such explosives, so are rarely, if ever, used.

Creating Homemade Explosives

Dice Pool: Intelligence + Science + Equipment

Action: Extended (each roll represents one hour of work).

By mixing the right ingredients together, anyone can create an explosive. Whether or not the maker will live through the process is another story . . . .

Example: Mad Dog is preparing for the attack on a vampire's haven. Mad Dog's job is to create enough explosive to blast through the vault wall. He begins by using the Internet (+1) to download a copy an Army field guide (+2). Working in his garage so no one will bother him (+1), he lays out what ingredients he can find (–2; he had to get by with what he had, not exactly what the book listed, but they'll do). Mad Dog's Intelligence is 3, and his Science is 5 with a total bonus of +2. His player rolls a 7, 6, 5, 7, 8, 9, 8, 4, 2, 8; four successes. Mad Dog decides to create enough explosive material for two uses, each with 2 (L) damage and a blast area of 10 yards.

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: Your character is overwhelmed by toxic fumes created from the chemicals. The fumes inflict 5 (B) damage.

Failure: Your character fails to create an explosive.

Success: Your character successfully creates an explosive. One success creates an explosive with a damage of 1 (L) and primary blast area of five yards. Each additional success can be used to either to increase the damage of the explosive, increase the primary blast area (in five-yard increments) or create one additional quantity of the same explosive (in order to create more than one bomb).

Suggested Equipment: Military demolition manuals (+2), Chemistry textbooks (+1), High-quality chemicals (+2), Internet access (+1), Quiet work space (+1)

Suggested Penalties: Incorrect or misleading reference material (–3), Poor-quality chemicals (–2), Lack of reference material (–1), Distractions (–1)

Arming/Disarming Explosive Devices

Dice Pool: Wits + Craft + Equipment

Action: Extended (and contested, when disarming); each roll represents 10 minutes of work

Before arming an explosive device, the character must decide which type of initiation system she is going to use. Electrical firing systems are faster to arm but less safe and reliable than non-electric systems. An electric firing system inflicts a –1 penalty to arming and disarming, but each roll represents only five minutes of work. Each person builds and arms explosives uniquely, so each setup is like a fingerprint that investigators can use to identify the person who created the device. This uniqueness also makes disarming explosives even more dangerous than arming them. A character disarming an explosive that she did not build or witness being built suffers a –2 penalty.

Arming an explosive device requires a minimum number of successes dependent on the initiation system used (see following), but a character can keep accumulating successes to represent superior work. Disarming a device is a contested roll against the character who armed it. Characters without a Demolitions Specialty in Craft can't use their Craft Skill on the roll, but must instead roll Wits with a –3 penalty for acting unskilled.

Example: Jake is attempting to arm a bomb with a remote initiation system (minimum six successes). With his demolition kit in hand (+2), he sets off for a quiet section of the complex so he can work without distraction (+1). Jake's Wits is 3, and his Crafts is 4. On his first roll he gets two successes, on his second roll he gets one success and on the third roll he gets three successes. He succeeded at arming the bomb, but it took him 30 minutes. Anyone attempting to disarm his bomb needs at least seven successes.

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: Your character accidentally sets off the explosive device. It detonates with its full explosive force.

Failure: Your character fails to make any headway in arming/disarming the explosive device.

Success: Your character successfully arms/disarms the explosive device.

Exceptional Success: Your character makes extraordinary progress toward arming or disarming the device (no additional effect).

Suggested Equipment: Demolition kit (+2), Quiet work space (+1), Diagram or manual (+1)

Possible Penalties: Regular tools (–1), Distraction (–2), Disarming a device the character did not arm/build (–2), Anti-tampering device (–2), Improvised tools (–3), No tools (–5)

Explosives

Type	Damage	Blast Area	Force	Size	Cost	Effects
Explosives						
Nitroglycerin, 1 oz.	N/A	5	2(L)	1/P	••	9 again, Knockdown**
Dynamite, 1 stick	N/A	10	2(L)	1/J	•	Knockdown**
TNT, 1 stick	N/A	10	3(L)	1/J	••	Knockdown**
C-4, 1.25 lb. block	N/A	10	4(L)	1/J	••	9 again, Knockdown**
C-4, .5 lb. sheet	N/A	5	2(L)	1/P	••	Knockdown**
ANFO, 1 gal.	N/A	5	2(L)	3/N	•	8 again, fire damage*, Knockdown**
Semtex, 1 lb.	N/A	10	4(L) 8 again	1/J	••	Knockdown**
Gunpowder, 1 lb.	N/A	2	2(L)	1/J	•	
Flash Powder, 1 lb.	N/A	1	1(B)	1/J	•	9 again
Det Cord, 10'	N/A	3	2(L)	2/J	••	9 again
Blasting Cap, non-electric	–3(L)+1	0	1	1/P	••	8 again
Blasting Cap, electric	–3(L)+1	0	1	1/P	•	8 again
Radio Receiver w/ blasting cap	–3(L)+1	0	1	1/P	••	9 again
Countdown Detonator	–4(L)+1	0	1	1/P	•••	
Explosive Devices						
Satchel Charge	1(L)+6	20	6	2/L	N/A	8 again, Knockdown**
Cratering Charge, 40 lbs.	N/A	15	8(L)	3/N	N/A	8 again, Knockdown**
Shaped Charge, 15 lbs.	N/A	5	7(L)	3/N	N/A	8 again, Knockdown**, AP 3
Breeching Charge, .25 lb.	N/A	1	2(L)	1/P	N/A	AP 2
Fougasse	N/A	25	3(L)	3/N	••	8 again, fire damage*, Knockdown**
Fireworks						
Firecracker, tiny	–3(B)+2	0	2	1/P	•	
Firecracker, M-1000	–1(L)+2	2	2	1/P	•	Knockdown**
Bottle Rocket	N/A	0	2(B)	1/S	•	
Roman Candle	N/A	0	1(L) *	1/J	•	
Accessories						
Time-Delay Fuse	N/A	-	-	1/S	••	
Blasting Machine	N/A	-	-	2/L	•••	
Radio Detonator, short range	N/A	-	-	2/J	••	
Radio Detonator, long range	N/A	-	-	3/N	•••	

* The damage from this weapon is caused by both fire and explosives. The damage listed is for the first turn. After that, characters still within the primary blast area take an additional 3 damage from fire (fougasse causes 5 fire damage each turn).

Explosive Devices

An explosive device has three main components: the explosive substance itself, a much smaller explosive primer, which sets off the main explosion, and the initiator, which delivers the heat, impact or electrical current necessary to detonate the primer. Explosive substances are described above. Virtually all modern devices use blasting caps as primers. Initiators come in two basic types: electrical and non-electrical. All commercial demolitions and, situation permitting, most military charges use multiple initiators to ensure detonation.

Most commercial demolitions use electrical initiation systems for greater control up to the moment of firing. In an electrical firing system, the blasting cap is detonated once it receives an electric current. This requires either enough wire to go from the explosive back to the detonator or a radio detonation system. The main disadvantage of an electrical system is its susceptibility to premature detonation through radio interference — even if the system doesn't use radio commands, a stray radio or microwave transmission can induce enough current in the initiation system's circuits to set it off. Industrial applications can mitigate this hazard, but military forces can't eliminate the use of radios on a modern battlefield. In a non-electrical firing system, enough of a time-delay fuse is used to allow the person setting the charge to escape, or a mechanical triggering device waits indefinitely for physical pressure to trigger it. This is the preferred method of initiating most military demolitions due to the simplicity and lack of susceptibility to accidental radio-induced detonation.

Time-Delayed Fuse Bombs

Time-delayed fuse bombs are familiar to anyone who's seen a movie cowboy light a stick of dynamite with his cigar. Such bombs use a time-delay fuse, which burns at a rate of around two to four seconds per inch.

When determining how much time-delay fuse is needed, a character always tests a section first to determine the rate at which the fuse burns. Once he knows how fast it burns, he cuts the fuse to the appropriate length. If it burns at a rate of three seconds per inch and he needs 10 seconds worth of fuse, then he

would cut a three-and-a-half-inch section — at minimum. Wise bombers will give themselves extra fuse length for safety.

Time-delay-fuse-initiated bombs are easy to disarm: simply cut the fuse or remove it from the bomb. Most time-delay fuse is wrapped in a waterproof sheath, so dousing the fuse with water is generally not effective (nor is covering it with sand or dirt like a campfire). The benefit to using this method is the simplicity of the design and the ease at which the bomb is armed and disarmed.

Minimum Successes: 5

Remote-Activated Bombs

Remote activation of a bomb is one of the best ways to guarantee a successful demolition. The operator is in complete control of the device the entire time and dictates when the bomb goes off. Remote activation can come from radio detonators, blasting machines, cell phones, cordless phones, door chimes and so forth. Anything that has an on/off switch or similar function and a power source can be used for remote activation. All that is required is for the operator to be within range to activate the switch.

Minimum Successes: 6

Timed Bombs

Timed bombs use a clock mechanism to detonate at a certain time. Timed bombs are used more with commercial or military explosives like TNT, dynamite or Semtex than with pipe bombs or other improvised charges.

Timed bombs have always relied on contemporary technology for their initiators. In the 1970s, timing devices were analog clocks. Each arm acted as a lead to a battery that was connected to each arm by wires. When the arms passed each other, they completed the circuit and triggered the detonation. This left only an hour as the maximum countdown time, however.

During the 1980s, analog alarm clocks were the flavors of the decade. They were cheap, easy to use and extended the maximum countdown to 24 hours. A wire attached to the alarm mechanism provided the primer with the current necessary to detonate: when the alarm went off, so did the bomb.

Since the 1990s, digital clocks have been the preferred mechanism by which to detonate bombs at a specific time. Digital clocks are still cheap and easy to use, but have many more features, such as date setting, stopwatch and military versus civilian time.

All timed bombs have one drawback, though: once set, there is no guarantee that they will detonate at the time they are set for. Electrical shorts, low batteries, power surges, overheating: all of these problems and more can cause issues and prematurely detonate a bomb or cause a bomb not to detonate at all. On top of that, these types of bombs are not always successful even if they do detonate on time. If a bomber knows that a certain diplomat will pass by a mailbox at 2:00 PM tomorrow and places a bomb timed to explode around 2:00 PM tomorrow in that mailbox, there is no guarantee that the bomber will catch the diplomat in the blast — not to mention the possibility of accidentally harming bystanders.

The most effective use for timed bombs is for short-time intervals that are necessary either to coordinate a larger event (such as setting 10 explosions to go off all at once) or to leave enough time to escape the area. Any more complexity risks factors that can greatly diminish the successful outcome of a bombing.

Minimum Successes: 7

Victim-Detonated Bombs

A victim-detonated device is a bomb that requires the victim of the explosion set it off. These bombs are probably the least consistently successful type of explosive, but are often the only option available. Most victim-detonation systems are tripwire-activated, using a sudden tug on a wire connected to a mechanical initiator to provide the force necessary for detonation, but others use pressure, switches or other creative mechanical methods for activation. Land mines are the most common mass-produced victim-detonated explosives. Many other systems are improvised explosive devices (or "IEDs" — see p. 117) such as gunpowder light bulbs, doorblams, grenades under items and so forth.

Minimum Successes: 6

Preconfigured Explosive Devices

Preconfigured explosive devices are complete packages, and include the explosive, initiation system and firing mechanism. Some preconfigured explosive devices are mass-produced for military use, while others are the products of basement labs. A professional never transports this device fully assembled, as keeping the initiator, primer and explosive together is a recipe for disaster. Each device still has to be armed using the "Arming the Explosive Device" rules (see p. 114), but only one success is needed, the roll only takes one turn, and no Demolitions Specialty in Crafts is required. A character who wishes to do so can take longer arming a preconfigured explosive device, in order to make it more difficult to disarm; this uses the normal "Arming an Explosive Device" rules, with each roll taking 10 minutes.

Satchel Charge: A satchel charge is nothing more than 20 pounds of C-4 explosive and a 10 to 30 second time-delayed fuse with an igniter, all packaged in a canvas bag. This is the standard military explosive for rapid general demolition work.

Shaped Demolition Charge: A military or industrial shaped demo charge looks like an upside-down flower pot. This 15-pound device can create a six-foot-deep, one-foot-wide hole in reinforced concrete.

Cratering Demolition Charge: A cratering charge is a tube-shaped metal container with approximately 30 pounds of ammonium nitrate and 10 pounds of TNT. These charges are designed to expend tremendous amounts of energy in all directions. When emplaced in a hole already cut in hard material (often with a shaped demolition charge), this charge creates a massive crater, hence the name.

Breaching Charge: The primary users of this very small (about a quarter-pound) shaped charge are military and paramilitary units engaged in hostage rescue or other rapid assault tasks. These users place breaching charges to blow locks and hinges out of doors for instant passage through a locked or secured entryway. Breaching charges can be used with either radio detonators or five-second time-delay fuses.

Fougasse: A fougasse is a 55-gallon barrel filled with ammonium nitrate, gasoline and TNT (or another booster

charge). The result is a field-expedient napalm bomb. Many derivatives exist, but the effects are all the same: lots of liquid fire blasted out of the mouth of the barrel. This burning liquid can attach itself to materials that are normally non-flammable (brick, concrete, water). While this does not necessarily cause the item to burn, the item will act as a transport for the fire.

Fireworks: Fireworks are some of the simplest forms of explosives around, little more than a bit of gunpowder and a fuse. Firecrackers, bottle rockets and Roman candles are only a few of the great many type of fireworks found worldwide. Firecrackers come in several shapes and sizes ranging from smaller than a finger all the way up to the M-1000, with almost the same destructive force as a quarter stick of dynamite. Bottle rockets are tiny, rocket-propelled firecrackers designed to be shot out of whatever is handy (most likely bottles). When lit, Roman candles fire 10 flaming stars that shoot out one by one from a tube.

Pipe Bombs and **Molotov Cocktails** are also preconfigured explosive devices, but are described under "Grenades," above (see p. 104-105).

Combining Explosives

Twice the amount of explosive material doesn't necessarily double a device's damage or blast area. Demolition professionals use complex formulas to determine the blast area and destructive force of an explosive based on weight and type, but we will not digress into endless number crunching. For simplicity's sake, use the following two rules:

For every *doubling* of the initial weight of the explosive, add either +1 to the Damage rating or five yards to the blast area. For example, the basic Traits given are for a one-and-a-quarter-pound block of C-4. Five pounds — the initial amount, doubled twice — could add +1 damage and +5 yards to the blast area, +10 yards to the blast area or +2 damage.

When adding unlike explosives together (as in the case of IEDs, in which the bombers often use anything they can find), the base effects of the weapon should belong to the primary charge, such as the artillery shell or land mine. Then add +1 (L) damage for the booster charge (the charge that detonates the IED). If more explosives are added than necessary to detonate the IED, refer to the above rule for additional effects.

Adding other features will also change the damage profile of an explosive. Fragmentary particles (ball bearings, BBs, nails, bolts and so on) adds +1 (L) damage. Using plastique explosives in a shaped form (creating a shaped-charge explosive) halves their blast area but adds the Armor Piercing quality to the blast effect with a rating equal to the amount in yards by which the blast area was reduced. Each additional effect adds three successes to the amount required to create the explosive device.

IEDs

An IED is basically any normal munition (land mine, artillery shell, rocket and such) that has been rigged to explode in a manner other than which it was designed for. Artillery shells have become the *de facto* standard for IEDs (improvised explosive devices). By attaching a primer charge, such as a stick of TNT or C-4, to an artillery shell (or other larger explosive) and adding some sort of initiation system (usually a cell phone remote detonator), you have yourself a very powerful improvised bomb.

To create an IED, use the "Creating an Explosive Device" rules (see p.114). The only difference is that the character is using an unconventional explosive as the primary charge. Because of the sensitive nature of handling these munitions, apply a –2 penalty to all rolls used to create the device. See "Combining Explosives" for more details regarding the damage of IEDs.

Land Mines

A land mine is one of the few weapons whose primary function is defensive in nature. That doesn't mean that you couldn't use a land mine in an offensive role, it's just that this explosive is limited by the time required to set the land mine in place, its lack of mobility and the expanse of the terrain.

The earliest use of land mines dates to the 16th century in Italy and Sicily. The first land mines were called fougasse, which were nothing more than holes filled with gunpowder and rocks. The gunpowder was susceptible to absorbing the moisture both in the air and in the ground and would often fail to ignite.

In the 18th century, German soldiers employed a *Fladdermine* (which means "flying mine"). This was a ceramic jar filled with metal and glass debris, which would then be placed in a shallow hole. This mine was designed to detonate when someone stepped on it.

It wasn't until the Russians, in the 19th-century attack on Silistra, improved the reliability of the fougasse by employing an electric firing system that the use of land mines as an effective tool on the battlefield became a reality. Still, almost another 100 years elapsed before land mines became a staple of modern warfare. World War II and the introduction of armored warfare brought with it a need for defensive weapons that would be effective against the new kings of the battlefield. Land mines became so important during the war that Germany, which had only three types of mines at the beginning, by the war's end, had developed 16 different types of anti-tank mines and 10 different types of anti-personnel mines.

Since 1939, more than 400 million mines have been employed, scattered and buried around the world. Areas in Europe are still claimed by World War II minefields, and these land mines are still killing people today. Removal operations for World War II minefields are currently underway in Holland, France and Serbia.

Land mines are preconfigured explosive devices, containing an explosive, an initiation system and a firing mechanism. These devices are not pre-assembled, however, only preconfigured for quick use. Each device has to be armed using the "Arming an Explosive Device" rules (see p. 114).

Land Mines

Land mines	Blast Area	Force	Size	Cost	Primary Effects
Anti-Personnel					
Generic AP Mine, tiny	3	2(L)	1	N/A	Stun
Generic AP Mine	6	3(L)	2	N/A	Stun
M14 "Toe Popper"	3	2(L) 9 again	1	N/A	Stun
M16 "Bouncing Betty"	12	4	2	N/A	Knockdown
M18 Claymore	10*	4(L) 9 again	2	N/A	Knockdown
Anti-Armor					
Generic AT Mine	5	5	3	N/A	Knockdown, AP 20
Anti-Tampering Device, box of 12		0	1	1	N/A

* Claymore mines are directional. The blast area listed is in the direction the mine is pointed; a secondary blast area of five yards is created behind the mine.

Minefield Deployment

Land mines are primarily employed in one of two fashions.

Land mines can be placed to protect friendly troops and valuable targets. When used in this role, land mines are often buried or otherwise hidden. The desired effect is to kill or wound the enemy forces, forcing them to either abandon their assault or minimize their chances of success.

Land mines can also be placed in order to funnel or direct the enemy in a certain way or slow the advance of an enemy force. This method is often used as a hastily set up obstacle, with land mines generally being surface-laid and in plain sight. This causes an enemy to either take the time to clear a path through the field or find an alternate route. Effective minefields used this way do not even have to be real or armed. The mere appearance of a minefield might be enough to dissuade an enemy from proceeding.

Anti-Personnel Land Mines

Anti-personnel (AP) land mines are intended to kill or injure enemy personnel or other soft targets (such as unarmored vehicles). These land mines can be set to detonate by pressure, tripwires or even on command. Most AP mines are classified as blast, bounding fragmentation or directional fragmentation.

Blast and fragmentation mines act like any other blast or fragmentation explosive. Bounding mines are thrown into the air by a booster charge, detonating at about one-and-a-half meters. The act of bounding allows for more of the explosive and fragmentation effects to be spread out rather than up. A directional fragmentation mine is very similar to a shaped charge in that the force of the explosion and fragments are aimed in a specific direction. This not only allows for more force to be directed at the target, but also allows friendly forces to safely operate much closer to the mine.

AP mines come in all shapes and sizes — some are shaped like butterflies (such as the Russian PFM-1), some can fit in the palm of a hand (such as the US M14) and some are as large as a shoe box (such as the Chinese Type 59). Because of the small explosives and the fact that most are buried, the lethal blast area of an anti-personnel mine is small and produces more injuries than deaths.

Examples: Chinese Type 69, Russian PMN-3, Israeli No. 4 Italian Valmara 69, Iranian YM-1

The infamous "click!" activation sound has been dramatized by Hollywood in almost every war movie since Vietnam, but this depiction is inaccurate. The majority of land mines are activated by the *application* of pressure, not the removal.

US M14 "Toe Popper" Mine: Pressure activated and about the size of a crushed soft drink can, this type of mine is called a "toe popper" because the M14 typically removes or severely damages one's foot upon detonation. The M14 produces a blasting effect only, with little to no shrapnel.

US M16A2 "Bouncing Betty" Mine: The M16A2 is classified as a bounding fragmentary mine, which, when triggered, is bounded (thrown) into the air about one-and-a-half meters by a booster charge before the main charge detonates. The M16A2 looks like a coffee can and contains a pound of explosive. Bouncing Betties can be set for either pressure or tripwire activation.

US M18 Claymore Mine: The M18 claymore is a curved, rectangular, plastic-cased anti-personnel mine. It is a directional fragmentation mine, which means that the explosion from the mine is focused in one direction. (Though there a small blast area around the mine, the area is free from shrapnel.) The claymore mine contains 700 small steel balls and a pound and a half of C-4 explosive. This mine can be initiated by tripwire or command detonation.

Anti-Tank Land Mines

Anti-tank (AT) land mines are designed to immobilize (generally called "mobility kills") or destroy armored vehicles or their occupants. A mobility kill damages either the drive mechanism or the crew to the point of immobilization; unfortunately, this often leaves the vehicle's weapons system intact. Mobility kills force the enemy to expend resources to recover and repair the damaged vehicle (and its crew).

AT mines are the size of a backpack or larger. They also pack a greater punch and are designed to penetrate the thick armored hide of tanks and other armored fighting vehicles. For the most part, AT mines also act as shaped-charged penetrating explosives, designed to direct all of their energy upward.

Although AP mines are generally only pressure and tripwire activated, AT mines have a multitude of different activation methods: magnetic, tilt rod (a two-foot rod protruding from the top of an AT mine, tilting the rod by more than a certain degree will detonate the mine), pressure, acoustic and even infrared sensor.

Anti-tank minefields are usually interspersed with anti-personnel mines to dissuade or hinder an enemy force from clearing the minefield.

Examples: US M19, US M21, Russian TM-62M, Russian TM-89, Italian VS-2.2, Hungarian UKA-63

Anti-Tamper Devices

Minefields are extremely effective when used to delay or redirect an enemy force. They would not be so effective if they were easily defused or disarmed. Each mine (with the exception of most magnetically activated mines) can be disarmed by removing the fuse (or fuse assembly) or by de-activating the trigger mechanism. While it is not an easy task, especially when you find yourself staring at a pound of explosive designed to remove your head from your shoulders, disarming a mine can be accomplished, given enough time. While you might be resting comfortably thinking your right flank is guarded by a minefield, remember the enemy could be clearing a path through it.

Methods and materials exist that can be utilized to keep enemy hands at bay and keep them from disarming a minefield. Almost every mine around the world can be fitted with an anti-tampering device. Those mines that cannot take an official anti-tampering device can simply be placed on top of a grenade with the safety pin pulled — lift the mine and the grenade explodes. Most mines also come with a secondary fuse well that can be used to connect an anti-tampering device. An anti-tampering device's purpose is to detonate the mine when it is lifted or moved. These devices are no bigger than large ink pens.

Anti-tampering devices must be purchased and procured separately from the mine. Anti-tampering devices are installed during the arming process and add a –2 penalty to the arming explosive device check. Any attempt to disarm a mine armed with an anti-tampering device is a –2 penalty.

NBC Threats

Nuclear, biological and chemical weapons have become buzzwords of the 21st century. Weapons of mass destruction, or WMDs as they have been labeled, are the most feared weapons ever developed.

WMDs are classified as one of three threats: nuclear, biological or chemical. Nuclear weapons are the only WMDs that are completely indiscriminate in their destructive power. Buildings, people, plants, animals, even the landscape will fall to the destructive might of a nuclear weapon. Chemical and biological weapons are used solely against living targets and will not cause any physical damage to the location of their use. However, their sheer killing potential ranks them as one of the highest threats a populace could face.

Delivery Methods

The NBC portion of a WMD is only half of the equation. The other half is how to deliver the payload to its intended targets. Several delivery options are available: canister, aerosol spray, conventional bomb, artillery shell and unconventional means (usable only by non-inhaled substances).

Canister

Canister delivery is the easiest method to use when deploying NBC threats. This delivery method is nothing more than a liquid (which is heated once the canister is opened, by the room temperature or other heating element) or gas released from an opened can, which seeps out and covers an area. Canister deployment is slow working and usually takes three to four times longer to cover an area than aerosol sprays and requires someone to open the canister in order for the deployment to work. Canisters can be filled with any amount of agent and take three rounds to fill each increment of area.

Aerosol Spray

Aerosol spray is a convenient method for dispersal; a sealed container holds the agent until it is sprayed into an area. This method is used in chemical weapon grenades, bug bombs, tear gas grenades and pepper spray, and can be used only with gas or vapor weapons. Aerosol containers come in all shapes and sizes and can therefore hold any amount of agent. Each increment of area can be filled in only one round. Large aerosol sprays can be attached to specially configured aircraft, naval vessels and ground vehicles.

Conventional Explosive Devices

The simplest method of delivery is to take the vessel containing the NBC material and strap a conventional explosive to it. While some of the material will be vaporized by the blast, most of the material will be spread out over the blast area and beyond. Also, in addition to the NBC effects, the blast will wreak its own havoc on the area.

The coverage area for NBC effects is equal to twice the normal coverage area per unit of agent. If a C-4 bomb contains two units of mustard gas, the coverage area is 40 yards. The conventional explosive still delivers its normal amount of damage to people and equipment caught in the device's blast area.

Artillery Shells

High-caliber artillery shells, 155mm and above, can come with nuclear, biological or chemical payloads. These shells are specially designed and can carry one

unit of an NBC agent; regular shells can't carry NBC materials. Biological and chemical shells have a coverage area equal to twice their normal coverage area. The shell also creates a blast area for explosive damage equal to one-quarter the blast area of a traditional HE shell of the same size.

Nuclear shells produce the equivalent of a 70-ton TNT explosion upon impact, capable of leveling an entire city block and covering an area of several square miles with radioactive material. In 1991 and 1992, the United States and Russia, respectively, withdrew their arsenals of nuclear-powered artillery shells. The United States dismantled its last remaining shell in 2003. However, several of these devices have found their way onto the black market.

Unconventional Devices

In 1978, a Bulgarian dissident was shot in London by a ricin pellet fired into his leg from an umbrella, which was turned into a gun and fired by means of compressed air. He died a few days later. Unconventional means covers a large section of possible delivery methods.

The only real restrictions to unconventional delivery methods are safety-related. In all honesty, a person could cover himself with anthrax and go to the Hug Me Fair, but the chances of returning next year would be slim. Unless a character is planning on dying during the deployment of the NBC agent, it's practical to limit unconventional delivery methods to those agents that are contact- or injection-based.

Decontamination

A character cannot heal wounds received from NBC threats until after she has been decontaminated.

The most important part of surviving an NBC threat is decontamination (after living through the initial attack, that is). Without decontamination, the effects of the weapon can linger and continue to affect the target. Once exposed to an NBC attack, everything needs to be decontaminated — clothes, vehicles, equipment and personnel. Most decontaminations consist of disposing of the clothing (to clean them would almost destroy them anyway) and thoroughly cleaning all equipment and vehicles exposed.

While a character is exposed to an NBC agent, she must continue to make a Stamina + Resolve roll to Resist Poison/Disease as often as is dictated by the agent's description. After the character has left the area of exposure, but before she's been decontaminated, she must make such a check once per day. Each failure causes the character to suffer damage per the normal "Toxicity" rules (see p. 180, the **World of Darkness Rulebook**).

Remember though, it does no good to try and decontaminate anything while still exposed to the threat. Before anything can be decontaminated, whether it is personnel or equipment, it must be removed from the source of contamination.

Decontamination requires 10 minutes for lethal agents and only one minute for non-lethal agents when using the proper gear (Portable Decon Apparatus for lethal agents, soap and water for non-lethal agents). When not using the proper cleaning equipment, decontamination requires 30

minutes for lethal agents and three minutes for non-lethal agents. During the time a character is decontaminating, she still susceptible to the agent in question. However, she only needs to check against exposure to the agent one fourth as often. (For example, mustard gas requires a check every five minutes normally, but, during the process of decontamination, checks only need to be made every 20 minutes.) Characters need to apply any necessary antidotes prior to decontamination or suffer the consequences of continued exposure checks.

Methods of Decontamination

Chemical Weapons: Special cleaning chemicals are used on personnel and equipment. Soap, water and bleach are only partially effective. Each item or person must be thoroughly scrubbed to remove all traces of the chemical. For non-lethal chemical weapons (such as CS gas), soap and water will work to decontaminate personnel and equipment.

Biological Weapons: Bleach, soap and water will remove and kill any biological agents on personnel and equipment. Personnel and equipment should also each be scrubbed thoroughly. Extreme temperatures (both low and high) can also kill biological agents.

Nuclear Weapons: Radioactive fallout forms as a dust-like material; this can be shaken or dusted off people and equipment. If any contaminated item or person is wet, then he or it must be thoroughly scrubbed with warm, soapy water.

All decontamination does is remove contaminates from the people or objects being decontaminated. Decontamination does not remove the effects, nor does it begin to heal characters from the damage caused by the NBC threat. Once decontaminated from any NBC threat, a character can then proceed to treatment. Characters cannot heal wounds received from NBC threats until after the characters have been removed from exposure and decontaminated.

See p. 170 for more information on NBC protective gear.

Agent Descriptions

Each nuclear, biological, chemical or medicinal agent (see "Medican Supplies," p. 128) has several qualities.

Effects lists any damage and/or other effects (such as roleplaying effects) the agent causes if a character fails his Resist Toxin roll.

Toxicity lists the toxicity level for the agent. When resisting the effects of NBC agents, characters roll Stamina + Resolve minus the Toxicity of the agent. One success is enough to resist the effects.

Exposure lists how often a character must make a Resist Poison/Disease roll while still exposed to the agent in question.

Unit describes in what quantities the agent can be purchased/created in and how large an area will be affected by contamination.

Form describes the various forms in which the agent is encountered (gas, pill, injection, liquid and so on). Form can also describe possible methods of exposure (contact, inhalation and so on).

Treatment list any known substances that can be used to counteract the agent(s).

Nuclear Weapons

Nuclear threats were in the popular consciousness for most of the latter half of the 20th century. The world changed the day "the bomb" was dropped on Nagasaki. No longer can destruction be measured in yards or in the tens of dead; now destruction is measured by miles and tens of thousands. Nuclear weapons are the most destructive devices developed to date. Their potential for devastation can't be matched by any conventional weapon in any army's arsenal.

Nuclear weapons cause tremendous amounts of physical damage and an even greater amount of delayed effects (radioactive fallout, environmental effects and so on). The majority of people who are killed from the blast do not die from the explosion. Those within miles of the detonation will be killed by the huge amounts of gamma radiation from the blast. Indeed, so much radiation is let loose that images of human bodies will form on any concrete material behind them and so fast that the humans will be dead before the pain impulses can reach their brain. These are the lucky ones.

The rest of those affected by a nuclear detonation are not killed by the burst of gamma radiation or the heat that follows a tenth of a second later. Not even the blast wave that follows, which can cause severe bleeding from every orifice of the body, or the 100-mph winds, propelling shrapnel-like debris, will have the most impact. Even the light emitted from the detonation, light so bright that it destroys the light cell receptors in the eyes, leaving the witness permanently blinded, will not have the greatest effect.

The radioactive fallout from a nuclear detonation is what will kill the most people and will continue to kill people even years after the blast. Lungs, hearts, livers and other vital organs slowly break down due to the radiation exposure. Mortality rates skyrocket in areas surrounding the blast, and the survivors continue to feel the effects even if they have managed to leave the area. Leukemia and other cancers become common ailments, and the numbers of people affected rise rapidly. This is on top of the ecological effects nuclear detonations will have on rivers, rain, crops, weather and the animal population.

Nuclear effects know no borders or the end of wars or the signing of peace treaties.

Storytelling Nuclear Weapons

For game play purposes, nuclear weapons can be a game breaker.

Their lethal area is measured in kilometers and in the tens of thousands of dead. Assume

anyone caught within 10 miles of the detonation of a nuclear warhead to be instantly dead (or shortly thereafter) and anyone within another 10 miles after that to be in serious condition due to blast and radiation effects.

It would be almost impossible that any nuclear detonation could be hidden from the appropriate authorities, the media or the people surrounding the detonation site. On top of that, the fallout, nuclear winter, retaliatory strikes and other negative side effects can have serious game consequences.

However, nuclear weapons can be used for more than their offense power; they can provide for reasonable character motivation and rich backdrop. Just remember, their application can have overwhelming implications for a game and the players in it.

Dirty Bomb

Officially called Radiological Dispersal Devices (RDD), "dirty bombs" are the new threat of the 21st century. Dirty bombs consist of conventional explosives combined with radioactive material. The radioactive component to the bomb can be high-grade material such as nuclear reactor waste or even small amounts of weapons-grade plutonium or low-grade hospital or industrial waste (thought to be the easiest and most convenient material to obtain). The device itself is primarily used to spread the radioactive material over a large area to deny its use to the enemy (a modern version of salting the earth).

The lethality of the weapon depends solely on the type of conventional explosive used, as the radiological effects are limited more to psychological than physiological. The use of more potent radioactive material bumps this weapon out of the "dirty bomb" category and into the realm of a true nuclear weapon. Because of this, these types of weapons are considered to be of no use to conventional armies and found only among terrorists.

Effects: The effect of the radioactive material from medical waste is mainly to cause FUD (fear, uncertainty and doubt) in the area of effect, but may also cause light radiation poisoning (see sidebar).

Toxicity: Toxicity of 0 for medical waste to a Toxicity of 2 (Light) for industrial toxic waste materials.

Exposure: Once per day

Unit: RDD devices are measured per pound of radioactive material.

Form: Explosive device

Resources: Normal cost requirements for the explosive portion of the bomb in addition to the radioactive material, which requires a Resources •• for medical waste and Resources •••• for industrial toxic waste.

Treatment: Most dirty bomb radiation is not lethal or even harmful unless exposure occurs over lengthy periods of time. Damage sustained from exposure to the radioactive material from a "dirty bomb" can be healed per the normal "Healing" rules.

Radiation Poisoning

Radiation is an aspect of life in the modern world. Radiation bleeds off computer monitors, slams us during medical or dental x-rays and even comes from the sun as ultraviolet rays. By and large, none of this radiation is harmful (though some could argue that even such miniscule radiation can cause cancer over a long-enough period of time). Radiation in excessive doses, however, will cause a character to suffer painfully. How could one be exposed to high amounts of ionized radiation? A dirty or other nuclear bomb would cause a radius of such radiation far greater than its blast area. Alternately, if a nuclear plant melts down or takes a hit from an airliner, those living tens of miles away could be affected. Several industries that work with uranium or plutonium must vigilantly monitor radiation levels to make sure employees don't suffer fatal doses.

Radiation poisoning comes in three categories: Light, Severe and Acute, each progressively worse than the last. Radiation requires only skin contact (touch) to poison a character. Characters can make Stamina + Resolve rolls (reflexive and contested) to resist the effects of exposure. (See p.181, the **World of Darkness Rulebook**, for information on Toxicity.)

Light radiation (Toxicity 2) is generally the result of being 10 or more miles away from the source (be it a bomb, plant meltdown or industrial core). A character who fails his Stamina + Resolve roll (made at a –2 penalty) takes 3 lethal damage immediately. He only takes this damage once. For the resultant 24 hours, the character may vomit and experience painful headaches. All rolls suffer a –1 penalty during this time frame. Characters exposed in this manner also experience sexual infertility for up to 30 days.

Severe radiation (Toxicity 4) is generally the result of being one to nine miles away from the source. A character who fails his Stamina + Resolve roll (made at a –4 penalty) will take 3 lethal damage per day for up to three days from the radiation sickness. His hair falls out, his mouth bleeds, he vomits regularly and he experiences extreme fatigue. All dice pools are assumed to be at a –3 modifier for one week after exposure. Also, once per month after exposure, a character should make a Stamina + Resolve roll. Failure on this roll means that the character suffers some sort of cancer from the incident. (See "Disease," p.176 of the **World of Darkness Rulebook**.) Characters are considered infertile for up to 60 days after exposure.

Acute radiation (Toxicity 5) means the character was within a mile of "ground zero" of whatever event caused the spike of radiation. A character cannot make a Stamina + Resolve roll to avoid this damage unless she has the proper protection (such as an NBC suit). Otherwise, the effects of radiation are automatic at this proximity. She will take 3 lethal damage immediately as she vomits uncontrollably and experiences powerful fatigue. For the following 12-hour period, the character suffers a –3 penalty to all rolls. However, exposure to acute radiation then leaves the character feeling fine for three days. She experiences no penalties and minimal pain during this time, often referred to as the "walking ghost" phase. After three days, the character suffers 5 lethal damage per day for five days. During this time, the character has terrible bouts of vomiting and diarrhea alongside massive internal bleeding. She also experiences –5 dice to all rolls. In most humans, acute radiation poisoning is fatal.

Vampires and other forms of undead suffer no damage and experience no ill effects from radiation exposure. Drinking the blood of someone who has been exposed, however, can cause dizzying effects. Vampires who ingest such blood suffer a –3 penalty for the subsequent 12 hours. At the end of that period, the vampire will vomit up three Vitae.

Werewolves suffer the same ill effects that humans do — except, of course, that werewolves often have enhanced Stamina and can heal the damage from radiation poisoning far more quickly, all of which reduces the long-standing harm caused by radiation poisoning. Werewolves can also make a roll to avoid Acute levels of radiation; the Stamina + Resolve roll is made at a –5 penalty. Lupines similarly experience no resultant sterility from exposure.

Mages, as mortals, suffer the damage from radiation poisoning the same as other humans. Mages have no natural in-built benefits against radiation poisoning, though some magic will help them heal the damage or resist the radiation.

Story Seed: The Night After

By accident or design, a nuclear explosion occurs in a major city — the one in which the characters reside. This story is less about weapons (or a single weapon, in this case) than it is about the after-effects of that weapon. As civilian authorities struggle to reconstitute themselves and initiate recovery efforts, the surviving supernatural creatures within the city take advantage of the chaos to bring their conflicts into the open. Which sides will the characters take in a devastated city without law, and how will they handle the sudden re-imposition of order when the military steps in?

Biological Weapons

The use of biological warfare is not limited to the modern era, as biological warfare has been practiced throughout history. The Assyrians used hallucinogenic fungus to poison their enemies' wells. During the Middle Ages, plague victims would be catapulted over castle walls and into cities. Even during the U.S. Civil War, the Confederate army used dead animals to poison ponds they knew the Union troops would use for water.

Biological warfare, or germ warfare, is the use of any organism or toxin as a weapon of war. The drawbacks to biological warfare are that, unlike nuclear or chemical effects, it takes time to take effect, is not easily contained and can spread even among friendly forces.

Most biological agents are slow acting. It takes days or possibly weeks for a character to show any signs of infection. After exposure, a character must make a Stamina + Resolve roll at a –2 penalty once a day for a number of days equal to 10 minus the character's Stamina. Only one success is enough to stave off infection; if the character fails, he becomes infected.

Military-grade chemical and biological weapons are all but impossible to acquire. Chemical and biological weapons cost •••••. More common diseases, infections, pesticides and other industrial poisons that are used as weapons have their own listed purchase requirements.

Anthrax

Anthrax is a highly lethal infectious disease caused by *Bacillus anthracis*. Anthrax can occur naturally or be produced in labs. Humans can be affected by exposure to infected animals or the tissue of infected animals or high concentrations of spores. Anthrax enters the body by inhalation, ingestion or skin contact. Anthrax is listed as non-contagious, meaning there is little likelihood of becoming infected just from coming into contact with another infected person. Treatment for anthrax includes large quantities of antibiotics.

Anthrax can be found naturally, but is extremely difficult to cultivate into a weapon, and all medical or scientific laboratories that house anthrax are tightly guarded.

Effects: Anthrax infections inflict 3(B) damage immediately. Once infected by anthrax, the character's condition can continue to worsen. After becoming infected, characters must roll against the Toxicity of anthrax once per day until they have overcome the effects. Each day the character fails her toxicity check, she suffers 3(B) damage.

Toxicity: 4

Exposure: Once per hour

Unit: One gram of anthrax powder is enough to cover a five-yard area.

Form: Anthrax is mainly an airborne agent (tiny spores), and normal infection is by inhalation. However, anthrax can be eaten or enter the body through an open wound.

Treatment: Treatment is through high doses of antibiotics. While on an antibiotic treatment for anthrax, the character receives a +2 bonus for Resisting Disease. A character infected with anthrax must make a Stamina + Resolve roll to Resist Disease once per day. A total of 20 successes are needed to overcome the effects of anthrax.

Ricin

Ricin is one of the most potent poisons in the world, roughly 6,000 times more poisonous than cyanide. Ricin is derived from the castor bean, of which only eight seeds are enough to be fatal in an adult. Exposure can come in the form of injection or ingestion, but the most common form of exposure is from inhalation. If ricin is inhaled, victims suffer from serious lung damage and, eventually, heart failure. If ingested, ricin poisoning can lead to gastroenteritis, bloody diarrhea and vomiting. Ricin can also affect a person's central nervous system, causing seizures.

Ricin can be found naturally, but is extremely hard to cultivate into a weapon, and all medical/scientific laboratories that house ricin are tightly guarded.

Effects: A character who fails her Stamina + Resolve roll suffers 5(L) damage.

Toxicity: 8

Exposure: Once per minute

Unit: In pellet form, one pellet is enough to affect one person. In mist or powder, one gram of ricin will cover a five-yard area.

Form: Ricin can be found in powder, a mist or pellet form. Ricin can also be dissolved in water.

Treatment: There is no known cure, only sympathetic and supportive treatments, for ricin poisoning. While under medical care (either from a physician or a hospital), characters receive a +1 bonus to all Stamina + Resolve roll to Resist Poison. Characters infected with ricin must make a Stamina + Resolve roll to Resist Poison once per day. A total of 30 successes are needed to overcome the effects of ricin poisoning.

Chemical Weapons

Some of the earliest known appearances of chemical weapons were in the form of Bronze Age hunters using poison-tipped arrows. These were not intended as weapons of war, but were primarily used to hunt game. The Spartan army, during a 5th century BC assault, used toxic fumes from burning wood, pitch and sulfur at the walls to Athenian cities in hopes of incapacitating the Athenians so they would offer little resistance.

Writings from the 4th century BC describe how the Chinese would use mustard and other toxic vegetables to create smoke, which was then piped to the enemy in underground tunnels. Chinese writings have been discovered that describe hundreds of recipes for the creation of poisonous smoke, along with accounts of their usage.

In the 1400s, Leonardo da Vinci had the idea of creating poisonous powders that could be thrown onto ships, and any who breathed such powders would then asphyxiate. The Bishop of Munster used explosives filled with belladonna (a very toxic poison, but also the most important ingredient in atropine, see p. 129) during his 1672 siege on the city of Groningen.

In 1854 a British chemist, Lyon Playfair, proposed using artillery shells as a delivery method for cyanide to be used against enemy ships. His plan was rejected as a "as bad a mode of warfare as poisoning the wells of enemies." His response was:

"It is considered a legitimate mode of warfare to fill shells with molten metal which scatters among the enemy, and produces the most frightful modes of death. Why a poisonous vapor which would kill men without suffering is to be considered illegitimate warfare is incomprehensible. War is destruction, and the more destructive it can be made with the least suffering the sooner will be ended that barbarous method of protecting national rights. No doubt in time chemistry will be used to lessen the suffering of combatants, and even of criminals condemned to death."

This statement would be used to usher in the use of chemical weapons during the 20th century.

Chemical Agents

Chemical weapons are categorized by the type of effects they cause on the human body (blistering, blood, choking and nervous system effects).

Blister agents cause wounds on a victim that resemble blisters and burns. These wounds are not limited to the outside of a victim — in fact, the internal blisters that are often fatal. Blood agents infect a victim and interfere with the body's ability to absorb and process oxygen. Chemical nerve agents attack a victim's nervous system, often overloading it to the point of complete exhaustion. Choking agents cause respiratory problems via irritation and inflammation of the lungs.

Exposure to chemical agents is often through, but not limited to, inhalation. Most chemical agents are gases or liquid vapor, but some chemical agents come in liquid forms as well, and physical contact with the liquid is often enough to trigger the chemical's effects.

Military-grade chemical weapons are all but impossible to acquire. Chemical weapons require Resources ••••• to purchase them. Pesticides and other industrial poisons that are used as chemical weapons have their own listed purchase requirements.

Mustard

Mustard gas, in its present form, was deployed by the German army during World War I against Canadian troops. Mustard gas gets its name because in its impure form, the gas has a brownish-yellow color and a slight mustard smell. In the pure form, though, mustard gas is both odorless and colorless. Exposure to mustard gas in small doses causes itching and blisters on parts of the body that have come into contact with the chemical (skin, eyes and throat). The eyes will become swollen and sore, which can lead to blindness if not treated immediately. Bleeding and blistering can develop within the lungs and respiratory system if the gas is inhaled in high concentrations. This can lead to severe damage of the mucous membranes followed by pulmonary edema. Mustard gas is a blister chemical agent.

Effects: A character who fails his Stamina + Resolve roll suffers 2(L) damage. While under the effects of mustard gas poisoning, characters are at a –1 penalty to all Composure rolls.

Toxicity: 4

Exposure: Once every five minutes

Unit: Mustard gas is found in coffee-can-sized canisters. Each canister can cover a 20-yard area.

Form: Mustard gas is available only in a gas form, which is used in canisters.

Treatment: Mustard gas has no known antidote. Characters poisoned with mustard gas can heal per normal "Healing" rules once they have been decontaminated, although they should seek medical treatment for the blisters and burns.

Hydrogen Cyanide

One of the few chemicals used as a weapon that is also used for legitimate commercial activities, hydrogen cyanide can be found in the steel, dyeing and plastics industries. Hydrogen cyanide is also produced naturally by some fruits such as cherries and apricots, as well as by bitter almonds. Hydrogen cyanide is said to have an almond-like odor, in addition to being colorless and very poisonous. Symptoms of poisoning include dizziness, excited heart rate, vomiting, convulsions, respiratory failure and death. Hydrogen cyanide is a chemical blood agent.

Effects: A character who fails his Stamina + Resolve roll suffers 3(L) Damage. Once administered, hydrogen cyanide will remain in the bloodstream and will continue to deliver harmful effects. After becoming infected, a character must roll against the Toxicity of hydrogen cyanide once per day until she has overcome the effects. Each day the character fails her toxicity check, she suffers 3(L) damage.

Toxicity: 6

Exposure: Once every 10 minutes

Unit: In liquid form, 50 mg is enough to poison one adult. Boiled to a poisonous vapor, one ounce is enough to cover a five-yard area.

Form: Hydrogen cyanide comes in liquid form, but must be boiled to produce a highly toxic vapor. Once transformed into a gas, hydrogen cyanide can be delivered by canister or aerosol spray.

Treatment: Treatments are available for hydrogen cyanide poisoning, although there is no cure. While under medical care (either from a physician or a hospital), characters receive a +1 bonus to all Stamina + Resolve rolls to Resist Poison. Characters poisoned with hydrogen cyanide can make Stamina + Resolve rolls to Resist Poison once per day. A total of 20 successes are needed to overcome the effects of hydrogen cyanide.

Phosgene

Used in World War I, phosgene is a highly toxic gas that is colorless but has an odor like moldy hay. First used by the French, phosgene mixes with the water inside the respiratory system, creating carbon dioxide and hydrochloric acid. The acid destroys the tissues in the lung, causing them to fill with blood, eventually resulting in death due to drowning, blood loss and shock. Phosgene is categorized as a choking chemical agent.

Effects: A character who fails his Stamina + Resolve roll suffers 3(B) damage. While under the effects of phosgene poisoning, characters receive a –1 penalty to all Composure rolls, due to the coughing and other minor discomfort effects.

Toxicity: 5

Exposure: Once per turn

Unit: One liter of phosgene is enough to cover a five-yard area.

Form: Phosgene is stored as a refrigerated liquid and must be heated to a gas in order to be used. Phosgene can be used in canisters or aerosol sprays.

Treatment: Like many chemical weapons, phosgene poisoning has no cure; only supportive treatments are available. While under medical care (either from a physician or a hospital), characters receive a +1 bonus to all Stamina + Resolve rolls to Resist Poison. Characters poisoned with phosgene can make Stamina + Resolve rolls to Resist Poison once per day. A total of 10 successes are needed to overcome the effects of phosgene.

Sarin

In 1938, while looking for a strong pesticide, two German scientists discovered sarin gas, one of the world's deadliest chemical weapons. Sarin works by causing neural transmitters to constantly fire. In the beginning, a victim experiences a runny nose, dilated pupils and other symptoms similar to heart attacks. Later, as the victim loses control of basic body functions, vomiting, uncontrollable bowel movements and urination occur. In the final stages, the body violently twitches and jerks, and the victim falls into a coma, only to suffocate as a result of all the spasms. Sarin is a chemical nerve agent.

Effects: A character who fails her Stamina + Resolve roll suffers 5(L) damage. While under the effects of sarin poisoning, characters receive a –2 penalty to all Composure and Dexterity rolls.

Toxicity: 8

Exposure: Once per minute

Unit: One ounce of sarin is enough to cover a five-yard area.

Form: At room temperature, sarin is an odorless, colorless liquid but evaporates quickly into a toxic vapor. As a liquid, sarin can be absorbed through the skin; as a vapor, sarin can be inhaled into the lungs.

Treatment: While under medical care (either from a physician or a hospital), characters receive a +1 bonus to all Stamina + Resolve rolls to Resist Poison. There is an antidote (atropine) for sarin poisoning. Once atropine is administered, a character no longer has to check against exposure to sarin, but should still remove herself from exposure.

VX

Probably the most famous chemical nerve agent thanks to recent action movies, VX is also the most deadly. Compared to mustard gas, with a lethal dose of 1,500 mg, as little as 10 mg of VX is enough to kill an average adult. VX belongs to a family of nerve agents called V-series agents. V-series agents were discovered by a British chemist and, in 1958, traded to the United States in exchange for nuclear weapon technologies. VX affects

the body much the same way that sarin does. Exposure to VX can come through contact or inhalation of VX vapors. VX and other V-series chemicals are chemical nerve agents.

Effects: A character who fails his Stamina + Resolve roll suffers 7(L) damage. While under the effects of VX poisoning, characters receive a –3 penalty to all Composure and Dexterity rolls.

Toxicity: 8

Exposure: Once per turn

Unit: One ounce of VX is enough to cover a 50-yard area.

Form: VX is a liquid that has been described as having the texture and feel of high-grade motor oil, but evaporates quickly at room temperature into a toxic vapor.

Treatment: While under medical care (either from a physician or a hospital), characters receive a +1 bonus to all Stamina + Resolve rolls to Resist Poison. There is an antidote (atropine) for VX poisoning. Once atropine is administered, a character no longer has to check against exposure to VX, but should still remove himself from exposure.

Rat Poison

Traditional rat poison is an anti-coagulant, which causes internal bleeding when taken in large quantities. "Large quantities" is a relative term when comparing rats and other small rodents and humans. One pellet is enough to kill a rat, but it would take several handfuls of pellets (and a bit less for children) are necessary to be fatal to adult humans.

Effects: A character who fails her Stamina + Resolve roll suffers 1(L) damage. While exposed to rat poison, characters receive a –1 penalty to all Composure rolls, due to the coughing and other minor discomfort effects. After becoming poisoned, characters must roll against the Toxicity of rat poison once per day until they have overcome the effects. Each day the characters fail their toxicity checks, they suffer 1(B) damage.

Toxicity: 2

Exposure: Every 15 minutes

Unit: One box contains enough poison for five doses.

Form: Rat poison comes in little pellets, which are intended for the rodent to eat.

Cost: • (found at any drug or grocery store)

Treatment: There is no cure for rat poison, although supportive treatments are available. The most common treatment is to have your stomach pumped. While under medical care (either from a physician or a hospital), characters receive a +1 bonus to all Stamina + Resolve rolls to Resist Poison. Characters affected by rat poison must make Stamina + Resolve rolls to Resist Poison once per day. A total of 10 successes are needed to overcome the effects of the poison.

Bug Bomb

Chemical weapon plants are often disguised as pesticide manufacturers since the chemicals are often the same. A bug bombs is basically a minor chemical weapon, but with a very low concentration so as to be effective only against insects and not too poisonous to humans. Prolonged exposure to bug bombs can cause vomiting, confused thinking, dizziness, blurred vision and depression. Although the effects of these

pesticides are quick to onset, serious complications and death occur only after prolonged exposure to high concentrations.

Effects: A character who fails her Stamina + Resolve roll suffers 1(L) damage. While exposed to the fumes from a bug bomb, characters receive a –1 penalty to all Composure rolls, due to the coughing and other minor discomfort effects.

Toxicity: 1 (add one for each additional bug bomb)

Exposure: Once per 15 minutes

Unit: Bug bombs are purchased in six 20 oz. cans and fill an 800-square-foot-room.

Form: Bug bombs are available only in a gas form, used in aerosol spray cans.

Resources: • (found at any drug or grocery store)

Treatment: There is no cure for bug bomb, although supportive treatments, anti-nausea medications and breathing treatments are available. While under medical care (either from a physician or a hospital), characters receive a +1 bonus to all Stamina + Resolve rolls to Resist Poison. Characters affected by bug bomb poisoning must make Stamina + Resolve rolls to Resist Poison once per day. A total of 10 successes are needed to overcome the effects of the poison.

Non-Lethal Chemical Agents

Chemical weapons are not always lethal or always designed to be. Sometimes it becomes necessary to neutralize a target without killing him. This practice is most commonly used by police forces around the world, but some military units are trained to use these same technologies.

Kolokol-1

Kolokol-1 is a classified Russian incapacitating agent. First produced by the KGB in 1970, Kolokol-1 was tested on the Moscow public without their knowledge. This chemical weapon is one of the quickest acting agents of its type, usually only taking one to three seconds to fully incapacitate an adult.

Effects: A character who fails his Stamina + Resolve roll falls unconscious for 4 turns.

Toxicity: 8

Exposure: Once per turn

Unit: One ounce of Kolokol-1 is enough to cover a 10-yard area.

Form: Kolokol-1 is available only in a gas form.

Resources: Because its chemical composition is a closely guarded state secret and is unknown to the West, Kolokol-1 is available only from Contacts who have access to Russian equipment and weapons. Even then, it costs ••••.

Treatment: There is no treatment for exposure to Kolokol-1, but its effects wear off completely in time.

BZ

BZ is also an incapacitating agent. Unlike Kolokol-1, however, BZ does not render the victim unconscious, only combat ineffective. BZ affects the nervous system and can cause mild effects like confusion, slurred speech and disorientation. In high concentrations, BZ causes a victim to experience hallucinations, impaired memory and ataxia (inability to coordinate muscular movements).

Effects: After succumbing to BZ, a character starts to suffer from the Level I effects listed below. Four hours after succumbing to BZ, the character will progress to Level II and 16 hours later, to Level III. Each level's effects are cumulative.

• Level I: From zero to four hours, the character suffers from slurred speech and mild confusion; subtract 1 die from any Presence or Intelligence dice pools.

• Level II: From four to 20 hours, the character experiences ataxia; subtract 2 dice from any Dexterity pools.

• Level III: From 20 hours until the effects wear off, the character suffers from full-blown delusions and paranoia. During this time, the character becomes extremely paranoid (–2 to all Social dice pools) and irrational (–2 to all Mental dice pools).

Toxicity: 4

Exposure: Once every 10 minutes

Unit: One ounce of BZ is enough to cover a 10-yard area.

Form: BZ is available only in a gas form.

Resources: BZ has equivalent agents all over the world. Even still, BZ is hard to come by even in countries with no WMD laws and costs ••••.

Treatment: There is no treatment for exposure to BZ. However, while under medical care (either from a physician or a hospital), characters receive a +1 bonus to all Stamina + Resolve rolls to Resist Poison. Characters affected by BZ can make Stamina + Resolve rolls to Resist Poison once per day. A total of five successes are needed to overcome the effects of BZ.

Tear Gas

Tear gas is a chemical that produces tearing of the eyes, skin irritations, runny noses and even vomiting. U.S. military personnel, as well as other countries' armed forces, undergo tear gas exposure as part of their training. Commonly called the "gas chamber," exposure to tear gas instills trust in the chemical protective gear issued to soldiers in hopes that they will not panic when under chemical attack.

Tear gas is usually deployed either from a burning canister or in a grenade. Tear gas grenades have the same range as other 40mm grenades, and all 40mm grenade launchers have available tear gas munitions. The blast area on tear gas grenades is considered the same as the Coverage Area. Tear gas needs to be inhaled to have any effect on a character.

Pepper spray is the civilian equivalent to CS gas in a liquid form in an aerosol spray canister. Capsaicin is the main ingredient in pepper spray, which is derived from the fruit of plants, including chilies. Pepper spray needs to be inhaled into the lungs or sprayed into the eyes for either to have any effect on a character. Pepper spray devices have a maximum range of one yard and require a successful Dexterity + Athletics roll at a –2 penalty (the target's Defense applies) to hit the target.

Animals are immune to the effects of tear gas and pepper spray, which is why dogs are commonly used by police forces during the use of such weapons. Werewolves are also immune to the effects of CS gas and pepper spray.

Effects: While suffering from the effects of tear gas or pepper spray, all dice pools and Resistance traits such as Defense are reduced by five for CS and three for pepper spray. This replaces the "Mace/Pepper Spray" rules in the **World of Darkness Rulebook**.

Toxicity: Tear gas — 3; pepper spray — 2

Exposure: Once per turn

Unit: Tear gas canisters cover a 10-yard area, and tear gas grenades cover an area equal to the blast area of a 40mm HE round (with no secondary blast area). Pepper spray is a contact chemical only (see description for addition information), and each unit contains enough chemical for three uses.

Form: Tear gas can be found in either in a canister or grenade. Pepper spray is found in the form of a liquid in an aerosol applicator.

Resources: Pepper spray devices cost •. Tear gas canisters are common, and cost ••. Tear gas grenades are strictly for military or law enforcement use, and cost •••.

Treatment: Affected areas need to be washed with warm water and soap.

Medical Supplies

Medicine in its basic form is just one or more chemicals in specific doses that are tailored to help a person get well. Medicine can be very helpful when taken in appropriate doses, but when abused or taken in too high a dosage, medicine can be deadly. Even simple medicines such as sleeping pills can be fatal when overdosed. In the same sense that medicinal agents can be harmful if used incorrectly, they can become effective weapons when used properly against an enemy.

Anti-Coagulants

Anti-coagulants are a series of drugs that prevent the blood from clotting. These types of drugs are used medically for people at risk for stroke and in medical equipment such as test tubes, transfusion bags and dialysis machines. If used against a living target, no lethal or aggravated wounds can be healed until the drug wears off. Anti-coagulants last six hours per dose and require Resources ••• to purchase them.

Anti-coagulants have little effect on the undead. However, after feeding from a victim with anti-coagulants medications in their blood, vampires will find it harder to use Vitae to power their supernatural abilities. The first time after becoming infected with anti-coagulants that a vampire tries to use Vitae to power any Discipline or other supernatural ability, the vampire needs to spend a point of Willpower. The Kindred must continue to spend a point of Willpower each time she wishes to use Vitae until the effects of the drug wear off.

Painkillers

From Demerol to Tylenol, painkillers are drugs that almost everyone has tried and many have even become addicted to. Both readily available and highly potent, painkillers can be used as effective assassination weapons if used in high doses. Over-the-counter (OTC) and prescription drugs can be dissolved into a

Overdosed Drug	Toxicity	Resources*
Generic Hospital Drug	4–7	••• **
Demerol	5	•• **
Morphine	6	••• **
Codeine	4	•• **
Generic Prescription Drug	3–5	••
OxyContin	4	••
Tramadol	5	••
Percocet	4	•
Generic OTC Drug	2-4	•
Tylenol 3	3	•
Aleve	4	••
Bayer	3	•

*The Resources cost if the drug is not readily on hand or purchased ahead of time.

**Requires a Contact of at least ••• in addition to the Resources cost.

drink and served to an unaware person. A drug that can be found in a hospital might be in a hypodermic and, therefore, can be injected into a person. Caution needs to be used when dealing with hypodermic painkillers, which are very powerful and fatal if overdosed. Painkillers have no effect on the undead.

When using drugs as weapons, treat them like poisons with different toxicities based on the drug itself. "Poison" rules can be found on p. 180 of the World of Darkness Rulebook.

Nitrous Oxide

Nitrous oxide, or laughing gas, is a staple anesthetic for dentists around the world. A colorless, sweet-tasting and -smelling gas, nitrous oxide is used to sedate a person rather than to render him unconscious. Some of the side effects of nitrous oxide are mild hysteria and an almost uncontrollable laughter, hence nitrous oxide's popular reputation as laughing gas. Like many chemicals, prolonged exposure to nitrous oxide can lead to serious illness and even death.

Every 10 minutes that a character breathes in nitrous oxide his player must succeed at a Stamina + Resolve roll with a –1 penalty, or the character suffers and loses a point of Intelligence. After a character reaches zero Intelligence, he then loses Stamina points at the same rate. While under the effects of nitrous oxide, the character also ignores all wound penalties from the anesthesia. The effects last until the character regains all lost Intelligence points. Resources ••.

Treatment

Generic Antidotes: Each chemical and biological weapon has unique antidotes and treatments (if any exist). Rather than list every possible antidote or treatment and which agent it works on, acharacter can purchase a "generic antidote". When doing so, the character must clarify which agent he needs it to work against. For protection against multiple agents, the character would need to purchase multiple "generic antidotes." (The character would need one for anthrax and need a separate one for tularemia.) Cost ••• per dose.

Atropine Autoinjector: An atropine autoinjector is used when a person is exposed to nerve gas agents such as sarin or VX. For exposure to nerve gas agents, atropine is followed up with pralidoxime chloride (also used in an autoinjector); this helps speed up the healing process. The atropine autoinjector must be used immediately after exposure to have any hope of saving a person's life. Cost ••• per dose (one dose per injector).

The jeep is a Russian hunk of junk, some cobbled-together piece of crap and metal that was supposedly made in Lenin's hometown. Still, the jeep keeps going over every bump and ditch. The sand in engine hasn't stopped the vehicle yet. The rusted thing idles like an iron lung as Collins peers out over the roll bar and chews the inside of his cheek.

In the distance, a battle. From the looks of it, Allied forces are under attack by foreign jihadists and Iraqi loyalists. Gunfire chatters, spitting light in twilight's half-darkness. Men yell. The smell of cordite comes in with the breeze, along with — something else.

That's when Collins sees it, and he can't believe his eyes. One of the insurgents — black beard, army jacket — takes a stream of bullets to the face and chest, delivered from the M16 of an American soldier. But the bullets don't matter, because the dead man gets back up. And takes off the soldier's head with a machete.

But that doesn't matter, either, because then the soldier's up — headless, which is impossible, he's headless — and the two are struggling.

Collins takes another look, and sees that this is happening everywhere. Soldiers without limbs attack burning, smoldering jihadists. They're dead. All of them, dead. And they keep on fighting. It's then that Collins realizes what he smells on the wind.

Rot.

Decay.

"This happens every night," Ansar, the driver, says. He shakes his head. "I do not understand it, but I know not to get close."

Collins grits his teeth. "We have to go that way. There's no way to go around?"

"No. I told you there would be trouble this way."

"So you did. Let's hope this thing is fast enough."

Chapter Four: Vehicles

"The highway's full of broken heroes
On a last-chance power drive
Everybody's out on the run tonight
But there's no place left to hide."
– Bruce Springsteen, *Born to Run*

Before the advent of the motor vehicle, personal transportation was limited to muscle power: horseback, ox-drawn wagon or shank's mare. The introduction of workable external and internal combustion engines in the 19th century removed that limitation, broadening the horizon of the individual traveler. In the modern era, ocean-spanning airliners facilitate overnight globe-hopping, and antagonists are more likely to ride into town in black sedans than on black chargers. Vehicles are an integral part of modern life, and this chapter examines the ways they can create or enhance stories.

Getting There Is Half the Fun

Modern vehicles range from commonplace, general-purpose commuter cars to experimental, rocket-propelled suborbital capsules. For the purposes of simplicity, this chapter focuses primarily on the range of vehicles to which ordinary characters are likely to have access: private and commercial ground vehicles, watercraft and aircraft.

Vehicle Traits

The following Traits appear in vehicle entries throughout this chapter. In some cases, they supplement or supersede the Traits given in the **World of Darkness Rulebook** (pp. 135 and 146).

Durability: This is the vehicle's material hardness. Any attack against the vehicle has the vehicle's Durability subtracted from its successes before damage is applied.

Size: This is the vehicle's Size.

Structure: This is the amount of damage the vehicle's body and frame can endure.

Acceleration: This is the maximum rate at which the vehicle can increase its speed, measured in yards per turn squared and miles per hour per turn. Note that the first value (yards per turn per turn) is artificially reduced for dramatic purposes (e.g., allowing a pedestrian to attempt to catch an escaping vehicle). For realistic values, double this Trait. Miles-per-hour-per-turn Traits, which are more likely to be used when vehicles are pitted against other vehicles, are more accurate in a "real-world" sense.

Safe Speed: This is the maximum speed at which a vehicle can travel without undue risk or instability, given in yards per turn and miles per hour. A character driving a ground or water vehicle faster than its Safe Speed suffers a cumulative –1 penalty to skill tests for every 30 yards per turn (20 miles per hour) in excess of Safe Speed. In an aircraft, this increases to –1 for every 150 yards per turn (100 miles per hour) or fraction thereof.

Maximum Speed: This is the vehicle's maximum possible speed in yards per turn and miles per hour.

Handling: This is a relative measure of the vehicle's maneuverability. It is applied as a bonus or penalty to all Dexterity + Drive dice pools made to control the vehicle.

Occupants: This is the number of adult humans (Size 5) for which the vehicle has seats. This Trait separates operators (drivers, gunners, navigators) and passengers: for example, "1 driver + 3 passengers."

Cost: This is the minimum dots in the Resources Merit required to purchase the vehicle, assuming a new model and a five-year payment plan. Buying a used model (if one is available) reduces Cost by 1, and outright on-the-spot purchase increases Cost by 2 (to a maximum of •••••, assuming the vehicle is available for civilian purchase at all). Renting a vehicle for a day has a Cost equal to the vehicle's Cost –1. Some vehicles are not normally available for purchase due to excessive price or legal restrictions on their sale.

Conversions

Readers who want to convert back and forth between game measurements and real-world numbers may find the following equivalencies useful:

1 mile per hour = 1.61 kilometers per hour. 1 kilometer per hour = 0.621 miles per hour.

1 foot per second = 1 yard per turn.

1 mile per hour = 1.47 yards per turn. 1 yard per turn = 0.682 miles per hour.

1 kilometer per hour = 0.621 yards per turn. 1 yard per turn = 1.10 kilometers per hour.

Ground Vehicles

Ground vehicles are the most familiar and common mechanical conveyances and the default for the Storytelling System's Drive rules. Most characters are likely to own a vehicle that falls into one of the less-expensive of the following general types.

Passenger Cars

Passenger cars are ubiquitous in any area of the world that has paved roads and available refined fuel. Almost all passenger cars are built for utility and efficiency over performance, though some auto makers attempt to combine these factors with varying degrees of success. These vehicles vary widely in size and amenities. Representative samples of passenger cars include the following:

Subcompact Car: Fuel efficiency and low price are the primary attractions of subcompacts, though some owners buy them for "cute" factor.

Examples: Chevrolet Aveo, Mini Cooper, Volkswagen Beetle

Compact Car: The archetypal ride for commuters and impoverished college students, compacts are affordable — and that's about it.

Examples: Dodge Neon, Honda Civic, Mazda Protégé, Saturn Ion

Mid-Size Car: The mid-size sedan (four doors) or coupe (two doors) is the bland average in automotive performance. Mid-sizes are nondescript and omnipresent. They are still somewhat cramped but easier to maneuver within than smaller vehicles.

Examples: BMW 325i, Chevrolet Impala, Ford 500, Honda Accord, Nissan Altima

Performance Mid-Size: Some manufacturers offer high-performance versions of their commuter boxes-on-wheels that are virtually indistinguishable from standard models, save for a few subtle accents. Performance coupes and sedans also feature luxurious interiors, which most buyers expect to see if they pay close to six figures. Thanks to the cars' ordinary appearance, they're perfect for owners who need to indulge in the occasional high-speed indiscretion without being too obvious. These cars also see service in some European nations as police pursuit cars for traffic enforcement.

Examples: Cadillac CTS-V, BMW M3, Mercedes AMG E 55, Nissan Altima SE-R

Full-Size Car: Full-sizes are the smallest cars found in most corporate and government fleets. Once the *de facto* standard for automobiles, full-sizes are now outnumbered by smaller and more economical vehicles. Full-size cars are spacious, though, seating five adults in relative comfort and having enough trunk space for several suitcases (or two to three more adults). Luxury full-size cars serve as status symbols for owners who want roomy transportation with class.

Examples: Lincoln Town Car, Mercedes C320, Toyota Avalon

Limousine: A limousine begins its existence as a full-size car, but the conversion process torches it in half, then welds it back together with several additional yards of passenger cabin grafted into the midsection. Performance suffers as a result, but a loss of acceleration is a small price to pay for riding in such style and elegance. Renting a limousine for a night costs •, and this service includes a professional driver (dice pools: Driving 6 dice, Local Area Knowledge 5 dice).

Cop Tires, Cop Suspension, Cop Shocks...

The typical police car begins life as a four-door, full-size car. Before leaving the factory, the base vehicle undergoes modifications to enhance its performance and ability to endure daily rough use. These modifications include reinforced suspension and brakes, heavy-duty cooling and electrical systems and a more powerful engine. Individual departments further modify their police cars to individual specifications. A typical package includes the following:

• **Identification:** Marked police cars feature department logos and other graphics in reflective decals, making the vehicles highly visible under all conditions. Strobe lights and a siren signify that the driver is responding to an

emergency, and a high-intensity searchlight is mounted near the driver's door. Unmarked cars hide their lights and siren inside the grille, on the dashboard and inside the rear window.

• **Communications and recording gear:** A cop car's communications gear starts with a police-band radio. Dashboard video cameras are rapidly becoming standard as well, automatically activating whenever the vehicle's lights or siren are running and recording their data on a digital or VHS recorder in the trunk. In the late 1990s, the first in-car laptop computers appeared. These use a dedicated radio or wireless network and enable officers to check a suspect's identification and criminal record, run a vehicle's license plate and exchange text messages. Newer networks also allow officers to send or receive digital photographs to help identify a missing child or fleeing vehicle.

• **Prisoner transport features:** A thick polycarbonate shield (Durability 3, Size 4, Structure 7) separates the front and rear seats, keeping prisoners from attacking the driver or front-seat passenger. Older designs used steel cages (Durability 4, Size 4, Structure 8), which were more rugged but still allowed the passage of blades or body fluids. The inside handles of the rear doors and the controls for the rear windows are removed to prevent egress. Upholstery is vinyl and plastic for easy cleanup.

• **Additional equipment:** The trunk of a typical police car is filled to bursting with department-issued emergency equipment: a fire extinguisher, a first aid kit, road flares and hazard markers, several gallons of water, emergency blankets, crime scene tape, a crowbar, a lug wrench, a folding shovel, evidence collection and drug identification kits, rain gear, a radar or laser speed gun and the officer's department-issued secondary weapons.

Few countries have laws restricting the purchase of police cars, but many manufacturers sell only to police departments; impersonating a police officer through the misuse of a marked vehicle is illegal. A strong secondary market for used and de-badged police cars exists, particularly in the taxi industry.

Sports Cars

Most sports car owners are more likely to brag about their vehicles' capabilities than to actually use them. A 180-mile-per-hour top speed means little in bumper-to-bumper expressway traffic. Sports cars are built for operating conditions that rarely arise for most drivers. Sports cars have limited passenger capacity and cargo space, consume fuel at a prodigious rate and can outrun and outturn virtually anything else on the road.

Sports Car: The standard for sports cars is two seats, two doors, a huge engine and minimalism in every other area. They're built to go fast and look good while doing it. The price of this performance comes not only in dollars but also in practicality and, often, comfort.

Examples: Chevrolet Corvette, Mercedes CLK 55 AMG, Porsche 911

Muscle Car: An American innovation from the 1960s, muscle cars trade a little performance for power, size and affordability. They're loud, unrefined and capable of blistering acceleration. They also feature marginally more interior volume than sports cars, including cargo space that can hold more than an overnight bag.

Examples: Dodge Charger, Ford Mustang, Pontiac GTO (aka Holden Monaro)

Sport Compact: Japanese manufacturers brought "sport compacts" — compact cars with enhanced speed and handling — into vogue in the late 1980s with a succession of "nickel rockets." Today's sport compacts range from petite roadsters to hulking sedans based on rally racecars. Sport compacts are the favored vehicles of street racers, whose ingenuity in installing performance parts is surpassed only by the extent to which the owners will add flamboyant decals, paint schemes and body accessories.

Examples: Chevrolet Cobalt SS, Mitsubishi Lancer Evolution, Nissan Sentra SE-R Spec V, Subaru Impreza WRX

Supercar: The ultimate in street-legal performance is the supercar, a classification established by Italian automakers whose flagship products can outrun, outturn and outprice anything else on the road. Supercars are painfully exclusive, often limited to several hundred of any given model sold in an entire country, and are as inconspicuous as a punch in the face. They're low-slung and don't take well to non-paved surfaces: their penalties for off-roading are increased by an additional –1 (see "Off-Roading," p. 136).

Examples: Ferrari F40, Lamborghini Murciélago, McLaren F1, Porsche Carrera GT

Traveling in Luxury

Heated leather seats, a premium sound system and other amenities can all raise a vehicle's prestige and price tag. A luxury vehicle provides a +1 bonus to all appropriate Presence and Manipulation rolls that the driver or owner makes while both he and his target are within or immediately near the vehicle. Limousines, supercars, performance SUVs and business jets always have this bonus. Some other vehicles may be purchased with luxury factory options at +1 Cost: mid-size cars, full-size cars, sports cars, recreational vehicles, commuter

Cars

Type	Durability	Size	Structure	Acceleration	Safe Speed	Speed	Max Handling	Occupants	Cost
Passenger Cars									
Subcompact Car	2	8	10	13 (18 mph/turn)	95 (65 mph)	147 (100 mph)	3	1+3	•
Compact Car	3	9	12	15 (20 mph/turn)	103 (70 mph)	161 (110 mph)	3	1+3	•
Mid-Size Car	3	12	15	19 (26 mph/turn)	110 (75 mph)	169 (115 mph)	2	1+3	••
Performance Mid-Size	3	12	15	28 (38 mph/turn)	117 (80 mph)	227 (155 mph)	4	1+3	•••
Full-Size Car	3	14	17	14 (19 mph/turn)	103 (70 mph)	176 (120 mph)	2	1+4	•••
Limousine	3	19	22	10 (14 mph/turn)	81 (55 mph)	147 (100 mph)	0	1+11	••••
Police Car	3	14	17	15 (21 mph/turn)	110 (75 mph)	213 (145 mph)	3	1+4*	•••*
Sports Cars									
Sports Car	2	10	12	28 (38 mph/turn)	117 (80 mph)	249 (170 mph)	4	1+1	••••
Muscle Car	3	12	15	26 (35 mph/turn)	110 (75 mph)	220 (150 mph)	3	1+3	••
Sport Compact	3	9	12	27 (37 mph/turn)	117 (80 mph)	213 (145 mph)	4	1+3	•••
Supercar	2	10	12	37 (50 mph/turn)	132 (90 mph)	301 (205 mph)	5	1+1	•••••

* See vehicle description for additional rules.

SUVs, tour buses, houseboats, yachts and racing yachts. Custom work on other vehicles may add luxury options at a significant price tag and the Storyteller's discretion.

Light Trucks

Drivers who expect to travel on dirt roads or across open wilderness find the low-slung suspensions of passenger cars to be inadequate. Light trucks offer an alternative: they're capable of clearing obstacles that would leave a car stuck or worse, can haul a reasonable amount of cargo and are rugged enough to withstand daily abuse.

Light Pickup: Light pickups are intended for dual use on city streets and rural trails, and their designs range from no-frills utilitarianism to sporty and impractical ostentation. One can typically haul three-quarters of a ton of cargo or up to eight passengers in the bed of a light pickup.

Examples: Ford Ranger, GMC Canyon, Toyota Tacoma

Heavy Pickup: Larger, slower and more massive than lesser cousins, heavy pickups are built for hard work on a daily basis. A heavy pickup with a standard configuration can haul up to a ton and a half of cargo or 16 passengers, while "king cab" models sacrifice about 800 pounds of cargo capacity or four unsecured passengers for an extended passenger compartment with an additional two or three relatively comfortable seats. Many heavy pickups come with diesel engines and heavy-duty transmissions, allowing them to tow a trailer with five or more tons of additional cargo.

Examples: Chevrolet Silverado, Ford F-150, Nissan Titan

Jeep: Jeeps are light, passenger-carrying, off-road vehicles, typically taller and less lengthy than light pickups. Jeeps are built strictly for utility, and some jeep models lack even rudimentary climate control or AM radios. Jeeps do, however, usually boast practical features such as roll cages, winches and mounting brackets for spare cans of fuel. The open or canvas tops of jeeps provide only minimal protection to their passengers when bullets start flying.

Examples: Chevrolet Tracker, Jeep Wrangler, Land Rover Defender

Off-Road SUV: The sports-utility vehicle is the modern successor to the hard-topped jeep designs of the late 1980s. Most SUVs are woefully inadequate for rough duty, being designed for use by harried suburban parents, but some examples do retain the off-road capability of the truck designs on whose frames they're built. Off-road SUVs are similar in general design to jeeps, being passenger haulers first and cargo vehicles second, but are longer and fully enclosed.

Examples: Jeep Grand Cherokee, Land Rover Discovery, Nissan Xterra

Military Tactical Truck: For military operations, off-road driving is the norm rather than the weekend exception. Armies require general-purpose cargo and passenger vehicles that are even more durable and capable than the most rugged civilian trucks. Most tactical trucks are diesel-powered, feature a medium-range radio as standard equipment and can mount a single machine gun (see p. 79) on a swivel mount in the roof (though the gunner must partially expose himself to fire it, receiving only –2 cover). Because tactical trucks aren't built with civilian safety regulations in mind, these vehicles are not normally available for civilian purchase.

Examples: AM General M998 HMMWV, ATL Pinzgauer, BAE Systems Panther, Land Rover Wolf

Off-Roading

Most of the ground vehicles described here are designed for use on well-maintained paved roads. When taking cars out of the highway department's jurisdiction, drivers incur penalties to their Drive checks based on the type of surface on which they're driving: –1 for dirt roads or grassy fields, –2 for gravel roads, –3 for sand or muddy fields and –4 for untamed wilderness. Light trucks, dirt bikes, mountain bikes, construction equipment and armored vehicles are better-suited than most to handle such abuse, so these vehicles' penalties in such situations are reduced by 2.

Vans

Best described as boxes-on-wheels, vans are built for maximum cargo capacity and easy access. Almost all vans have double rear doors, and many vans have additional sliding or double doors on the passenger's side.

Full-Size Van: Capable of hauling up to a ton of cargo or 12 passengers, vans are the ubiquitous service vehicles for all manner of businesses. Passenger models tend to have windows all around, while cargo designs typically only have windows in the rear doors, if even there — plumbing supplies don't need to see out (and inquisitive passersby don't need to see in). Vans with appropriate markings can remain parked for extended periods of time without arousing suspicion, which makes them ideal for surveillance operations and other covert goings-on. Full-size cargo vans can have diesel or gasoline engines, while passenger vans are almost exclusively gas-powered.

Examples: Dodge Sprinter, Ford Econoline E-150, Nissan Primastar

Minivan: A compromise between van utility and automobile efficiency, minivans appeared in the mid-1980s. Most minivans are more streamlined in appearance than full-size vans and are built on front-wheel-drive car chassis. Minivans typically have more amenities than full-size passenger vans, as the minivans' primary target market is large middle-class families. These vans' second and third rows of seats are designed for easy removal, which allows conversion from passenger to cargo configurations in a few minutes. In Europe, minivans are called MPVs (Multi-Purpose Vehicles).

Examples: Dodge Caravan, Ford Windstar, Honda Odyssey, Renault Espace

Delivery Van: In much of the world, the most familiar delivery vans (or "step vans," for the need to step up into them) are UPS' brown-liveried fleet. These vehicles are ubiquitous in any urban or suburban area, and unlikely to occasion comment even in more rural areas. Delivery vans are typically about 20 feet long; most of the length is given over to cargo space for just under two tons of packages. Inside a delivery van, wide shelves, canted slightly upward to keep parcels from sliding during turns, line both sides of a center aisle, which is open to the two seats in front. The roof of many newer models is translucent plastic for better interior visibility. Heating and cooling systems tend to be overbuilt to compensate for the drivers' frequent needs to exit and re-enter the vehicle. Light rental trucks do not offer unrestricted access between the passenger and cargo areas, having only a yard-square sliding door (if any), and lack the shelves of delivery vans, but have identical Traits for game purposes.

Examples: Freightliner MT-45, GMS Utilimaster, International FH1652

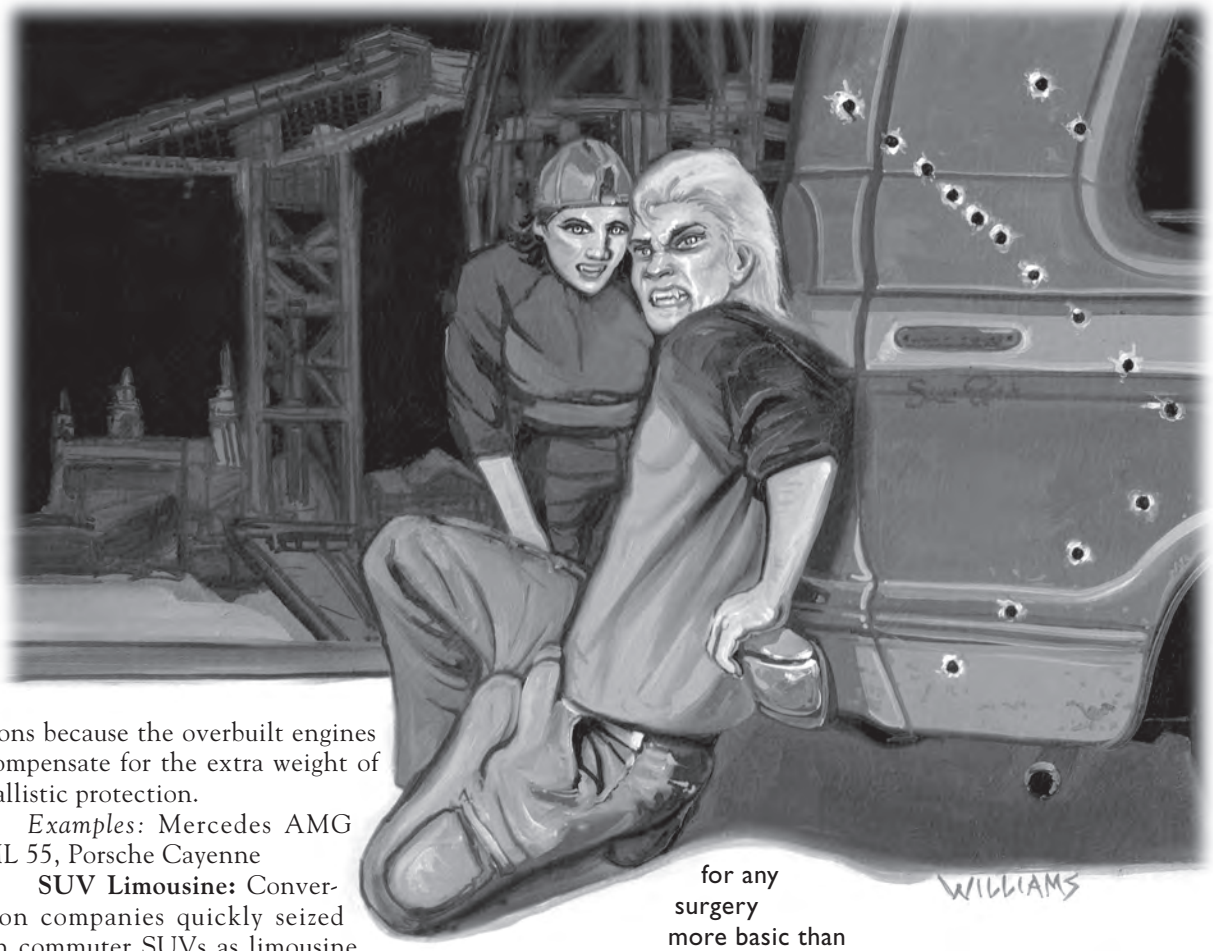
Recreational Vehicle: RVs, also known as motor homes, are vehicles built as mobile living quarters. Small RVs are built on van frames, while larger RV models resemble small buses. Almost all designs have external attachment points for electricity, water and waste lines, allowing the occupants to stay in one place for an extended period without relying solely on the vehicle's internal fuel and water resources. A typical motor home includes a tiny kitchenette, a restroom with a shower stall and a chemical toilet, a minimal entertainment system and sleeping accommodations for four to six people. Luxury models may add satellite broadcast reception, full bathrooms, saunas or the most decadent and extravagant furnishings. The Traits given are for the typical design used by well-to-do retirees: about 40 feet in length and the largest vehicles that don't require a commercial driver's license. A character with Resources •••• may own an RV as his primary residence, rather than a house or apartment.

Examples: Fleetwood Expedition, Tiffin Phaeton, Winnebago Adventurer

Commuter SUV: Although many SUV owners would vehemently deny this classification of their prized status symbols, the truth is that a significant number of modern SUV designs have minimal off-road capability, sluggish handling and a large cargo volume with easy access. In other words, they're vans. Commuter SUVs come equipped with all manner of creature comforts, from heated leather seats to DVD players.

Examples: Chevrolet Equinox, Ford Escape, Nissan Murano, Toyota Highlander

Performance SUV: For most SUVs, "performance" means being able to take the kids to band camp. Some manufacturers eschew conventional wisdom, preferring to build SUVs that can hold their own against sports cars. Such behemoths are painfully overpriced, but are moderately successful blends of SUV utility and high-end automotive performance. For owners who intend to engage in activities best kept from the attention of the authorities, performance SUVs have the same advantages as performance mid-size cars: a nondescript appearance combined with superior speed and handling. Performance SUVs are also ideal for security conver-



sions because the overbuilt engines compensate for the extra weight of ballistic protection.

Examples: Mercedes AMG ML 55, Porsche Cayenne

SUV Limousine: Conversion companies quickly seized on commuter SUVs as limousine platforms for their added internal volume. SUV limousines tend to be more ostentatious than regular limos, in addition to the greater length and bulk. Renting an SUV limo with a driver for the night costs ••.

Meat Wagons and Air Evac

Ambulances are emergency vehicles built on full-size van or light truck chassis. Ambulances are equipped to carry the medical gear necessary to stabilize a single patient and keep her alive during transport to a hospital. In addition to basic work and identification modifications equal to those of a police car (see p. 133-134), an ambulance also gets an expanded cargo area wide enough for two people to work around a single stretcher whose folding legs lock into rails in the floor. Both walls are lined with cabinets full of medical supplies. All surfaces are metal, plastic or vinyl and constructed to be easy to clean after each emergency run. The full inventory of equipment typically runs eight or more pages and includes virtually everything *up to* surgical equipment. Ambulances are not stocked for any surgery more basic than emergency clamping of severed arteries and do not carry rib spreaders, bone saws or spare blood. Most ambulances have seating for up to four people (two in the cab plus two on fold-down seats in the rear) but almost always run with two-person crews.

Air ambulances are helicopters fitted for medical evacuation. Due to the expense, they're used only when time is critical or when patients are located in areas that ground vehicles can't access. An air ambulance is designed to hold its normal two-person flight crew, one patient and two medical personnel. In addition to all of the emergency equipment on a regular ambulance, an air ambulance is often equipped with a winch for lifting well-restrained patients out of areas in which the helicopter can't land.

Mechanics: An ambulance or air ambulance has Traits equal to those of a standard delivery van or service helicopter, respectively, save for a +1 increase in Cost. In either case, the facilities an ambulance or air ambulance provides grant a +3 bonus to appropriate Medicine rolls.

Trucks, Vans, and SUVs

Type	Durability	Size	Structure	Acceleration	Safe Speed	Max Speed	Handling	Occupants	Cost
Light Trucks									
Light Pickup	3	14	17	15 (20 mph/turn)	88 (60 mph)	154 (105 mph)	1	1+2	••
Heavy Pickup	3	15	18	12 (16 mph/turn)	81 (55 mph)	132 (90 mph)	0	1+2	•••
Jeep	3	13	16	9 (12 mph/turn)	88 (60 mph)	147 (100 mph)	1	1+3	••
Off-Road SUV	3	15	18	12 (17 mph/turn)	96 (65 mph)	154 (105 mph)	0	1+4	•••
Military Tactical Truck	4	17	21	7 (10 mph/turn)	81 (55 mph)	117 (80 mph)	0	1+3	N/A
Vans									
Full-Size Van	3	16	19	8 (11 mph/turn)	81 (55 mph)	132 (90 mph)	–1	1+12	••
Minivan	3	15	18	12 (16 mph/turn)	95 (65 mph)	154 (105 mph)	0	1+7	••
Delivery Van	3	17	20	7 (9 mph/turn)	73 (50 mph)	132 (90 mph)	–1	1+1	•••
Recreational Vehicle	3	18	21	9 (12 mph/turn)	81 (55 mph)	117 (80 mph)	–1	1+6	•••
Commuter SUV	3	15	18	15 (20 mph/turn)	95 (65 mph)	147 (100 mph)	0	1+6	•••
Performance SUV	3	15	18	24 (33 mph/turn)	110 (75 mph)	242 (165 mph)	3	1+4	•••••
SUV Limousine	3	20	23	10 (13 mph/turn)	81 (55 mph)	132 (90 mph)	–1	1+17	••••

Motorcycles

Two wheels, an engine, a fuel tank and enough metal tubing to hold everything together are essentially all that comprise a motorcycle. With a power-to-weight ratio to shame the finest sports cars, a motorcycle can dominate most ground chases, but its lack of structure is its Achilles' heel.

Mechanics: Keeping a motorcycle's shiny side up and rubber side down can be a physically demanding effort, and accelerating and braking with hand controls is a foreign concept to the average driver. A character attempting to control a motorcycle without a Motorcycle Specialty in the Drive Skill suffers a –2 penalty.

In addition, as noted in the **World of Darkness Rulebook** (see p. 147), a motorcycle has no exterior surfaces: rider, passenger and any cargo are exposed to wind, rain and bullets, and suffer equal damage whenever the bike itself takes damage from a collision or other wide-effect source. Attacks, however, must be targeted at the bike or one of its occupants — shooting a motorcycle does not automatically damage the rider as well.

Street Bike: A bare-bones motorcycle has few options and minimal fairings or streamlining. Most of the street bike's components are exposed, and it's designed for functionality over fashion.

Examples: Agusta Brutale S, Honda RVF400, Yamaha XJ600

Dirt Bike: Built for off-road travel, a dirt bike features a higher and heavier suspension, knobby tires and a relatively small engine. Rural residents use these bikes for both recreation and utility, and motocross racers have built an entire sport around dirt bikes.

Examples: Kawasaki KLX110, Yamaha YZ-250

Cruiser: Cruisers, or "touring bikes," are intended for long-distance travel at highway speeds. Therefore, cruisers are more comfortable than other motorcycles, usually having some support for the rider's back in an upright position. Some cruisers come equipped with intercom systems, allowing driver and passenger to use helmet-mounted microphones to converse audibly over 80-mile-per-hour wind noise. Most cruisers also have locking, hard-sided cargo containers on either side of the rear tire, each one capable of holding about a cubic foot of material. Motorcycles favored by bike clubs and gangs, known as "choppers" after their construction from pieces of different chopped-up motorcycles, also fall into the cruiser performance category, though they're not as refined or respectable.

Examples: BMW R100RS, Harley-Davidson Electra-Glide, Honda Gold Wing, Yamaha Wildstar

Sport Bike: In many cases, the only differences between street-legal sport bikes and competition racing bikes are the exhaust system and instrumentation. Sport bikes are also referred to as "crotch rockets" for their blistering acceleration: in the hands of a proficient rider,

Motorcycles and Personal Vehicles

Type	Durability	Size	Structure	Acceleration	Safe Speed	Max Speed	Handling	Occupants	Cost
Motorcycles									
Street Bike	2	7	9	20 (27 mph/turn)	88 (60 mph)	183 (125 mph)	5	1+1	••
Dirt Bike	2	5	7	18 (25 mph/turn)	51 (35 mph)	81 (55 mph)	4	1+1	•
Cruiser	2	7	9	22 (30 mph/turn)	103 (70 mph)	176 (120 mph)	4	1+1	••
Sport Bike	1	6	7	44 (60 mph/turn)	117 (80 mph)	279 (190 mph)	5	1+1	•••
Personal Vehicles									
Street Bike	2	3	5	*	+5	+15	3	1	•
Mountain Bike	3	3	6	*	+4	+12	2	1	•
Skateboard	2	2	4	*	+3	+8	4	1	•

a sport bike can out-accelerate anything short of a jet aircraft and keep pace with a supercar. Sport bikes feature lightweight plastic fairings to reduce wind resistance and require their riders to maintain uncomfortable hunched-over positions. Whenever a character rides a sport bike for more continuous hours than half his Stamina, he suffers a –1 penalty to all other physical actions until he spends at least 10 minutes stretching out.

Examples: Ducati 999R, Kawasaki Ninja ZX-10, Suzuki GSX-1300R Hayabusa, Yamaha YZF-R1

Sidecar: A sidecar is a single-wheeled pod that attaches to the side of a street bike or cruiser. A motorcycle with a sidecar has its Acceleration, Safe Speed and Maximum Speed reduced by 1/4th each and its Handling reduced by 2, but the sidecar adds space for another passenger or an equivalent volume and weight of cargo.

Traits: Durability 2, Size 4, Structure 6, Occupant 1 passenger, Cost •.

Personal Vehicles

The simplest ground vehicles are unpowered, consisting solely of wheels and a body. This ground vehicle relies on the rider's own physique to provide motive power, but are more efficient than just running across town or away from a threat.

Mechanics: A muscle-powered ground vehicle has an Acceleration equal to the rider's Strength. To determine the ground vehicle's Safe Speed and Maximum Speed, add character's own Speed to the values given in the appropriate columns of the vehicle table. A character can only maintain speeds above Safe Speed for a number of minutes equal to twice her Stamina + Resolve; after this, each minute (or fraction thereof) of high-speed pedaling or pushing inflicts one level of bashing damage. A character who isn't pushing herself can maintain Safe Speed for a number of hours equal to her Stamina + Resolve, after which she must rest for half that length of time. All maneuvers with such vehicles use Athletics rather than Drive.

Street Bike: A typical bicycle is little more than a tubular frame, a crank with attached pedals and a pair of wheels.

Mountain Bike: Bikes intended for off-road use are heavier than their traditional counterparts. Mountain bikes are common even in urban settings, as they're better able to withstand casual city hazards like curbs and stairs. Some police departments assign patrol officers to bike duty in business or college districts.

Skateboard: As the name implies, a skateboard is little more than a flat board with wheels attached. A scooter has steerable front wheels and is identical for game purposes.

Open Vehicles

Some vehicles provide less than perfect cover, resulting in reduced penalties to attacks. Vehicles providing *no* cover include motorcycles, personal watercraft and personal vehicles. Vehicles providing –1 cover include canoes, construction equipment, day sailers, fishing boats, inflatable boats, jeeps, kayaks and motorcycle sidecars. Vehicles providing –2 cover include powerboats, racing boats and convertible versions of passenger cars and sports cars.

Commercial Vehicles

Commercial vehicles are the backbone of mass cargo and passenger transportation across the industrialized world. In most countries, operators of commercial vehicles over a certain length must have specialized operators' licenses due to the exceptional mass and size of these vehicles compared to ordinary passenger cars. Almost all commercial vehicles have diesel engines and manual transmissions.

Commercial vehicles are built to a scale that most drivers don't really consider, even when they're passing convoys on the highway. The largest commercial vehicles weigh 40 tons or more and require hundreds of feet to come to a full stop from cruising speed. They carry enough fuel to cross countries without refueling, and the nature of their work requires sufficiently robust construction that they can shrug off collisions and other damage that would turn the average car into an unrecognizable wreck.

Mechanics: Driving a commercial vehicle requires a different set of reflexes and a bit more expertise than operating the average commuter car. A character attempting to control one of the following vehicles without a Commercial Vehicles or similar Specialty in the Drive Skill suffers a –2 penalty.

Medium Truck: Medium trucks are mostly used for local cargo-hauling and utility work, though some medium trucks see highway use for long-distance transport of relatively small cargoes. Medium trucks typically weigh five to 15 tons and have six to ten wheels. These vehicles come in a bewildering array of configurations, including flatbeds, cargo boxes, liquid bulk tankers and refrigerated cargo boxes. Bare-bones truck chassis are also available for customization with specialized equipment such as cement mixing drums or articulated bucket arms for utility repair. Medium trucks intended for construction work are built for off-road duty (see "Off-Roading," p. 136).

Examples: Freightliner Business Class M2 series, International 4000 series, Isuzu F-series, Mercedes-Benz Atego, Mitsubishi Fuso FM

Armored Truck: Armored trucks (also referred to as "armored cars" despite their size and mass) are built to haul large amounts of cash or other valuables in relative safety. Originally a response to the gang violence of 1920s America, armored trucks have since become valued tools of banks and diamond merchants the world over. A standard armored truck is built on a medium truck frame, engine and transmission. The

Commercial Vehicles

Type	Durability	Size	Structure	Acceleration	Safe Speed	Max Speed	Handling	Occupants	Cost
Medium Truck	3	20	23	10 (13 mph/turn)	81 (55 mph)	110 (75 mph)	–1	1+2	•••
Armored Truck	7	17	24	13 (18 mph/turn)	88 (60 mph)	125 (85 mph)	–1	1+4*	••••*
Semi Tractor	3	18	21	9 (12 mph/turn)	102 (70 mph)	139 (95 mph)	–1	1+2	••••
Semitrailer	3	21	24	-	-	-	-	-	••
Tractor-Trailer Rig	*	25	*	6 (8 mph/turn)	102 (70 mph)	132 (90 mph)	–3	*	*
Transit Bus	3	21	24	9 (12 mph/turn)	66 (45 mph)	95 (65 mph)	–2	1+45	•••
Tour Bus	3	24	27	7 (10 mph/turn)	95 (65 mph)	125 (85 mph)	–2	1+56	••••

* See vehicle description for additional rules.

body is custom-fabricated around layers of steel and composite armor, and every window is a bullet-resistant sandwich. Other standard options include run-flat tires, a fire extinguishing system and explosion-resistant fuel tank and a radio for communication with a dispatch office or police. The cab and cargo compartment of the vehicle are completely separated, with two passenger seats in each. Gun ports in the doors and the sides of the cargo area allow occupants to fire out with a –2 penalty while completely concealed and protected. Most armored truck manufacturers will sell only to established security or courier firms to avoid liability for criminal misuse of their vehicles.

Run-Flat and Oversized Tires

Shooting for a vehicle's tires is one of the easiest ways to disable it without destroying it or its contents. Run-flat tires are the private security and diplomatic protection industries' response to aggressors who use this tactic. A run-flat tire incorporates a ceramic or metal insert wrapped around the wheel, inside the tire itself. When the tire loses pressure, whether from a nail or a bullet, the vehicle's weight falls on the insert. This mitigates the handling problems caused by a puncture and allows the driver to maintain control long enough to escape a road hazard or ambush.

Mechanics: Refitting a vehicle with run-flat tires costs •••, and they are not available for motorcycles, sports cars or vehicles larger than Size 17. When a vehicle loses a run-flat tire, each blown tire only imposes a –1 penalty on Drive rolls and a 10% speed penalty (see p. 142, the **World of Darkness Rulebook**, for rules on damaging tires).

While not available in run-flat versions, the tires of commercial and heavy-duty vehicles are significantly tougher than those of ordinary passenger vehicles. Any vehicle of Size 17 or larger has tires with Durability 2, Size 3 and Structure 5.

Semi Tractor: A semi tractor is built to pull one or more attached semitrailers (below). A semi tractor is built around a massive diesel engine and large-capacity fuel tanks that give the vehicle a range of at least 800 miles. Tractors come in two main configurations. Long-nose designs, which place the engine in front of the driver, are more common in North America. In Europe and Asia, the norm is the cab-over design, which puts the cabin on top of the engine. Cab-overs are shorter and easier to maneuver, but the entire cab must be hinged to allow access to the engine compartment. A two-way radio is standard, and many newer designs have GPS navigation systems and locator beacons to allow corporate dispatchers to track the semi tractors more efficiently. Tractors intended for highway use often have sleeper compartments, which are effectively miniature apartments: a bed, small appliances designed to run off the vehicle's power supply and storage space for food, clothing and other travel necessities. Any windows are small and can be completely sealed against light for drivers who travel at night and sleep during the day. Umbilical hoses from the back of the tractor are designed to hook into matching connectors on a trailer to provide power for lights and pressurized air for brakes.

Examples: Kenworth T2000, Mack Vision, Mercedes-Benz Actros, Peterbilt 378, Volvo FH16

Semitrailer: A semitrailer is designed to attach to the back of a semi tractor. A semitrailer is little more than a steel frame with two or three axles at one end, a hitch at the opposite end and some type of cargo container on top. Most semitrailers are about three and a half feet off the ground — just barely enough for some exceptionally low-slung supercars to drive under. The most common arrangement is the cargo van trailer: a simple metal box 45 to 53 feet long, eight feet wide and nine feet tall, with a translucent fiberglass roof (for better lighting when loading and unloading cargo) and double doors that can only be opened from outside. A tank trailer has multiple compartments and inter-

nal buffers to keep its 7,000 gallons of cargo from sloshing and shifting the trailer's weight distribution in turns. A flatbed trailer features further reinforcement to handle industrial loads of up to 35 tons. A refrigerated box trailer is insulated and has its own refrigeration unit, powered by a diesel generator with a separate fuel tank good for three to five days of continual operation. In addition, many specialized designs exist, tailored for the transport of specific cargoes. While semi tractors use conventional mechanical or hydraulic brakes, trailers have brakes operated by compressed air. Under normal circumstances, air pressure keeps the brakes open. If a trailer loses air pressure, its brakes lock up, inflicting a –2 penalty to all maneuvers (except stopping) and immediately requiring the driver of the tractor to make a roll to avoid a wreck — but this is better than waiting until the middle of a long downhill run to discover the lack of brakes.

Cargo Containers

The 1970s saw the overnight expansion of what the transportation industry calls *intermodal shipping*, which is the use of a single cargo container to move goods via multiple forms of transit. International standards defined the dimensions of a standard freight container: a steel box eight feet wide, eight-and-a-half feet tall and either 20, 40 or 45 feet long. One of these standard containers can be stacked atop others in a ship or on a rail car, rolled into a transport aircraft, slung under a helicopter or bolted onto a skeletal or flatbed semitrailer. This allows a shipper to place goods in a container and send them across nations and oceans without the need for repacking. Refrigerated and tank units exist, and standard containers can also serve as temporary offices, housing or medical clinics. The sheer number of containers moving around the world — several thousand at a time in a single, large container ship — makes them both ubiquitous and impossible to comprehensively screen, two qualities ideal for smugglers or other parties with cargo they'd like to keep hidden. A cargo container typically costs ••••. Leasing one for a month costs ••.

Tractor-Trailer Rig: A connected semi tractor and semitrailer has markedly different performance characteristics than a tractor running alone (a "bobtail," in trucker parlance). The articulated joint connecting the two makes for tricky handling when turning or backing up. In a panic stop, if the trailer decelerates more rapidly than the tractor, the trailer can swing to one side on this joint, a condition known as *jackknifing*. In combat, a tractor-trailer rig's component vehicles are targeted separately.

Transit Bus: A transit bus is designed to move people around a city as efficiently as possible. As the bus is not intended to often go faster than about 40 miles an hour, it lacks even the most basic safety features such as seat belts or padded seats. Overhead grab bars allow additional passengers to stand in the center aisle. School buses have identical mechanical Traits.

Examples: Blue Bird Xcel 102, International RE 200, Neoplan Centroliner, Wrightbus Solar

Tour Bus: A tour bus is ostensibly built for some degree of comfort, as passengers can expect to spend eight or more hours at a stretch in it. Standard features include reclining seats and a restroom with a chemical toilet. A cargo compartment runs most of the length of the vehicle under the passenger cabin, with locking roll-up doors providing easy access to luggage. Tour buses converted for actual living arrangements, such as those used by rock groups and touring politicians, sacrifice about half their seating for four to eight narrow bunk beds and a kitchenette. A character with Resources ••••• may own such a tour bus as her primary residence, rather than a house or apartment.

Examples: Motor Coach Industries J4500, Prevost XL II, Van Hool T2100, Volvo 9900

Construction Equipment

Yellow diesel-powered machinery is a familiar sight around the world as construction engineers go through the routine of erecting buildings and widening roads. Few observers stop to consider that what's good for construction is also good for destruction. Stories of heavy machinery gone bad permeate urban legend, and characters who discover a hive full of slumbering horrors may seek a solution that's easier to obtain than explosives.

Mechanics: Construction equipment's controls are laid out differently, even counter-intuitively, from those of commercial and consumer vehicles. A character who attempts to maneuver any of the following heavy machinery without a Construction Equipment or equivalent Drive Specialty suffers a –3 penalty to all Drive rolls. Using any special equipment mounted on such a vehicle, such as an excavator's bucket arm, requires a Dexterity + Crafts roll, again with a –3 penalty if the operator lacks an appropriate Crafts or Drive specialty.

Excavator: Commonly known as a "backhoe," an excavator is little more than a set of tracks on top of which swivel a diesel engine, a cab for an operator and a large hydraulic arm ending in a bucket. The typical heavy excavator can reach any patch of ground within

15 yards of itself and can dig to 10 yards below its own level. Each bucketful is about five cubic yards, or roughly a single grave. Scooping out or emptying a bucketful requires one full round. An excavator arm isn't particularly swift, but a skilled operator can attempt to use it as a giant crushing implement. Such an attack is a standard operation roll as described above, suffering a penalty equal to *twice* the target character's Defense. The attack benefits from the "8 again" rule, has the Armor Piercing 4 effect and inflicts bashing damage.

Examples: Caterpillar 345B, Hitachi EX700, John Deere 690E

Bulldozer: Few obstacles exist that a four-yard-wide steel blade backed by 50 tons of diesel engine and treads can't overcome. A bulldozer is the ultimate in mobile brute force, capable of uprooting trees or flattening buildings. The operator can raise the blade to about a yard off the ground, which protects him and most of the vehicle from attacks coming from the front but completely blocks his forward view of anything closer than 10 yards. The process of raising or lowering the blade takes a single round and requires a standard operation roll. The Traits given below are for the bulldozer's body; the blade is considered a separate object with Durability 10, Size 10 and Structure 20. As long as the blade is intact, it adds four dice to the damage the bulldozer inflicts in a forward collision. A bulldozer also comes with a rear-mounted winch whose motor and steel cable can pull up to the vehicle's own weight. A character struck by a bulldozer suffers a –2 penalty to her attempt to avoid the Knockdown effect. (See p. 168, the **World of Darkness Rulebook**.)

Examples: Case 1850K, Caterpillar D9T, Holland DC85

Steamroller: A steamroller has even less subtlety than a bulldozer, being a support mechanism for an eight-foot-wide, 15-ton rolling drum. A steamroller has no special equipment, and thus the most likely way for a character to run afoul of a steamroller is to fail to run away from it in time. A character struck by a steamroller suffers a –2 penalty on her attempt to avoid the Knockdown effect. If she fails and the driver continues moving forward during the next round, roll the amount by which the steamroller's Size exceeds the victim's as a dice pool to determine additional lethal damage against which armor does not protect. The damage is bashing if the character is prone on a soft or semi-liquid surface that can deform to accommodate her body, such as mud or hot asphalt.

Examples: Caterpillar CP-433E, Komatsu PC4000, Terex SP2006

Forklift: Small forklifts are common sights in factories and warehouses everywhere, leaving the unique aroma of their propane-burning engines behind them as their drivers scuttle around on pallet-moving errands. Forklifts are exceptions to the rules regarding the opera-

tion of construction equipment and rely on a standard Dexterity + Drive roll; forklifts are just in this category for ease of classification. A typical warehouse forklift can lift up to five tons to a height of five yards, but most characters will be more concerned with impaling someone on the forklift's pair of two-yard steel tines. Such an attack is resolved like any other intentional collision (see p. 144, the **World of Darkness Rulebook**) with an additional –2 penalty. If the attack succeeds, the subsequent damage roll has the Armor Piercing 3 effect. If a character suffers damage equal to or greater to his Stamina, he's impaled and must succeed in a Strength + Resolve roll to pull himself free, suffering a penalty equal to the amount of damage the initial attack inflicted.

Examples: Hyster H130, Palfinger CR50, Toyota 7FBMF

Tracks

Some construction and armored vehicles rest on segmented metal tracks rather than tires. These "Caterpillar treads" (after the construction equipment manufacturer) are significantly more resilient than the pressurized rubber attached to a car's wheels. Tracks have Durability 4, Size equal to one-third that of the vehicle itself and appropriate Structure. On an armored vehicle, tracks have armored skirts that provide an additional +4 Durability (without increasing Structure). If a vehicle loses one track, the vehicle is crippled, able only to pivot around the disabled side. A vehicle that loses both tracks is immobilized.

Armored Vehicles

Some military vehicles are simply upgraded or modified cousins of ordinary civilian transport, such as the ubiquitous medium trucks that haul soldiers, beans and bullets, while other military vehicles are more specialized designs built expressly for combat and mounting weapons vastly more powerful than those available to even the best-connected private citizen. Standard equipment on an armored vehicle includes a fire extinguisher system, an overpressure system to seal the interior against nuclear, biological, and chemical hazards, night vision systems, encrypted radios and smoke generators.

Armored vehicles are not available for civilian purchase in their original armed forms. Collectors may be able to acquire obsolete demilitarized models that have had their weapons and classified electronic systems removed or permanently disabled (Cost •••••), but such purchases are subject to careful scrutiny during the import process, lest an armored personnel carrier wind up in the hands of a drug cartel.

Mechanics: Using an armored vehicle requires not only specialized training to handle the controls, but the confidence and situational awareness to drive while seeing the world through only a set of dirt-smeared armored prisms. A character who attempts to maneuver any of the following vehicles without an Armor Specialty in the Drive Skill suffers a –3 penalty to all rolls.

Normally, an armored vehicle completely encloses its crew, and opponents may not make called shots against them. However, this same enclosure forces the crew to rely on *vision blocks* (the aforementioned armored prisms) and electronic systems to see out. This inflicts a –2 penalty on all tasks that require vision (except attacks with the cannon of an infantry fighting vehicle or tank, whose targeting systems remove the penalty). A character who opens his hatch and sticks his head out to see — not uncommon among drivers, for instance — can be targeted with head shots at the standard –3 penalty. A character who sticks his upper body out of the hatch to use a top-mounted machine gun or perform other tasks receives the standard benefit of –2 cover.

All armored vehicles mount their heaviest armor, or *glacis plate*, in the front. Against an attack or damaging effect striking its front, an armored vehicle's Durability is *doubled*.

Armored Personnel Carrier: The "lightest" armored vehicles, relatively speaking, are armored personnel carriers (APCs). As the name implies, an APC is designed to carry and protect troops, effectively serving as a "battle taxi." The average APC is a lozenge-shaped armored hull slung on four pairs of huge bullet-resistant tires. An APC carries a driver, a commander who doubles as a gunner for a turreted heavy machine gun and a squad of infantrymen and their possessions. Access is through a pair of top-mounted hatches or a rear door that hinges down into a ramp. Most APCs are at least nominally amphibious, able to awkwardly swim through calm water at a few miles per hour.

Examples: Arzamas BTR-80, General Dynamics M1126 Stryker, Mowag Piranha III, Oto Melara Puma

Infantry Fighting Vehicle: The bigger, nastier cousin of the APC is the infantry fighting vehicle (IFV), a tracked armored vehicle. In addition to filling the same basic role of infantry transport, an IFV also carries heavier weapons that can support its dismounted troops. Typically, an IFV has a three-man crew. The driver rides alone in a compartment in the vehicle's nose, while the commander and gunner occupy the small turret, along with a light automatic cannon and an anti-tank guided missile launcher. The gunner operates these weapon systems while the commander coordinates his crew's activities or uses the medium machine gun mounted atop the turret. Each crewman has his own top-mounted hatch, while the passengers have a rear ramp.

Examples: BAE Systems Warrior, Rheinmetall Marder, Kurganmashzavod BMP-3, United Defense M2 Bradley

Construction Equipment and Armored Vehicles

Type	Durability	Size	Structure	Acceleration	Safe Speed	Max Speed	Handling	Occupants	Cost
Construction Vehicles									
Excavator	4	18	22	2 (3 mph/turn)	4 (3 mph)	7 (5 mph)	–5	1	●●●●●
Bulldozer	5	20	25	3 (4 mph/turn)	7 (5 mph)	13 (9 mph)	–4	1	●●●●●
Steamroller	5	19	24	2 (3 mph/turn)	6 (4 mph)	12 (8 mph)	–4	1	●●●●
Forklift	3	9	12	4 (5 mph/turn)	7 (5 mph)	16 (11 mph)	–2	1	●●
Armored Vehicles									
APC	10	19	29	7 (9 mph/turn)	51 (35 mph)	73 (50 mph)	–2	2+11	N/A
IFV	12	18	30	6 (8 mph/turn)	44 (30 mph)	66 (45 mph)	–3	3+6	N/A
Main Battle Tank	26	20	46	4 (6 mph/turn)	44 (30 mph)	88 (60 mph)	–4	4	N/A

Main Battle Tank: A main battle tank is the most deadly predator on the modern battlefield. Built around a 120mm cannon that can pierce over three feet of armor plate and capable of moving faster than 50 miles per hour over any solid terrain, a tank's sole purpose is to kill anything it can catch — and it does this exceedingly well. The tank's armor is thick enough to shrug off most casual hazards, and even a direct hit from another tank's main gun. A tank has a four-man crew: a driver, a gunner, a loader to feed 60-pound shells into the cannon and a commander to coordinate the activities of the other three. The driver sits alone in his compartment in the tank's hull, while the other three crewmen occupy the turret. Each crewman has his own hatch atop his position. In addition to the main gun, a medium machine gun and a heavy machine gun are mounted at the loader's and commander's hatches, respectively, and another medium machine gun is mounted alongside the cannon.

Examples: General Dynamics M1A2 Abrams, KBTM T-80, Krauss-Maffei Leopard, OMC Engineering Olifant

Watercraft

The earliest vehicles were simple rafts that primitive humans used to cross rivers and lakes. Before the advent of the railroad, river travel was the only way to move large cargo across continental interiors, and virtually every major civilization expanded and built its early cities along rivers. Today, a mariner can purchase a private yacht that can cross oceans in a matter of weeks, families own weekend pleasure boats and wealthy bachelors live on vessels moored in marinas. Ports, docks and harbors are integral and often-overlooked parts of any city built on a river, lake or ocean. Criminals favor the water as a poorly patrolled means of moving merchandise or disposing of troublesome evidence.

While ground vehicles move on a stationary surface, watercraft aren't always so fortunate. Tides and currents can aid or hamper a vessel's mobility, giving a boost to get out of town quickly or inexorably pushing the vessel toward a coral reef. This shouldn't normally be a problem, but Storytellers should feel free to occasionally throw in such water hazards to raise dramatic tension.

Small Boats

The smallest watercraft are those just big enough for one to three people. Most of these watercraft aren't motorized, instead relying on the occupant's muscle power for propulsion.

Mechanics: A muscle-powered boat isn't as efficient as a muscle-powered ground vehicle. Such a craft has an Acceleration equal to the rower's Strength, a Safe Speed equal to her Strength + Stamina and a Maximum Speed equal to her Strength + Stamina + 10. For every 100 pounds of passenger or cargo that the vessel carries, reduce each of these values by 1, to respective minimum values of 1, 1 and 2. A rower can only maintain speeds above Safe Speed for a number of minutes equal to her Stamina + Resolve; after this, each minute (or fraction thereof) of high-speed rowing inflicts one level of bashing damage. A rower who isn't pushing herself can maintain Safe Speed for a number of hours equal to her Stamina, after which she must rest for half that length of time.

Canoe: Some of the earliest boats were canoes simply made from hollowed-out tree trunks. Modern canoes are made of lightweight laminated wood, fiberglass or aluminum. A typical canoe can seat up to five people, though only a single occupant must paddle. For each additional rower, add 1 to the Strength of the primary rower for determining Safe Speed and Maximum Speed, and don't count that rower's weight when determining penalties (see above). Canoes are difficult to keep stable; all attacks made from a canoe suffer a –1 penalty. Canoes are muscle-powered craft and use Athletics instead of Drive for all maneuver rolls.

Kayak: A kayak is effectively a closed canoe with one or two openings in which occupants sit. The enclosed design of a kayak makes it less likely to fill with water if capsized, which makes the kayak ideal for use in swiftly moving and turbulent water. Kayaks are muscle-powered craft and use Athletics instead of Drive for all maneuver rolls.

Personal Watercraft: Also known as a "Jet Ski" after the Kawasaki trademarked design, a personal watercraft is a motorcycle-like water vehicle that uses a gasoline engine to drive a water jet: an enclosed propeller or high-speed water pump that accelerates water for propulsion like a jet turbine engine. The result is a light, swift and loud recreational vehicle that a capable driver can make outperform anything else on the water. Most personal watercraft have deadman switches that shut down their forward thrust if the riders fall off, bringing the Jet Skis to a halt within easy swimming distance. Personal watercraft

are the same as motorcycles (see p. 147, the **World of Darkness Rulebook**) for purposes of collision damage and ranged attacks targeting their riders.

Inflatable Boat: The basic design of an inflatable boat (or "Zodiac" after the best-known manufacturer) is little more than a set of inflatable tubes attached to a canvas or aluminum floor. When packed for travel, the tubes roll up to make a flat and compact package. Uses for inflatable boats include sport fishing, water taxi service, rescue and lifesaving and military small unit transport. An inflatable boat comes with four paddles for muscle power, but can also be fitted with an outboard motor (reflected in its Traits).

Motorboats

Generally speaking, a motorboat is anything larger than a personal watercraft and smaller than a ship that uses an internal combustion engine for propulsion. Most motorboats receive their forward thrust from propellers. High-performance speedboats instead use larger versions of the water jets found in personal watercraft. Motorboats with *outboard* propulsion have their engines, transmissions and propellers mounted outside the hull, usually pivoting as a single piece for steering, while those motorboats with their engines mounted within the hull are *inboards*. Motorboats cover a wide range of sizes and designs, including the following:

Fishing Boat: Little more than a small metal or fiberglass hull with an outboard motor attached, a fishing boat is intended for recreational use on smooth lakes and rivers. Those boats actually used for fishing, as opposed to casual recreation, have a secondary battery-powered electric motor for low-speed maneuvering (no faster than Speed 5) that won't scare away fish with noise.

Powerboat: A powerboat features an engine comparable in overall power to that of a mid-size car. These vessels are primarily sold for recreational purposes, though harbor police and other waterborne emergency services use powerboats for patrol and lifesaving duties. Powerboats are built to be as comfortable as cars and usually have comparable amenities. Many are outfitted as ski boats, with a metal frame in the rear to which a tow rope is attached for a waterskier.

Racing Boat: Often referred to as "cigarette boats," for the name of the most famous design, racing boats are sleek, narrow 40- to 50-foot boats with excessively powerful engines. In addition to appealing to sportsmen, racing boats are also popular with smugglers due to the boats' ability to outrun anything law enforcement can bring to bear against them, short of a helicopter. Racing boats are built to operate with a three-person crew: one to steer, one to baby the engines and one to navigate.

Houseboat: As their name suggests, houseboats are effectively floating residences, with all the comforts of a modern large apartment or small house. Some houseboats are built on single hulls, but most float on pairs or quartets of cylindrical pontoons. Many houseboats have no motors, relying on chartered towboats to move them from one mooring to another; the Traits given assume a motorized version. Even self-propelled designs are not meant for more than the most rudimentary of travel and handle poorly in any but the smoothest of seas. A character with Resources ••• may own a houseboat and rent mooring space in a marina as his primary residence.

Sailboats

Wind is the oldest form of vehicle propulsion aside from raw muscle power. Sailboats rely on a combination of modern engineering and millennia-old seamanship techniques to exploit this natural power source.

Mechanics: A sailboat's speed is limited by the amount of available wind. A sailboat's Maximum Speed is equal to the current wind speed, and its Safe Speed is equal to three quarters this amount. All maneuvers with a sailboat rely on the pilot's understanding of wind, waves and ropes, and the Survival Skill replaces the Drive Skill for this purpose.

A sailboat's sails have Durability 0 and Size equal to the sailboat's own Size. An attacker can target the sails at no penalty, but most weapons pass through after inflicting only cosmetic damage. An attack that covers a wide surface area or inflicts persistent damage, such as a spray of acid or a stream of burning napalm, damages sails normally.

Attacking a sailboat's mast is possible, but more difficult. A mast has Durability 2 and Size equal to the vessel's Size –2, and ranged attacks against the mast suffer a –3 penalty due to its narrow profile.

Day Sailer: The smallest sailboats are open-topped hulls with minimal amenities and little-to-no special equipment. In essence, day sailers are rowboats with masts and sails. As the name suggests, day sailers are intended only for short daylight travel, as they are not equipped with navigation lights or instruments. Day sailers' hulls are made of wood or fiberglass.

Yacht: The primary differences between a sailing yacht and a day sailer are the former's living quarters and greater size. A yacht is large enough to support a separate enclosed area within its hull, which features a small kitchen ("galley" in nautical parlance), bathroom ("head") and living quarters for two to four people. Above the deck, most usable space is taken up by the necessities of sailing, and characters receive only –1 cover. Many yachts have a secondary diesel engine for maneuvering in tight quarters or windless conditions. When this engine is in use, the vessel has Acceleration 2 (3 mph/turn), Safe Speed 15 (10 mph), Maximum Speed 29 (20 mph) and Handling 0. A character with Resources •••• may own a yacht as her primary residence. Luxury yachts also feature electronic suites that include long-distance marine radios and navigational radar.

Racing Yacht: These vessels are built for speed and extended voyages. Many competitive events last days, with the longest transoceanic races stretching to weeks. Up to six characters can sail a racing yacht, per

Boats

Type	Durability	Size	Structure	Acceleration	Safe Speed	Max Speed	Handling	Occupants	Cost
Small Boats									
Canoe	1	7	8	*	*	*	0	3	•
Kayak	1	6	7	*	*	*	1	1	•
Personal Watercraft	2	6	8	22 (30 mph/turn)	44 (30 mph)	88 (60 mph)	4	1+1	•
Inflatable Boat	1	8	10	9 (12 mph/turn)	22 (15 mph)	44 (30 mpg)	2	1+7	•
Motorboats									
Fishing Boat	2	9	11	4 (5 mph/turn)	7 (5 mph)	22 (15 mph)	2	1+3	•
Powerboat	3	14	17	7 (10 mph/turn)	37 (25 mph)	66 (45 mph)	3	1+5	•••
Racing Boat	2	18	20	17 (23 mph/turn)	73 (50 mph)	198 (135 mph)	4	3+2	••••
Houseboat	3	23	26	2 (3 mph/turn)	15 (10 mph)	44 (30 mph)	–1	1+7	•••
Sailboats									
Day Sailer	1	8	9	*	*	*	0	1+2	•
Yacht	2	20	22	*	*	*	1	1+5	••••
Racing Yacht	3	25	28	*	*	*	2	6+6	•••••

* See vehicle description for additional rules.

the "Backseat Driving" sidebar below. With fewer than three characters helping, maneuvers with a racing yacht suffer a –4 penalty. A racing yacht carries quarters for up to a dozen occupants and has a marine radio and navigational radar as standard equipment. Luxury models upgrade the communication suite to satellite radio. A character with Resources ••••• may own a racing yacht as his primary residence.

Backseat Driving

Most vehicles aren't equipped with multiple sets of controls, which prevents characters from engaging in normal teamwork (see p. 134, the **World of Darkness Rulebook**) while driving. Lunging across the center console to yank the wheel aside at the last instant usually doesn't help the situation very much, either. However, a single character who has an unobstructed view (or an appropriate equivalent, like a terrain-mapping radar picture) of the vehicle's course may engage in teamwork by acting as a navigator or spotter, calling out upcoming turns and hazards to the primary driver. This requires the navigator to make a Composure + Drive roll instead of the normal Dexterity + Drive roll. The character does not have to be in the vehicle, so long as she is in voice contact with the primary driver and can clearly see the vehicle's course.

In vehicles that *do* have multiple sets of controls (such as helicopters and cruise liners), one secondary driver at each extra set of controls can assist the primary driver via normal teamwork. A single navigator may also assist in such a situation.

Aircraft

Aircraft stay in the air via the Bernoulli effect, which describes a change in the pressure of a fluid medium — air — with respect to its speed. As an airplane accelerates, the air pressure under its wings becomes greater than that on top. This pressure translates into *lift*, which keeps the aircraft aloft. Loss of speed results in loss of lift, and all airplanes have a *stall speed:* the speed below which they do not generate sufficient lift to support their weight. Air turbulence and pressure changes brought on by weather can also cause unexpected gain or loss of lift.

Mechanics: Per the **World of Darkness Rulebook** (see p. 69), a character attempting to control an aircraft without a Pilot Specialty in the Drive Skill is considered to be completely untrained in aviation. He may not use his Drive Skill, and makes all rolls based on Attribute alone with a –1 untrained penalty.

Light Airplanes

Light aircraft range in size from single-seat kit airplanes built in their owners' garages to small twin-engine "puddle jumpers" used to haul commuters between nearby cities. A light aircraft is the first airplane that any aspiring pilot learns to handle. Standard equipment on all light aircraft includes one radio for general aviation communication, basic navigation instruments, a fire extinguisher and first aid kit. Most light aircraft do not have the advanced navigation electronics (called *avionics*) necessary for flying on instrument guidance alone (see "Flying Blind," p. 147) or flight data and cockpit voice recorders. The cabins of light aircraft are not pressurized, which gives them an effective *ceiling* (maximum altitude) of about 8,000 feet above sea level. The aircraft themselves are capable of flying higher, but, without individual oxygen supplies, their pilots and passengers aren't.

Most light aircraft are fitted with piston engines that turn propellers. Some larger light aircraft, typically twin-engine transports, are *turboprop* designs, in which

turbine engines turn propellers rather than providing direct thrust as jet turbines would.

Single-Engine Airplane: Hundreds of thousands of private citizens around the world own single-engine airplanes as business vehicles or weekend toys. Such an aircraft is roughly equal in internal volume to a full-size van, but much more limited in the weight that can be hauled: only about 300 pounds of cargo plus the airplane's occupants.

Examples: Aero Boero AB-series, Cessna 150, Piper PA-20

Twin-Engine Airplane: Larger, faster and capable of hauling heavier loads than the single-engine cousins, twin-engine designs are the aircraft of choice for commuter airlines and small air cargo businesses. Most models come equipped with a second radio, which is always tuned to the international aviation emergency frequency, and a few are equipped for instrument flight. Some designs can be fitted with floats or skis for water or ice landings, making them popular for service and research work in remote wilderness areas. In addition to the crew and passengers, a twin-engine airplane can haul a half-ton of cargo.

Examples: Beechcraft King Air B200, Cessna 404 Titan, De Havilland Canada DHC-6 Twin Otter

Stunt Plane: Designed for flashy and stressful aerobatic maneuvers, stunt planes are single-engine aircraft, often biplanes (with two sets of wings, one above the other). Stunt planes feature powerful engines, rugged construction and minimal amenities. Some stunt planes even have open cockpits instead of enclosed cabins. Popular options include smoke generators for skywriting, equipment for towing advertising banners and struts and braces for brave or foolhardy showmen to walk on the upper surface of the wing during flight. Cargo space is nonexistent, and parachutes are at the top of the list of recommended safety equipment.

Examples: Aermacchi F-260, American Bellanca, Pitts S2B, Stearman Biplane

Glider: As the name suggests, a glider has no engine. A glider must be towed aloft by another airplane, after which the glider's pilot releases the tow cable and flies free. Gliders have long, spindly wings, which enable a skilled pilot to stay in the air for several hours with good weather conditions. On occasion, gliders find use in providing one-way transportation at the beginning or end of covert operations: the gliders' composite construction makes them virtually invisible on radar, and their lack of engines means no thermal signature or noise to betray their passage. Cargo space is limited to what the pilot and passenger can carry, though.

Examples: DG Flugzeugbau LS 10, Schempp-Hirth Nimbus 4D, Schleicher ASH 25

Flying Blind

Driving, like combat, is best performed with clear eyesight. A character who attempts to operate a vehicle with impaired vision suffers a penalty determined by how little she can see of the road ahead: –1 for light precipitation or minor vehicle damage like a bullet-starred windshield; –2 for light fog, patchy clouds or moderate precipitation; –3 for heavy fog, blizzard or downpour conditions or blood covering the windows. If the character can't see at all, she must pick a direction, hang on and hope for the best as the Storyteller makes a secret roll as if the driver were fighting blind (see p. 166, the **World of Darkness Rulebook**).

Commercial and military aircraft and ships are equipped with navigational instruments that allow a trained pilot to execute normal maneuvers with little-to-no penalty, regardless of visual conditions. Such instruments reduce the above penalties by 2 and allow completely blind flying at a –3 penalty if the character has the training necessary to use them: an Instrument Navigation Specialty in the Drive Skill.

Commercial Airplanes

The vehicles of commercial aviation are too expensive and complex for anyone short of a multi-billionaire engineering genius to own and maintain on her own. These giant machines require the support that only a corporate or government infrastructure can afford to provide — let alone the eight- and nine-figure price tags.

All commercial aircraft have pressurized cabins, allowing the airplanes to fly at high altitudes without subjecting their occupants to oxygen deprivation or other altitude-related problems. Few transports have pressurized cargo compartments, however, which proves problematic for stowaways. Most of these airplanes use two, three or four jet turbines for propulsion, though a few smaller or older transports may use turboprops or even piston-driven propellers. It's rare to find a commercial aircraft without electronic navigation instruments or multiple aviation radios, and all modern designs have radio transponders and flight data and cockpit voice recorders.

Business Jet: As much mobile office as passenger transport, a modern business jet is fully equipped for a small staff to conduct normal business operations while cruising at an altitude of 25,000 feet. Standard options include luxurious leather seats, a small restroom and power outlets for portable office equipment. High-end jet models can be fitted with a wet bar, a kitchenette, wireless networking, satellite telephone and Internet connectivity and a private stateroom. Most manufacturers offer a wide array of easy-to-modify cabin layouts, and business jets can be further customized for any task from long-range medical transport with advanced life support gear to ocean search-and-rescue.

Light and Commercial Aircraft

Type	Durability	Size	Structure	Acceleration	Safe Speed	Max Speed	Handling	Occupants	Cost
Light Aircraft									
Single-Engine	2	18	20	9 (12 mph/turn)	176 (120 mph)	213 (145 mph)	0	1+3	●●●
Twin-Engine	2	21	23	18 (25 mph/turn)	367 (250 mph)	499 (340 mph)	0	2+14	●●●●
Stunt Plane	3	15	18	15 (21 mph/turn)	205 (140 mph)	264 (180 mph)	2	1+1	●●●
Glider	1	15	16	16 (22 mph/turn)	161 (110 mph)	257 (175 mph)	2	1+1	●●●
Commercial Aircraft									
Business Jet	2	25	27	17 (23 mph/turn)	660 (450 mph)	880 (600 mph)	0	2+10	●●●●●
Airliner	2	35	37	18 (24 mph/turn)	689 (470 mph)	924 (630 mph)	–2	3+180	N/A
Light Transport	2	30	32	7 (9 mph/turn)	257 (175 mph)	337 (230 mph)	–1	2+6	●●●●●
Heavy Transport	3	40	43	10 (14 mph/turn)	631 (430 mph)	843 (575 mph)	–3	3+9	N/A

Examples: Beech Starship 2000, Bombardier BD-100, Lear Jet 23

Airliner: The backbone of international travel in the 21st century is the jet airliner. Designed for an optimum mix of economy and comfort, airliners provide seating for as many people as can reasonably be crammed into a 150-foot-long aluminum tube. Although airliners are technically large enough to qualify as locations for scenes rather than vehicles, characters may find themselves in desperate situations in which they have no choice but to take the controls of one of these behemoths. Traits given are for a medium-sized airliner; the largest wide-body models can seat over 400 passengers and have Size 45 and Structure 47 but essentially identical flight characteristics.

Examples: Boeing 727, Airbus A-380, Lockheed L-1011

Light Transport: Regional air cargo movement is the province of light transport aircraft, which can haul up to five tons of goods (or an equivalent weight of passengers, albeit in extreme discomfort). Light transports account for most of the truly old commercial aircraft still flying today — the total lack of amenities in a 60-year-old airframe doesn't much matter to cattle and machine tools, though business travelers would refuse to board such a rattletrap. A light transport is the largest aircraft that most characters could conceivably own privately.

Examples: AASI Jetcruzer, Antonov An-12, Douglas DC-3

Heavy Transport: The largest aircraft in the world are heavy transports, designed to move military forces or over 120 tons of cargo around the globe. The cargo bays are large enough to use as basketball courts, and most heavy transport are pressurized to accommodate large numbers of troops. As with airliners, heavy transports are more likely to be the setting of character-scale action than the focus of vehicle-scale action, but characters may need to take the controls of a heavy transport in an emergency.

Examples: Boeing C-17 Globemaster, Ilyushin IL-76, Lockheed C-5 Galaxy

Combat Airplanes

Since World War II, control of the skies has been a deciding factor in virtually every major international conflict. Military aircraft are built to fulfill a wide range of specific missions, but all military aircraft have the same general design principles: to fly faster than anything in the civilian world while carrying a wide array of armament. Characters in the World of Darkness are highly unlikely to ever have the opportunity to fly a combat aircraft, and no government will allow such a dangerous piece of equipment to leave military ownership, but stories set in the many war-torn areas of the world may feature brief and deadly encounters with military air power.

All of the following aircraft are powered by jet turbine engines, and most of this aircraft are capable of supersonic flight at altitudes of 40,000 feet or more. Standard equipment includes military-grade encrypted radios, full navigation avionics for instrument-only flight and guidance systems for both air-to-air and air-to-ground ordnance. In addition, each crew position in a combat airplane is an ejection seat for a last-ditch attempt to escape a doomed vehicle.

Mechanics: Activating an ejection seat is a reflexive action for a pilot with military flight training (e.g., an appropriate Specialty in Drive) and a standard action for anyone else. When a character activates an ejection system, a set of explosive charges blow the cockpit canopy away a split-second before rocket motors hurl each seat clear of the aircraft. Two turns later, the seat falls away from its former occupant, leaving him strapped into a parachute (see p. 150).

Ground Attack Fighter: "Close air support" is the military term for using aircraft to kill enemy ground targets that are in close proximity to friendly forces. Ground attack fighters are built to operate in the hazardous low-altitude environment of a modern battlefield. They can fly low and slow enough to visually identify enemies, and they carry the armor and redundant systems necessary to survive sustained anti-aircraft fire and shoot back. Typical armament for a ground attack fighter includes a large automatic cannon and an array of bombs and antitank guided missiles, as well as a couple of short-range air-to-air missiles just in case. This is the kind of aircraft that characters will face if they make targets of themselves while abusing a military armored vehicle in a war zone.

Examples: Fairchild-Republic A-10 Thunderbolt II, Sukhoi Su-25 *Grach*

Air Superiority Fighter: The pinnacle of military air power is designed to kill anything else that flies. An

air superiority fighter is capable of speeds approaching Mach 2 and maneuvers tight enough to kill a pilot in poor health. Typical armament is a high-speed automatic cannon, usually a Gatling-type weapon, and six to 12 heat-seeking and radar-guided air-to-air missiles that can kill another aircraft at more than 20 miles' distance. Some air superiority fighters also can be equipped with bombs and air-to-ground missiles for a secondary ground attack role. This is the kind of aircraft that characters will face if they're in an aircraft of their own and an air force absolutely wants them dead.

Examples: Eurofighter Typhoon, McDonnell Douglas F-15C Eagle, Mikoyan-Gurevich MiG-29 "Fulcrum", Saab JAS-39 Gripen

Jump Jet: Jump jets operate on a system of *vectored thrust*, in which pivoting nozzles divert a portion of a jet engine's exhaust in directions other than straight backward. These streams of superheated gas allow a pilot to shove her aircraft in directions that normal flight does not allow, even balancing the jet in a vertical hover like a helicopter or taking off with a heavy load of weapons from a runway as short as several hundred feet. The resulting design combines a fighter jet's speed with a helicopter's flexibility in choosing bases from which to operate, making jump jets favorites of military ground forces that move rapidly and want to take their air support with them wherever they go. In addition to the ubiquitous high-speed automatic cannon, a jump jet usually carries a combination of bombs and short-range air-to-air missiles to deal with a variety of threats. This is the kind of aircraft that characters will face if they make targets of themselves in the middle of an amphibious invasion, peacekeeping operation or other rapidly developing military endeavor.

Examples: BAE Systems GR9A Harrier II, Yakolev Yak-38 "Forger"

Jet Trainer: Militaries don't risk multi-million-dollar combat aircraft on unproven pilots. Instead, trainees who have proven their basic aviation skills in single-engine light aircraft graduate to advanced training in high-performance jets. Jet trainers have performance only slightly less than that of air superiority fighters, but lack the weapons and combat electronics of their deadly cousins. Similar civilian designs are marketed as high-performance aerobatic planes. A very wealthy private individual could theoretically own such an aircraft, but the expense is enough to deter all but the most dedicated collectors or those few stunt pilots who make a living performing demonstrations at air shows.

Examples: Aero L-39C Albatross, Mitsubishi T-2, Northrop T-38 Talon

Helicopters

Helicopters (or *rotary-wing aircraft*) do not have wings as conventional airplanes (*fixed-wing aircraft*) do. Instead, they rely on a set of rotating blades, or *rotors*, to provide lift. The rotation of these blades provides them with the speed necessary to generate air pressure in accordance with the Bernoulli effect, raising the helicopter on a column of air. By adjusting the angle of the rotors, the pilot can change the direction of this column, allowing the helicopter to fly in any direction. Most helicopters rely on turbines for power, with only a few very light designs using piston engines.

The turning rotors generate reverse torque that, left unopposed, would force the helicopter to rotate in the opposite direction. To counteract this and facilitate stable flight, most helicopters have a secondary *tail rotor*. This smaller set of blades rotates in a vertical plane like a light aircraft's propeller, pushing the tail of the helicopter sideways to counteract the main rotors' torque. By varying the force the tail rotor provides, the pilot can rotate the helicopter around its vertical axis. Some large transport helicopters instead use two main rotors, which turn in opposite directions, canceling each other's torque, and a few modern designs eschew a tail rotor in favor of a vectored thrust system in the tail.

Helicopters are fraught with disadvantages. They're frailer and more maintenance- and fuel-hungry than fixed-wing aircraft, slower, shorter-ranged and strapped for cargo capacity. Reliant on relatively dense air to stay aloft, they can't fly well above 10,000 feet in altitude. However, their maneuverability allows them to land and take off in any open space as small as one and a half times their rotor diameter. Helicopters find use in a variety of roles that exploit their lack of need for lengthy runways, from executive transport on the tops of skyscrapers to medical evacuation in dense forests.

Mechanics: Helicopters are among the most challenging vehicles that a single pilot can strap herself into. Accordingly, a character must have a separate Helicopters Specialty in the Drive Skill to fly one with her full dice pool. If she lacks this Specialty, she is considered completely untrained, may not use her Drive Skill and makes all rolls based on Attribute alone with a –1 untrained penalty — even if she has the Pilot Specialty that allows use of fixed-wing aircraft. Very few pilots learn to fly helicopters without first receiving basic fixed-wing training, so most characters with rotary-wing pilots' licenses will have at least two Specialties in Drive (though this is not required).

Observation Helicopter: Little more than a glass or polycarbonate bubble with an engine, rotors and landing skids, an observation helicopter is a minimalist design intended to carry a pilot and an observer/copilot aloft to look down at things. In the United States, helicopter traffic reports usually come from pilots in observation helicopters. In an emergency, an observation helicopter can carry another two passengers who are brave enough to dangle from (or, more safely, tie themselves to) its skids. Some service helicopters have pontoons in place of skids, allowing them to land on calm water.

Examples: Bell 47D, Hughes 269A, Robinson R22 Beta II, Schweizer 300CBi

Service Helicopter: The most common helicopters in the air today are service helicopters, medium-sized airframes that can be adapted to a variety of roles. Common uses include police air support, television

news broadcasts, air ambulance duty, VIP transport and search-and-rescue. Service helicopters can be stripped down to the bare metal of their fuselages to accommodate greater cargo loads or luxuriously appointed with leather seats and thick noise insulation. Militaries also use service helicopters as light transports, often adapting civilian designs with nothing more than a change of paint and avionics.

Examples: Bell 210 (the modern version of the ubiquitous "Huey"), Bell 206B-3 JetRanger III, Eurocopter BK-117C, Mil Mi-17 "Hip," Sikorsky S-62

Transport Helicopter: The largest helicopters are designed to lift relatively heavy loads — for a helicopter, 10 tons is immense. Transport helicopters are common in the military, where they carry both troops and equipment to and from the battlefield. In the civilian market, transport helicopters most commonly support industrial operations in remote areas, such as North Sea oil drilling and Siberian timber harvesting.

Examples: Aérospatiale Super Frelon, Eurocopter Super Puma, Mil Mi-26 "Halo," Sikorsky CH-53E Super Stallion

Attack Helicopter: Some helicopters are purely military, bearing the same relation to civilian models that fighter jets do to commuter planes. Attack helicopters are designed to fill the same role as ground attack fighters, skulking behind terrain and lunging from ambush to destroy enemy targets. A typical attack helicopter carries a light automatic cannon in a swiveling turret in its nose and a mix of anti-tank guided missiles and unguided rockets. As with fixed-wing military aircraft, attack helicopters are not available for civilian sale; most characters will only encounter them in adversarial roles. An attack helicopter is usually the first air support that shows up when military ground forces call for help.

Examples: AgustaWestland A129 *Mangusta*, Boeing AH-64D Apache Longbow, Denel Aviation Rooivalk, Kamov Ka-50 Black Shark

Gunship: Gunships are compromises between the combat capability of attack helicopters and the passenger capacity of service helicopters. A gunship carries much the same weapons mix as an attack helicopter, but a gunship gives up speed and maneuverability to carry troops to can drop off and then support. The term "gunship" also applies to military service helicopters converted to carry heavy armament, which lack the automatic cannon and have only Durability 3.

Examples: Eurocopter Cougar, Mil Mi-24 "Hind"

Parachutes

A parachute is a fabric device, usually made of nylon in the modern era or silk in years past, attached to a harness that a character wears around his body and thighs. Usually, a parachute is enclosed in a backpack rather than just carried around as a bundle of cloth and rope. To deploy a parachute, the wearer pulls a *ripcord*, which opens the pack and allows the wind of his fall to pull the parachute free. Once the chute deploys, the parachutist can pull on two sets of ropes, known as *risers*, to steer by spilling air from the canopy. Most parachutists carry two parachutes: a primary in a backpack and a smaller emergency reserve chute in a chest pack.

Combat Aircraft and Helicopters

Type	Durability	Size	Structure	Acceleration	Safe Speed	Max Speed	Handling	Occupants	Cost
Combat Airplanes									
Ground Attack Fighter	6	22	28	15 (20 mph/turn)	587 (400 mph)	953 (650 mph)	3	1	N/A
Air Superiority Fighter	3	20	23	51 (70 mph/turn)	1027 (700 mph)	2200 (1500 mph)	5	2	N/A
Jump Jet	2	19	21	37 (50 mph/turn)	733 (500 mph)	1093 (745 mph)	4	1	N/A
Jet Trainer	2	20	22	42 (57 mph/turn)	836 (570 mph)	1195 (815 mph)	4	2	•••••
Helicopters									
Observation	2	17	19	13 (18 mph/turn)	176 (120 mph)	227 (155 mph)	1	2	••••
Service	3	20	23	15 (21 mph/turn)	205 (140 mph)	279 (190 mph)	2	2+8	•••••
Transport	3	25	28	11 (15 mph/turn)	147 (100 mph)	257 (175 mph)	1	2+2	•••••
Attack	6	21	27	19 (26 mph/turn)	257 (175 mph)	330 (225 mph)	3	2	N/A
Gunship	6	22	28	12 (16 mph/turn)	242 (165 mph)	293 (200 mph)	1	2+7	N/A

Properly packing a parachute in its container for release requires a Wits + Crafts roll. Professional parachute technicians (e.g., characters with Parachute Specialties in Crafts) are known as *riggers*. A failed roll inflicts a –2 penalty on all further rolls with the parachute until it's successfully repacked. A dramatic failure increases this penalty to –5. Exceptional success, on the other hand, provides a +1 bonus.

Deploying a parachute requires a standard action and a Wits + Athletics roll. Failure means that the character must try again next turn — not a problem unless he's only a few turns away from hitting the ground. With a dramatic failure, the chute deploys improperly, sending the character into an uncontrolled tumble without slowing him to a survivable impact speed. If he has a reserve chute, he must first detach, or *cut away*, the primary chute, requiring another action and another Wits + Athletics roll. Parachutes on ejection seats have automatic systems that deploy themselves after ejection, in case the pilot is unconscious; these systems have an effective Wits + Athletics dice pool of 5 for this purpose only.

The altitude at which a character opens his chute can be important. A human being at terminal velocity falls at a speed of about 200 miles per hour (300 yards per turn) if curled up. A spread-eagled position reduces this speed to about 125 miles per hour (180 yards per turn). As a parachute takes a few precious seconds to slow its occupant to a survivable speed, opening the parachute too low can be dangerous. Assuming a character has already reached terminal velocity, opening the chute at too low an altitude still doesn't prevent damage on impact: 10 lethal damage for an altitude of 30 yards or less, reduced by 1 for every additional 30 yards of altitude. (Per p. 179, the **World of Darkness Rulebook**, terminal velocity falling damage is 10 lethal.)

Once a character is "under the silk," he falls at about 40 miles per hour (60 yards per turn). During this time, he may attempt to steer his flight toward a specific landing point. This requires an extended Dexterity + Athletics roll (successes dependent on the distance to, and size of, the target; one roll equals one turn).

Upon landing, a character must make one final roll to hit the ground safely. This requires another Dexterity + Athletics roll, this time at a –2 penalty. Success indicates that the character lands without injury, though he still suffers a Knockdown effect (see p. 168, the **World of Darkness Rulebook**) unless he achieves a dramatic success. With a dramatic failure, he suffers three points of lethal damage.

Very Large Vehicles

Most of the vehicles described in the preceding sections are small and inexpensive enough that a single character, or at most a small group of well-heeled characters, can afford to own and operate one. Some conveyances, though, are outside both the financial and practical reach of the street-level characters on whom the World of Darkness focuses, and are large enough to function as the setting for scenes rather than the focus. These vehicles include commercial ships (cruise ships, tramp freighters, supertankers), warships (destroyers, guided missile frigates, submarines, aircraft carriers) and rail vehicles (subways, freight trains). Immense aircraft such as airliners and large transports also fall into this category, though these are at least maneuverable on a scale comparable to that of other air vehicles.

In most scenes involving one of these vehicles, action will occur on or around the vehicle, with characters interacting with it in one of the following ways:

The vehicle is going somewhere, and the characters are trying to catch it and board it. In this case, successful pursuit is pretty much assured so long as the characters have a halfway decent vehicle. Most commercial ships have a top speed of less than 20 miles per hour, with the fastest warships moving at perhaps double that rate. The drama comes in getting alongside the target vehicle and leaping onto it, which requires a standard jumping action (see p. 66, the **World of Darkness Rulebook**). The Storyteller may assess penalties to this roll based on the relative size of the vehicles, weather conditions or other factors. A character who fails is considered to have jumped from a moving vehicle (see p. 143, the **World of Darkness Rulebook**).

The vehicle is going somewhere, and the characters are trying to escape from within it. This chain of events occurs on the vehicle, with the characters presumably opposed by enemies, security systems or the difficulties inherent in navigating through a cramped and unfamiliar environment.

The vehicle is about to run into something, and the characters are trying to take control of the vehicle and avert the disaster. The best way for a Storyteller to handle this is to throw away vehicle Traits like Maximum Speed and Handling and simply declare, "the cruise ship will collide with the supertanker in eight turns." This gives the characters a fixed time limit in which to solve (or escape) an immediate problem. Controlling a very large vessel is more akin to operating heavy machinery than driving, and requires either an Intelligence + Crafts or Intelligence + Computers roll, depending on whether the vehicle's controls are primarily mechanical or electronic. If the character lacks an appropriate specialty (such as Shiphandling or Railroads), she must rely on her existing knowledge of technology and make a best guess as to which cryptically labeled controls do what, suffering a –4 penalty to all rolls. Because of inertia, altering the course of a 35,000-ton freighter takes several turns (really, several *minutes*, but compressing time in the interest of dramatic tension won't hurt in this instance), so the Storyteller may wish to require an extended Skill check.

The characters are doing something else on board the vehicle, and it's nothing more than the setting for the current scene. In this case, no special considerations are required unless the characters engage in combat in a sensitive part of the vehicle (see below). For Storytellers who prefer to be prepared, deck or floor plans of many large vehicles are available with a quick Web search.

Combat and Damage

Most characters have access to weapons that can technically damage a very large vehicle, but even several hundred .50 caliber bullet holes pose no real impediment to the functioning of a 900-foot-long ship. Any damage to such a vessel (short of an uncontrolled fire or the detonation of several hundred pounds of high explosive) is inconsequential to the ship's overall structural integrity. However, the destruction of certain critical components, such as engines or controls, can cripple the vehicle without physically destroying it. If characters attempt such sabotage, bear in mind the scale of the machinery that they intend to destroy. The marine diesel engines of a freighter may themselves be objects of Size 20 or greater.

If characters do find themselves in the middle of a naval battle or similar large-scale combat that has the potential to actually destroy their vessel, the Storyteller may find it easiest to treat the combat as a backdrop against which the characters must accomplish objectives of a more personal nature. Keeping track of several thousand combatants and their guided missiles, bombs and cannon is an exercise in futility. Keep the action on a bloodily intimate level, with occasional nearby explosions and frantic damage control teams providing hazards or complications.

The Need for Speed

Shade-tree mechanics and professional racing teams alike have made an industry out of enhancing motorized vehicles' performance for the better part of a century. With sufficient time, skill and money, virtually any vehicle can be upgraded to outperform its unmodified siblings.

Modifying a vehicle requires an extended Intelligence + Crafts action. Each roll equals two hours of work. The number of successes required depends on the vehicle's Size and the complexity of the task being attempted. Each of the following modifications has a base number of successes determined by the vehicle's Size that applies to all ground vehicles. For armored vehicles and all water vehicles, double this number. For civilian aircraft, multiply this number by five. For military aircraft and helicopters, multiply this number by *10*. This reflects the relative complexity of vehicles and the additional care that a mechanic must take to avoid breaking something critical.

Before performing the work, a mechanic must have the performance parts he's going to install. Each of the following modifications also has an associated Cost determined by the vehicle's own Cost. The minimum Cost for any modification is •, and a modification with a Cost higher than ••••• is impossible. Each modification's Cost is also increased by +1 for aircraft.

Acceleration Upgrade

Getting off the starting line faster is critically important in competitive events such as drag racing, and enthusiasts will spend thousands of dollars in pursuit of shaving a few tenths of a second off an elapsed quarter-mile time. This modification can be applied up to five times.

Effect: The vehicle's Acceleration is increased by 10% of its original value.

Successes Required: Equal to vehicle's Size for first instance; +5 for each successive instance.

Cost: Equal to vehicle's Cost –2 for first two instances; vehicle's Cost –1 for successive instances.

Speed Upgrade

Top speed isn't as important as acceleration in most pursuits or races, but owning a 200-mph car does confer a certain amount of bragging rights. This modification can be applied up to three times.

Effect: The vehicle's Maximum Speed is increased by 10% of its original value. The vehicle's Safe Speed is unaffected.

Successes Required: Equal to vehicle's Size for first instance; +5 for each successive instance.

Cost: Equal to vehicle's Cost –2 for first instance, Cost –1 for second instance and Cost for third instance.

Handling Upgrade

Being able to go 200 mph doesn't mean much from a practical point of view if the car can't dodge potholes and pedestrians. This modification can be applied up to twice.

Effect: The vehicle's Handling is increased by 1, to a maximum of 6.

Successes Required: Equal to vehicle's Size x2 for first instance, vehicle's Size x4 for second instance. With the second instance, the vehicle's Safe Speed is also increased by 10% of its original value.

Cost: Equal to vehicle's Cost –1 for first instance, Cost +2 for second instance.

Limit: This modification may not be applied to a vehicle with a negative Handling trait.

Police Package

As described in the "Cop tires, cop suspension, cop shocks . . ." sidebar (p. 133), police vehicles are subject to a wide-ranging series of modifications. Most police departments choose from only a handful of standard designs, but some departments have modified more unexpected vehicles to act as interceptors or undercover cruisers. This modification includes all of the options described in the abovementioned sidebar. Note that police markings are illegal if the vehicle doesn't actually belong to a police department, and most suppliers of this equipment sell only to law enforcement representatives.

Effect: The vehicle's Handling is increased by 1, to a maximum of 5. The vehicle's Acceleration and Safe Speed are increased by 10% of their original values, and Top Speed is increased by 20%. In addition, the vehicle gains all of the optional equipment described in the "Cop tires, cop suspension, cop shocks . . ." sidebar.

Successes Required: Equal to vehicle's Size x3.

Cost: Equal to vehicle's Cost +1, maximum Cost •••.

Limit: This modification may be applied only to passenger cars, sports cars (except supercars), light trucks and vans.

Security Package

With the widespread threat of violence in the modern world, dignitaries and businesspeople alike frequently invest in vehicles modified to keep them safe from assassination or kidnapping attempts. Such conveyances begin life as normal designs, and a secondary objective of their extensive alterations is to keep them looking as standard and unassuming as possible. This modification begins with the addition of ballistic material inside the vehicle's body panels and the replacement of all window glass with layered polycarbonate compounds, to stop bullets and shrapnel. Additional layers of armor protect the vehicle's critical systems. Run-flat tires (see p. 140) replace the vehicle's original rubber. Many conversions also include fire extinguishers

bracketed to the inside of the passenger compartment, clamps or safes for handguns or submachine guns and encrypted cell phones or radios.

Effect: The vehicle gains three points of Durability and run-flat tires. The vehicle's windows are upgraded to Durability 4 and Structure 7, the doors to Durability 6 and Structure 9 and the gas tank to Durability 8 and Structure 10. The vehicle's Handling is reduced by 1 (to a minimum of –1), and the Maximum Speed and Acceleration are each reduced by one-quarter of their original values.

Successes Required: Equal to vehicle's Size x5.

Cost: Equal to vehicle's Cost +1, maximum Cost ••••.

Limit: This modification may be applied only to passenger cars, sports cars (except supercars), light trucks and vans.

Cosmetic Customization

From Brooklyn pimps to Moscow street racers, subcultures around the world consider vehicles status symbols and each subculture has its own set of standards to judge such possessions. The possible ways in which custom shops can alter a vehicle's appearance are the subject of numerous magazines and television shows and range from subtle tastefulness to eye-searing flamboyance. Imagination and money are the only practical limits to this modification.

Effect: When applying this modification, choose one specific subculture. The vehicle gives its owner or driver a +1 bonus to appropriate Socialize and Streetwise rolls when dealing with that subculture. The Storyteller has the final say as to what constitutes a subculture that appreciates a vehicle's custom appearance — Old World Mafia enforcers are unlikely to be impressed by the latest in hydraulic, metal-flake, neon-lit, gold-trimmed, low-riding bling-bling. On the down side, a customized vehicle grants a +2 bonus to any observers trying to identify, visually track or investigate the vehicle, and may inflict a –1 penalty on Socialize and Streetwise rolls against an observer who finds the vehicle particularly silly or tasteless.

Successes Required: Equal to vehicle's Size x2.

Cost: Equal to vehicle's Cost –1. Characters can choose to spend less, to a minimum of Cost •, but each such level of discount inflicts a cumulative –2 penalty on each roll.

Vehicle Hazards

Heavy machinery has some unique dangers, particularly when it's moving at 80 miles an hour. The following rules collect a variety of special situations in which characters may find themselves when fighting or attempting other antics in or around vehicles.

Industrial Roadkill

Due to the larger vehicles' exceptional mass, many vehicles presented in this chapter will kill a pedestrian unfortunate enough to be hit by one. A tractor-trailer rig moving at highway speed inflicts a pool of over 30 dice of damage. Fortunately, most vehicles of Size 17 or larger (except steamrollers and forklifts) are built high enough off the ground for a quick-thinking adult to drop flat to avoid being struck in a collision. A victim who doesn't successfully get out of the way will be fortunate if his next of kin can identify his pulverized remains.

Dropping flat to avoid being run over by such a vehicle is a reflexive action that requires a successful Dexterity + Composure roll. This roll suffers a cumulative –1 penalty for every full 20 miles per hour the vehicle is moving, and is only possible for characters of Size 5 or smaller. A character who successfully drops flat may then make a Strength + Athletics roll at an equivalent penalty to grab the underside of the vehicle as it passes over him, which may set him up for future heroics.

Propellers

When an aircraft's propeller is turning, its blades create a danger zone two yards wide. The force of a propeller isn't strong enough to pull an unsecured solid object or character into it, but anything or anyone thrown through the propeller suffers an attack roll with a pool of its own Size +4. The propeller, which has Size 4, Durability 2 and Structure 6, receives damage equal to the Durability +1 or Stamina +1 of the object or character.

Boat propellers are much smaller but more durable, as their designers expect them to periodically encounter solid hazards. Boat propellers aren't strong enough to suck in characters, either, but anyone forced into the arc of a propeller suffers an attack pool of seven dice.

Turbines

A turbine engine's blades spin at 10,000 revolutions per minute. In aircraft turbines, this generates enough suction to pull in small objects. Pilots call the resulting hazard FOD: Foreign Object Damage. Characters and unsecured items in front of an operating turbine are in danger of being "FODded in" and puréed.

A turbine has a danger zone extending five yards from its front end in a 90-degree arc. For every turn that an unsecured item spends in this zone, the Storyteller rolls the zone's Size. This roll gains a +1 bonus for every full yard of distance between the object and the turbine. Failure means that the turbine's intake sucks in the object. Players must make this same roll for any characters in the danger zone, but may add a character's Strength to the roll if she's hanging onto something immobile with at least one hand.

A character or object sucked into a turbine inflicts damage equal to twice its own Size directly to the vehicle, whose Durability does not protect against this "attack." However, the object also suffers damage equal to half the *vehicle's* size, against which Durability protects but body armor does not. A player whose character is about to be puréed in such a fashion may make a Strength + Wits roll for the incipient victim to grab the edge of the intake and hold on until rescued.

Driver's Education

Most adults in modern industrial nations at least know how to drive a conventional automobile in day-to-day traffic, but few adults are specifically trained in high-performance race or pursuit driving techniques, and the operation of more specialized vehicles is often a profession in and of itself. The following section details the most common sources from which characters might receive basic and advanced instruction in various types of vehicles.

You Want Me To Drive A *What*?

Some vehicles are sufficiently idiosyncratic that the Drive Skill doesn't apply to their controls. All vehicles controlled with gross body movement and powered solely by the operator or natural forces, such as bicycles, canoes, windsurfers, hang gliders and parachutes, depend on the driver's balance and general fitness and are controlled with the Athletics Skill. All larger wind-powered craft, from balloons to schooners, rely on the pilot's understanding of waves, wind and ropes as well as the Survival Skill. Finally, the operation of remote-piloted vehicles such as military surveillance drones falls under the Computer Skill. In all such cases, no Specialty is necessary for a character to exercise his full dice pool in such maneuvers.

Ground Vehicles

The **World of Darkness Rulebook** assumes that any character who grew up in a modern society is capable of driving a car under normal road conditions without penalty. A character with this degree of proficiency (none, in other words) has no specialized training, either having taken a driver's education course in high school or having learned from friends or family members. Likewise, training in how to ride a motorcycle or drive a powerboat is sufficiently commonplace that no skill is required for basic proficiency. The following general types of training deal with more specialized vehicles or enhance basic skills with common ones.

Commercial Driving School: Specialized schools exist across the industrialized world to certify drivers in the safe operation of vehicles with mass, inertia and size issues that ordinary commuters rarely consider. Commercial driving school, or "trucker school," typically lasts six weeks and costs •, and many shipping companies will pay for a new employee's Commercial Driver's License (CDL) education if he signs a two-year or longer contract. Additional formal training beyond a basic CDL certifies the driver's ability to transport hazardous materials.

Military Armored Vehicle Training: Training in the use of military vehicles is limited to those crewmen who are actually assigned to operate and maintain the vehicles. Armor school lasts between eight and 12 weeks in most armies, after which the soldier is assigned to an armor unit for at least two years (anything else would be a waste of the expensive training he just received).

Police Pursuit Training: During their initial training, law enforcement cadets receive about a week's worth of instruction in high-speed driving, pursuit through traffic and vehicle stops (controlled ramming). This instruction confers no special abilities or certification, but ensures that most patrol officers have at least Drive 1 or 2, possibly with a Specialty such as Pursuit or Ramming. Independent schools offer similar training for police forces that don't have their own training programs, but these schools are not open to the general public and departments pay for the training out of their own funds.

Security Driver School: While police training programs teach their students how to conduct a pursuit, bodyguard and security driver programs handle the other side of the equation: how to evade pursuers and ambushes. The primary objective of security driving is to get the vehicle and passengers away from threats, not to engage in vehicular combat that may leave the driver's own vehicle disabled in the enemy's gun sights. Secondary topics include shooting from the driver's seat and inspecting a vehicle for sabotage or explosives before using it. A character who's gone through such training (one to two weeks, Cost •••) is likely to have at least Drive 2 with a Specialty such as Avoiding Pursuit, as well as the Stunt Driver Merit.

Racing School: Many professional race drivers got started at local demolition derbies and drag strips, building their skills through practice for years before acquiring a team or a sponsor. Schools do exist, though, to provide a formal introduction to motor sports in a controlled environment. Such training is expensive, not least because of the high price of liability insurance and replacement vehicles for the school. Racing school typically lasts one to two weeks and costs ••••. Characters who've gone through racing school (and maintained their skills in competition afterward) are unlikely to have less than Drive 3.

Rail Transportation: Learning how to operate a rail vehicle isn't hard, but instruction is hard to come by and hands-on training is largely inaccessible to anyone who isn't already employed by a railroad or mass transit authority. Engineers and motormen — two different titles for the people who operate trains and subways, respectively — are typically employees who've spent two to five years in other positions in such companies before being promoted and trained as operators. Training periods, often consisting of informal apprenticeships and on-the-job instruction rather than formal classroom lessons, vary widely between organizations.

Watercraft

Characters who are used to driving cars can pick up on the controls of a standard motorboat with little-

to-no difficulty, and even larger cabin cruisers and small motor yachts aren't that much different (though specialized knowledge may be helpful in interpreting the navigational radar or understanding which ripples indicate a reef just ahead). For larger vessels, though, understanding the array of controls and readouts requires extensive training in shiphandling. Only two sources for this knowledge exist, both of which require significant time commitments.

Commercial Shipping: A character who signs on to work as a deckhand on one of the tens of thousands of commercial vessels plying the world's sea lanes shouldn't look forward to becoming a captain in his own right any time soon. New merchant mariners usually start out in the dark and greasy confines of the engine room, learning how to maintain giant marine diesels and other systems that keep a vessel afloat. Promotion only comes quickly to those with education, though it's possible to pick up a working knowledge of a vessel's controls over six months to a year at sea. Obtaining full-fledged captain's certification, which entitles the character to seek worldwide employment as a ship's master, requires a bachelor's degree in an appropriate field (naval architecture, meteorology, oceanography) and about a decade's worth of experience.

Naval Training: Naval officers whose careers take them into the surface warfare or submarine warfare areas of expertise receive months or years of training in shiphandling and how to give orders to the dozens of sailors who actually man their vessels' controls. The enlisted personnel who receive those orders begin with more specialized duties but often cross-train as they advance through the ranks.

Aircraft

Air travel is an everyday event for people around the globe, but the complexities of powered flight and the international regulations on air traffic leave piloting to a privileged elite. On-the-job training is potentially expensive and fatal, so pilots learn on the ground first.

Flight School: For ordinary citizens interested in learning to fly, the best route is to enroll in flight schools, found at airports around the world. Before a student first straps into an airplane for a supervised flight under the watchful eyes of an instructor, she typically undergoes several weeks of classroom studies on the principles of aviation and the basic flight controls of aircraft. To earn a private pilot's license, she must pass both written and practical tests, including actual flight under clear weather in daytime conditions. In addition to entry-level flight training, some schools offer additional instruction in other aircraft. Flight school for a private pilot's license costs ••• and requires three weeks for full-time students or three to six months for once-a-week courses. Costs for advanced instruction are the same, but training lasts two to three times as long. A character with a Pilot Specialty in the Drive Skill has almost certainly gone to flight school.

Undergraduate Pilot Programs: Some universities offer programs that prepare their graduates for careers in commercial aviation. In addition to flight training as described above, students earn bachelor's degrees in aerospace engineering, meteorology and related fields. Such programs are the primary career entry route for aspiring professional pilots who don't want to commit to military service first, and are as expensive and time-consuming as any other college degree. A graduate of such a program likely has Drive 3 with a Pilot Specialty, as well as Science 2 with a Specialty in one of the fields mentioned above.

Military Aviation: Air power has been a dominant factor in conventional warfare since World War II. Militaries around the world are constantly training new officers to handle the high-performance combat planes and helicopters that project force on an international level, as well as to fly the myriad transport and support aircraft that keep supplies and information moving. In most militaries, pilots must first be commissioned officers, which requires a bachelor's degree and six to nine months of basic military training. Introductory military flight school teaches the equivalent of a private pilot's license, after which a pilot who hasn't yet washed out goes on to an advanced school that teaches him to fly fighters, helicopters or transport and support aircraft. Training in multiple advanced flight schools is rare, as a pilot may fly the same specific model of aircraft his whole career. The entire process takes 10 to 18 months, after which the character has a multi-year service obligation. A military-trained pilot should have at least Drive 3 with a Pilot Specialty (and possibly a second Specialty appropriate to the kind of aircraft he flew), as well as at least Survival 2 from escape and evasion training.

Vehicles in Horror Stories

Amid the technical minutiae of turbochargers and ailerons, it's easy to forget that this chapter is part of a book for a horror game. On the surface, there's nothing innately horrifying about an SUV, and it's difficult to be scared of an inflatable boat unless you're already afraid of the water. However, vehicles have held central roles in stories of the supernatural for centuries. Consider the following ways in which the machinery presented in this chapter can enhance, or even be the focus of, your stories:

Ride Like a Demon

The speed advantage that vehicles provide makes them the best possible means of escape from all manner of threats. When characters need to get away from a pack of slavering werewolves, a fast car can be a lifesaver,

and minor mechanical problems can turn into terminal complications. Horror stories are full of examples of this sort of desperate chase, and throwing a malfunction at the characters can give the technically inclined ones a chance to save the day while their more combative allies hold off the threat for those last few precious seconds necessary to reconnect the fuel line or bypass the short circuit.

On Through the Night

In a longer-term horror survival situation such as a worldwide zombie uprising, a good vehicle is worth its weight in gold. A nomadic lifestyle may offer a far better chance of survival than a fortified existence, forcing characters to scavenge their way through a post-apocalyptic wasteland. The ideal transportation for such a scenario is rugged enough to withstand the paranormal threats of the day, capable of moving off-road and easy to repair (or find parts for) and keep fueled. In a situation in which staying in one place for too long can mean death, finding spare parts takes on a whole new importance.

A nomadic existence isn't just for human survivors of a global disaster. Various supernatural beings may find it easier to live on the road (or the high seas) than to stay in one place where their differences may eventually come to light. Some supernatural beings keep moving to keep one step ahead of hunters or the consequences of their actions, while others are just afraid of discovery. Again, for such characters, an appropriate vehicle is a mandatory possession, particularly if they require special equipment or need specific protection that a motel room or highway overpass might not provide.

She's a Good Ship

Members of transportation-related professions and speed-obsessed subcultures around the world personify their vehicles. Mariners and pilots alike refer to their conveyances with the feminine pronoun (except Russians, to whom ships are always masculine). Automotive enthusiasts secretly and somewhat abashedly name their cars. Military professionals of all stripes personalize their combat machines with nose art, kill markers and other modern interpretations of ancient war paint designed to express the warrior ethos and boast of past exploits.

In the World of Darkness, where inanimate objects can have spirits more powerful than many characters, this sort of animistic behavior may have unexpected consequences, even for characters who are spiritually blind. A painstakingly restored Douglas DC-3 may perform better than possible (from a strictly mechanical standpoint) for a long-time owner who's sweated and bled to restore the plane to pristine condition, but fly like a wounded whale for any pilot who doesn't properly respect its age and history. Players and characters should never rely on such occurrences, but Storytellers should feel free to reward consistent roleplaying with occasional instances of odd fortune.

Individuals able to deal directly with the spirit realms, such as werewolves and mages, might establish even stronger bonds with vehicles that they treat as equal partners. This may lead to some unsettling bargains, particularly once a vehicle experiences combat and develops a taste for blood. Demands for sacrifice may begin with roadkill ("Hit the squirrel!") and gradually escalate. A particularly strong spirit may go so far as to animate its corporeal form, autonomously hunting down lesser vehicles or even living prey.

Carry-On Baggage

Large vehicles are ideal settings for locked-room mysteries. When an inexplicable crisis happens in the middle of the North Atlantic or at 30,000 feet above the ground, characters can't simply call the police or get off at the next stop. Something may happen to the vehicle's crew, requiring the characters to take control of the vehicle — or the crew may be perfectly fine but unable to stop the vehicle or alter its course. A sudden storm may knock out the vehicle's internal lighting for a few seconds, and the return of illumination reveals some passengers missing — or added.

Highways to Hell

Sometimes the longest journey can begin with one wrong turn. Stories of trails and roads that appear at certain times of night, leading to places best left unseen by human eyes, predate the invention of most vehicles. If such routes do exist, they may have changed with the times, now appearing as shadowed side streets or ill-marked highway exit ramps. Characters who make such a wrong turn may not realize their error at first — until they find themselves in a world with a superficially normal appearance but subtle details that are horribly wrong. On such a trip, the characters' vehicle may be the only safe way home, as the supernatural rules of such journeys often require travelers to return as they came or not at all.

Other travel arteries may not go anywhere abnormal, but are ill-favored in other ways. A laborer may fall into wet cement during bridge construction and be entombed in his last work. A shipwreck may likewise forever stain the water around a reef with the blood of its victims. An airliner that slams into a mountainside may later be seen cruising along its intended flight path or unloading its spectral passengers at a decommissioned airport gate. The ghosts bound to such sites may warn fellow travelers of hazards or attempt to lure them to their deaths, depending on the ghosts' disposition.

Who's In the Trunk?

Haunted vehicles are almost as common as haunted roads in urban folklore. Any craft in which someone has died may carry the essence of that death or serve as an anchor for the ghost. A previous owner may return

from the grave to reclaim his prized possession, or an innocent victim may demand justice from her killer's heir. Larger vehicles aren't immune to such hauntings either, and ghostly passengers and crew walk the passages of ships and trains around the world. The spiritual corruption of a vehicle in which multiple people died at once, such as a semitrailer used to haul a cargo of suffocating illegal immigrants, can be a powerful source of negative resonance.

Ship of the Dead

Sometimes the vehicle itself *is* the ghost. The *Flying Dutchman* is the most famous ghost ship — by some accounts cursed to sail eternally because of her captain's ill-considered oath in a storm or a deal he made with the Devil to run a trade route in record time. The railroads of Urbana, Ohio, see the appearance of Abraham Lincoln's funeral train every April, crewed and guarded by skeletal engineers and soldiers. Ghostly truckers and their rigs haunt America's interstate highways, still trying to make the deliveries that they died striving to complete.

Alternately, a vessel may appear as did the *Mary Celeste*, functioning normally, but without passengers or crew. Characters traveling in a remote area may encounter such a derelict, or investigators may need to explain the disappearance of an airplane's flight crew and its subsequent perfect landing hundreds of miles from its intended destination.

Ill-Met by Streetlight

Before modern science pushed back the shadows of the highways, travelers told tales of encountering mysterious strangers at crossroads or on deserted streets. Dark-clad merchants offered bargains too good to be true, and fey and terrible knights issued challenges with rewards worth a king's ransom. Such beings may have adapted to the modern era, opening all-night truck stops selling any needful thing or daring characters with fast cars to engage in the ultimate drag race.

Black Helicopters

Sometimes the mere appearance of a strange vehicle can be cause for concern. Modern conspiracy theory is rife with tales of malevolent government agents disembarking from blacked-out helicopters or Cadillacs to enact shadowy cover-ups. Mirrored windows can conceal a car's driver from prying eyes, revealing only a distorted silhouette that somehow doesn't quite match human proportions. Sails on the horizon can shadow a ship for days or weeks, never drawing close enough to be identified but always staying with its quarry. Encounters of this sort can breed paranoia all out of proportion to the actual threat, if any, that the vehicle and its occupants represent.

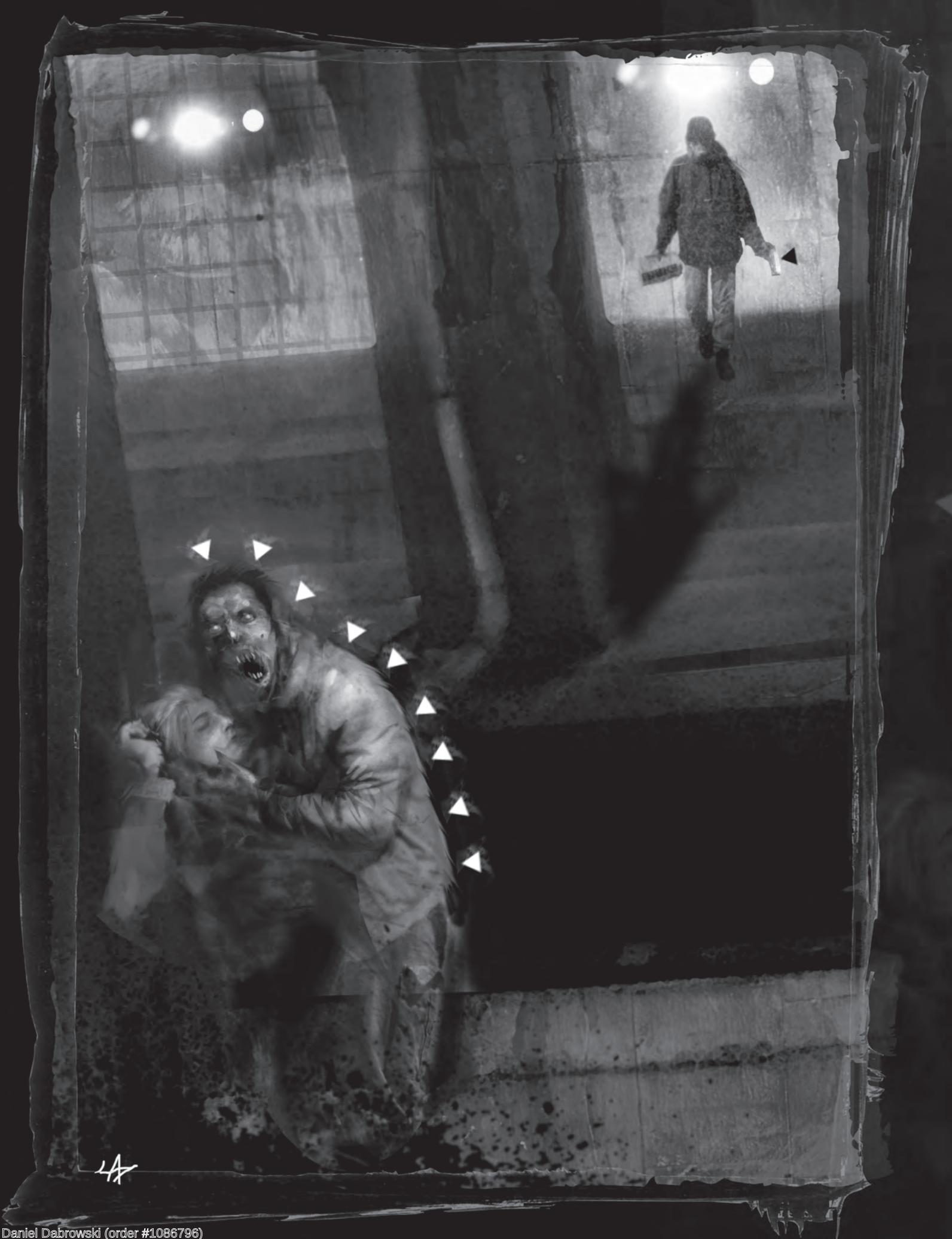
Fighting in Confined Spaces

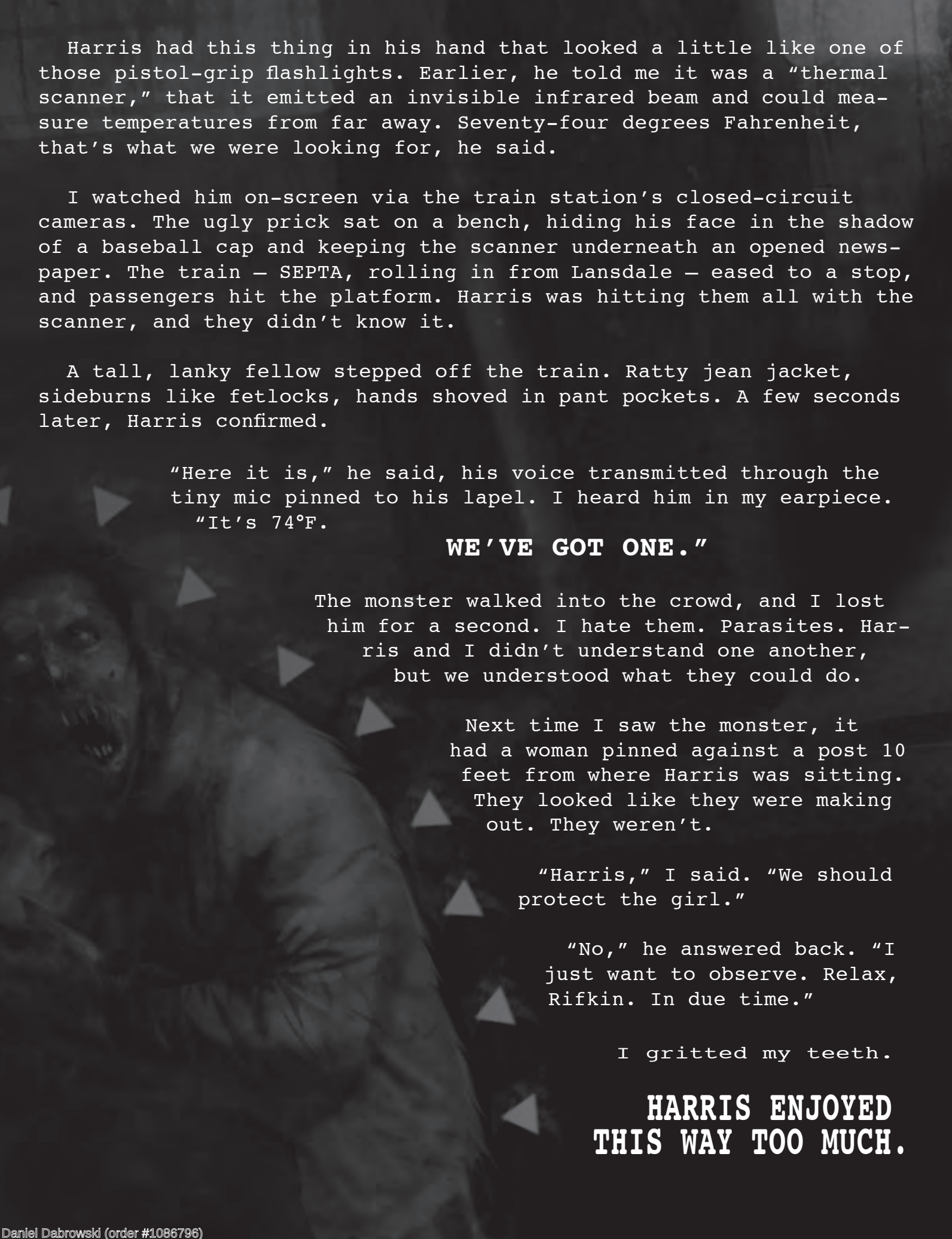
The normal Storytelling rules assume that combat takes place in settings large enough for all combatants to maneuver without restriction. Some situations force combatants to fight through tight quarters, hampered as much by chairs and doorways as by enemy attacks. Any space smaller than 10 feet across — room for two combatants at arm's reach — has a minimum total Size of character and weapon. A character who exceeds this minimum suffers a penalty equal to the difference to Defense, Initiative and all physical actions (including attacks). Sample confined spaces include the following:

Confined Space	Minimum Total Size
Car trunk, 55-gallon drum, subcompact car	3
Coffin, compact or sports car, phone booth	4
Bathroom, light airplane, mid-size car	5
Cluttered bedroom, full-size car, SUV	6
Airliner, shark cage	7

Thus, a Size 7 werewolf swinging a Size 3 axe at a fellow passenger of a mid-size car suffers a –5 penalty.

Note: A character of Size 5 or smaller never suffers these penalties to attempts to operate a vehicle. Pilot's seats are not built for giants, though, so characters of Size 6 and up suffer full penalties to these Dexterity-based rolls.





Harris had this thing in his hand that looked a little like one of those pistol-grip flashlights. Earlier, he told me it was a "thermal scanner," that it emitted an invisible infrared beam and could measure temperatures from far away. Seventy-four degrees Fahrenheit, that's what we were looking for, he said.

I watched him on-screen via the train station's closed-circuit cameras. The ugly prick sat on a bench, hiding his face in the shadow of a baseball cap and keeping the scanner underneath an opened newspaper. The train — SEPTA, rolling in from Lansdale — eased to a stop, and passengers hit the platform. Harris was hitting them all with the scanner, and they didn't know it.

A tall, lanky fellow stepped off the train. Ratty jean jacket, sideburns like fetlocks, hands shoved in pant pockets. A few seconds later, Harris confirmed.

"Here it is," he said, his voice transmitted through the tiny mic pinned to his lapel. I heard him in my earpiece. "It's 74°F.

WE'VE GOT ONE."

The monster walked into the crowd, and I lost him for a second. I hate them. Parasites. Harris and I didn't understand one another, but we understood what they could do.

Next time I saw the monster, it had a woman pinned against a post 10 feet from where Harris was sitting. They looked like they were making out. They weren't.

"Harris," I said. "We should protect the girl."

"No," he answered back. "I just want to observe. Relax, Rifkin. In due time."

I gritted my teeth.

HARRIS ENJOYED THIS WAY TOO MUCH.

Chapter Five: Gear and Accessories

"There is no victory at bargain basement prices."
– Dwight D. Eisenhower

Equipment can give a character an edge over those who oppose her, pushing her that extra inch past her adversaries. A wiretap may allow her access to secret information. A pair of handcuffs may subdue the slaves of her enemy while she pursues her primary prey or while she tortures his thralls to find out just where the monster sleeps. Even something as simple as an ammo holder strapped to the butt of a shotgun may afford her that bleeding edge — one that comes in the form of the single additional shell with which she dispatches her attacker. Yes, one can wade into the field of battle with nothing more than fists and fury, but a character will find it gives her no edge.

Gear Up

This chapter details a number of items that might help a character even the odds in her favor. Some of these items modify existing weapons, whereas other items are accessories that may give her the upper hand before, during and after battle.

Most of the equipment listed in this chapter can help a character complete a task more easily. Usually, this means the item provides a bonus to the character's pertinent dice pool, such as a scope attached to a rifle that grants bonus dice to a character's attack at long range, diminishing any associated penalties. These bonuses range from +1 to +5 and are listed with the item's description. Also listed are an item's Durability, Size, Structure and Cost. All of these things affect just how effective an item is at its job, as well as just how much damage the item can sustain if it comes under a concerted attack.

It's important to recognize that this is all relative. The statistics listed for each item aren't firm. They may change, depending on circumstances specific to the story. The aforementioned scope might have a scratched lens or be poorly mounted upon the firearm. As a consequence, the scope may not provide its full bonus to the shooter. The scope might have a lesser Structure as a result, as well. If the scope is an older piece of equipment, perhaps it's already suffered the dings and dents of frequent use, and has a resultant –1 modifier to its Structure; unless the seller is a rip-off artist, he'll accommodate the price of the lesser item, meaning it might undergo a –1 modifier to Cost, as well.

Alternately, consider a pair of high-grade binoculars: not the kind a character would buy at Wal-Mart or Sears, but ones he'd have to special order. Perhaps the binoculars offer extremely high magnification and image stabilization, and allow for a viewing distance and width three or four times that of most binoculars. The item might be ruggedized and encased in a rubber molding to keep the binoculars safe in case of a drop or tumble. Such a device would surely grant greater bonuses than the normal binoculars (listed below), and it might have a higher Durability *and* Structure (+1 to both) as a result. Of course, these bonuses will also tack on one or two extra zeroes to the price tag. Such a pair of binoculars might cost as much as a pre-owned *car* (Cost •••).

What's listed below are the "normal" statistics associated with the particular items. Those elements may change at a Storyteller's discretion or during the chronicle. At the time of purchase, as the item's effectiveness goes up, so does Cost. As the Cost goes down, so do its valued bonuses. Some items may become so effective that their price tag goes beyond that which Resources may afford. Such Costs are left to the whim of the seller, and may require a character to pay in favors or in blood.

For more information on "Equipment," see p. 139 of the **World of Darkness Rulebook**.

Firearm Accessories

A gun doesn't need much to operate beyond a bullet and a finger willing to pull the trigger. That essential combination can be deadly at over 1,100-feet-per-second. However, characters may want to give themselves an extra edge with some of the equipment listed below.

Bipods

Durability 2, Size 2, Structure 4, Cost •

Shooting from a long distance isn't easy, even with a mounted scope. If the barrel wavers by mere millimeters, the shot can go wide by many yards. Long-range shooters such as big-game hunters or snipers tend to fit their weapons with bipods. Most bipods actually bolt to the bottoms of rifles, and fold up beneath the front of the stocks. When the shooter is about to take his shot, he opens up the bipod and rests the weapon on a flat surface. This gives him a greater stability when lining up his shot.

When used, a bipod reduces the penalty for firing at both medium *and* long range by one. A telescopic scope may further reduce these penalties accordingly.

A bipod also grants the shooter stability when using autofire. Assume that the bipod can reduce a penalty by one when firing a burst from an automatic weapon.

A shooter might also use a tripod on his weapon, though a tripod offers no appreciable difference from a bipod. Some rifles will not operate properly unless the bipods are deployed. The bipods still grant these weapons the appropriate bonuses to shoot. More information about such weapons can be found on p. 50.

Ear Protection

Durability 1, Size 1, Structure 2, Cost •

Earmuffs or earplugs help to keep a character from going temporarily deaf from discharging a firearm. Characters using ear protection (which may come as earmuffs or earplugs) do not suffer from the penalties that a Storyteller may incur as a result of firing loud weapons. While a character is actually *wearing* the ear protection, however, she suffers a –2 penalty to all listening-related Wits + Composure rolls.

What's That Ringing Sound?

The shorter the barrel and bigger the bullet, the louder a weapon will be. Some guns are so noisy, they leave the shooters half-deaf with debilitating ringing in the ears. The Storyteller might invoke dice penalties equal to the firearm's Damage modifier to listening-related Wits + Composure rolls due to this ringing. Such penalties last for 10 minutes after firing a weapon.

Ear protection, listed above, helps to mitigate this penalty to Perception-based rolls.

Gunsmithing Kit

Durability 2, Size 2, Structure 4, Cost ••

Guns get dirty. Pistols jam. Rifles need new stocks, sights and scopes. A character can use normal tools to handle these needs, but not easily. A gunsmithing kit (bore cleaners, Allen wrenches, calipers and so on) will allow a character to handle most weapon maintenance and modification with little issue. Cleaning, fixing or modifying any firearm requires an extended Dexterity + Crafts roll, with each roll equaling 15 minutes. The number of successes should be determined by the complexity of the task. Cleaning a barrel or replacing a revolver's grip is easy and likely requires five successes. Replacing a whole barrel, or any other critical part of the weapon, might require 15 successes. Having a gunsmithing kit adds 2 bonus dice to the appropriate Crafts rolls. Without the kit, working on a gun may be more difficult, and the Storyteller may incur a –1 penalty.

Light Mount

Durability 1, Size 1, Structure 2, Cost •

Also called a "tactical illuminator," this device is essentially a flashlight made to be strapped or bolted onto a firearm. Light mounts are manufactured for just about every type of gun in existence. Most illuminators hang from beneath the weapon's barrel, somewhat similar to a bayonet. Using a flashlight attached to a firearm doesn't offer bonuses to the attack roll, but instead allows a character to ignore the "Fighting Blind" rules (see p.166, the **World of Darkness Rulebook**). Instead of literally firing into the dark unknown, a character can see a target with the mounted flashlight and take a shot. Attack rolls performed in this manner suffer a –3 penalty.

Higher intensity lights (halogen or LED) are incredibly bright and reduce the penalty to –2. This advantage is not without a higher price, however (Cost ••).

Using a mounted light in this manner announces the shooter's location. Any witnesses nearby are likely to see the beam of light. Therefore, attacks made *against* the shooter can now ignore the "Fighting Blind" complication, and are made at a –4 penalty.

Reloading Bench

Durability 2, Size 5, Structure 6, Cost ••

A character can learn to reload his own bullets, shells, even his own black powder loads if he's shooting some antiquated muzzle-loader. On the surface, there would appear to be little reason for doing so. Bullets are cheaper when purchased at local gun stores (or the ubiquitous Wal-Mart), and it takes less time to walk up to a counter than to load each bullet by hand.

However, some characters might have good reason to load their own bullets. For one, it might be a hobby. People don't need to hunt or fish for meat, but they do it anyway. Also, some people feel that they can get better accuracy and speed out of home-pressed bullets; this being the World of Darkness, however, characters might have other reasons. Conspiracy-minded characters (or those who have very real criminal records) don't want to be caught buying bullets from Wal-Mart or anywhere, just in case the police (or the "monsters") find out. Also, char-

acters might be interested in making the kinds of bullets not for sale at gun stores. (For more information on "Home-Crafted Ammunition," see p. 88)

Loading bullets at home requires a number of items, all generally found upon a single workbench: gunpowder, primers, precision scales, empty shell casings, brass polisher, a bullet press. Shotgun shells also require measured shot, crimping tools, empty plastic shells and wads.

Reloading Bullets

Dice Pool: Dexterity + Crafts + equipment

Action: Extended (6–12 successes; one roll equals 30 minutes of work)

Reloading bullet casings is an extended action, demanding a number of successes based upon the complexity of the bullets desired. Normal bullets or shotgun shells, such as those purchased at a gun store or a retailer like Wal-Mart, require only six successes. More complicated, "special" rounds (any of the unique ammo listed on p. 82-89) require 12 successes.

As a general rule, assume that completing the task results in a box of finished ammunition, approximately 30 shells. With normal ammo, one success typically makes about five bullets. With custom shells, one success makes two.

Reloading is a complicated enough procedure to require the equipment that comes with a reloading bench. Without this, a character may still make the attempt, but acts at a –5 dice pool to do so.

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: Dramatic failure results in a handful (five–10) of seemingly workable bullets. Using these bullets in a gun, however, causes them to discharge improperly and damage the gun and, potentially, the shooter.

Failure: At the Storyteller's discretion, successes that fall short of the six or 12 required may still grant the character a handful of bullets. No successes at all means no bullets are made.

Success: The character reloads a box of ammunition: 30 rounds of normal ammunition or 24 rounds of unique ammunition.

Exceptional Success: The character performs the reloading with startling speed, cutting his time dramatically.

Suggested Equipment: Reloading bench, see above (+2), High-quality shells and bullets (+1), Quiet work space (+1)

Possible Penalties: No reloading bench (–5), No Firearms score (–1), Distractions (–1)

Sighting Tools

Durability 1, Size 2, Structure 3, Cost ••

A character has no guarantee that her gun is accurate. Any number of variants can screw up a firearm's accuracy. The sights might be poorly adjusted, the scope might not be mounted to precision or the gun's barrel might be off by a scant millimeter. A gun suffers bumps and nudges over time, and a series of small collisions can result in general inaccuracy. In fact, assume that most guns *aren't* sighted inproperly and that their base stats reflect this.

"Sighting in" a gun is a time-consuming procedure and requires any number of different items. Barrel accuracy can be measured with bore-sighter equipment. Sights and scopes can be adjusted with normal tools. The shooter must also fire her weapon at a target time and time again to see how tight the bullet groupings are.

Anybody can attempt to sight in her weapon with an extended Wits + Firearms roll. Ten total successes are required, and each roll takes 10 minutes of time and consumes 10 rounds of ammunition. Using the appropriate sighting tools adds +2 to this roll.

Successfully sighting in a firearm with the proper tools provides a +1 bonus to all medium- and long-range attacks. This effect lasts for a number of uses equal to twice the weapon's Damage rating. (One "use" is considered to be a single bullet fired from the weapon.)

Sights, Fiber Optic

Durability 1, Size 1, Structure 2, Cost •

Sometimes called "glowsights" or "firesights," most fiber optic sights are replacements for a firearm's existing sights, both

front and back. These illuminated sights are nothing more than beaded, colored lights (two in the back, one in the front) that allow a shooter to line up a more precise shot. Most sights tend to glow red in the daytime, and green or yellow at night. Under any conditions, such sights grant the user an additional +1 to all shooting rolls in which the shooter takes a turn to aim, though the normal penalties other conditions still apply.

Characters can purchase these sights for any type of firearm (sidearm, rifle, shotgun, assault weapons). These sights are also available for bows and provide the same benefits.

Sights, Laser

Durability 1, Size 1, Structure 2, Cost ••

Laser sights improve accuracy at short and medium range, but are ineffective at long range, as the laser dissipates and becomes useless. At short range, a shooter can add +1 to her attack roll. At medium range, she may halve the standard –2 modifier, making it –1 instead. At long range, the normal –4 penalty still applies. Laser sights do not work with *medium burst* or *long burst* autofire. However, laser sights do still provide benefit when using a *short burst*, as the sights still allow for easier initial target acquisition.

The red dot from a laser sight is visible, however. The target of a surprise attack using a laser-sighted weapon gains a +1 bonus to his Wits + Composure roll to avoid surprise (see p. 151, the **World of Darkness Rulebook**). If conditions are foggy or dusty, the laser becomes even easier to see, because the airborne debris illuminates the entire beam of light (which is normally hidden). In such circumstances, the bonus to avoid surprise increases to +2.

A variation (Cost •••) uses an infrared laser beam. The infrared dot can normally be seen only by using night vision sights or goggles. Characters using infrared laser sights and a night vision scope benefit from both.

Sights, Telescopic

Durability 1, Size 2, Structure 3, Cost •

The scope is a staple of firing a rifle or shotgun at medium or long range. A scope sits mounted on the top of the weapon, and allows the shooter to capture a target in a magnified view.

Range penalties at medium range with a rifle or shotgun are ignored when using a scope. Range penalties for long range are halved. A scope offers no bonus when shooting at short range, but does not hamper the shot, either.

Telescopic sights can be used on a handgun (revolver or pistol), but firing the weapon at short or medium range with a scope offers no aid. When attacking from long range, however, the penalty is once again halved (–4 becomes –2) as above.

Sights, Telescopic (Night Vision)

Durability 1, Size 2, Structure 3, Cost •••

A night vision scope is the same as a normal scope, except that a night vision scope allows a character to shoot more accurately at night. Night vision is generally infrared — staring through the scope shows everything as varying shades of green. A night vision scope makes it far easier to shoot at night, but finding and maintaining a target is still difficult. Looking through that circle provides only a tiny green fraction of the world. Trying to assess a subject, moving or still, in such a limited frame requires patience.

Using a night vision scope allows a user to ignore the Fighting Blind penalties, but it's still more complicated than using a normal scope, and the normal scope benefits do not apply. At long range, night vision reduces the modifier to a –3 penalty. At medium range, night vision offers no bonus other than allowing the shooter to ignore the normal Fighting Blind penalties. However, with a night vision scope on his weapon, a character can also ignore the Fighting Blind complications at short range. Short-range shots with a night vision scope are performed at –1 penalty. (These rules apply to shots fired during times of darkness.) Note that if the scope's lenses are exposed to harsh light, such as sunlight or halogen, the device shuts down to prevent damage to its sensitive optics, remaining useless until one turn after the end of exposure to the bright light. Characters can purchase day/night versions of these scopes that work normally in both sunlight and darkness, but such equipment comes at a greater price tag (Cost ••••).

Characters with the Unseen Sense Merit who succeed on a Wits + Composure roll may be able to catch a one- or two-second glimpse of ghosts or spirits through a night vision scope. Such entities do not show clearly, but may show as human-sized blobs that seemingly have no corporeal form when the character looks away from the scope.

Sights, Telescopic (Thermal)

Durability 2, Size 2, Structure 4, Cost •••••

Used extensively by Special Forces and SWAT, a thermal scope picks up a target's body heat and illustrates the target more clearly. Everything else is blue, but the target shows in bright white. These heat vision scopes work equally well in both daylight and darkness. Night vision requires some ambient light (from the moon or a distant streetlight) to be present, but a thermal scope asks only that the subject has a heat signature above the ambient temperature.

At long range, a thermal scope minimizes the penalty from –4 to a –1 modifier. At medium and short ranges, a character using a heat vision scope on a weapon suffers no range penalties. In darkness, the same penalties apply but the "Fighting Blind" rules do not.

An important consideration, however, is that a thermal scope provides benefit only when shooting warm (meaning *living*) targets. Animals, humans and other warm-blooded creatures show up perfectly in thermal vision. Vampires show up only minimally. Targeting a vampire with heat vision offers the shooter no more benefit than a normal scope (see above under "Sights, Telescopic"), as the vampire is hardly warm enough to stand out more than a little.

Thermal scopes usually offer no bonuses to seeing ghosts or spirits. However, if a spirit can in any way affect temperature (writing a Ghost Sign on a steamy shower door,

using Magnetic Disruption, raising or lowering the temperature in the room), the spirit may show through the scope for the second in which the spirit invokes its Numen.

Speedloader

Durability 1, Size 1, Structure 2, Cost •

Most pistols and some rifles can be easily reloaded in the field by keeping extra magazines, but revolvers and internal magazine or action-fed weapons (like autoloader shotguns and some rifles) require that the bullets be placed into the weapon one by one (see p. 55).

A speedloader, however, changes all that. Speedloaders exist for a number of weapons, and allow for a character to quickly slam ammunition back into the weapon without foregoing her Defense. Revolver speedloaders are six to eight bullets (depending on the gun's capacity) loaded into a carousel. A character opens the cylinder and slams the bullets in all at once. Characters can speed-load other internal magazine-fed weapons such as some shotguns and rifles, dropping in ammunition four at a time.

Stock, Collapsible

Durability 2, Size n/a, Structure 3, Cost ••

A folding or telescoping stock is a modification to the butt end of a firearm, and allows the wielder to make the firearm more compact. This allows some weapons to become concealable. A collapsible stock reduces the weapon's Size by one, though a weapon's Size cannot be reduced below 2. (Or, in regard to the "Alternate Size" rules, Size 3 and 2/N weapons become 2/L.)

Refitting a gun with a collapsible stock requires six successes on an extended Dexterity + Crafts roll. Each roll takes 15 minutes. Without a Gunsmithing Kit (see above), the character suffers a –1 penalty to the Crafts roll.

For more information on "Collapsible Stocks," see p. 71.

Suppressor

Durability 3, Size 1, Structure 4, Cost •••

Discreet killers wishing for total silence when using a suppressor might be surprised at how much noise is still present when firing. A suppressor works by dissipating some of the built-up pressure that comes from discharging a bullet down a slim barrel. The suppressor allows some of the gas to escape before the bullet exits the barrel, thus dampening the noise.

Unfortunately, most bullets still travel 1,100 feet per second or more, and they still break the sound barrier with a sonic pop. While a suppressor muffles the sound of the bullet leaving the barrel, a suppressor can't silence sonic booms. The trick is to use *subsonic* ammunition. Smaller caliber rounds or specially made bullets can be subsonic: they travel just under the speed of sound, and while they have less power, they also make next to zero noise. (Though the bullet still makes a faint sound on impact.)

All guns make noise, no matter what kind of suppressor or ammunition is being used. However, bystanders nearby (within 50 yards) have a –4 penalty to their Wits + Composure roll when attempting to notice the sound from a suppressed subsonic bullet. Bystanders have an easier time hearing a suppressed *super*sonic bullet, however. Witnesses within 100 yards may hear the shot, suffering only a –2 penalty to their Perception roll. Note that suppressors also diminish muzzle flash. Characters attempting to pinpoint where a bullet came from do so at a –3 penalty if the shooter uses a suppressor.

Contrary to popular belief, suppressors can be made for all firearms, including shotguns and revolvers. However, revolvers are difficult to silence effectively, and bystanders have only a –2 penalty to their roll.

Making a Suppressor

Characters can jury-rig a suppressor for just about any firearm. Clever assassins can make suppressors out of cans, PVC pipe or rubber tubing. Doing so requires an extended Dexterity + Crafts roll. Ten successes must be accumulated, and each roll is equal to 15 minutes of time.

Using a failed suppressor on a weapon reduces the weapon's Damage potential by 1. If the character suffers a dramatic failure on the construction roll, the suppressor looks fine, but the bullet cannot leave the barrel of the gun and destroys the weapon.

Surveillance Gear

Surveillance equipment, also called "spy gear" because it almost always involves spying or gathering information on a target, was once exclusively the domain of the intelligence community. FBI agents used spy gear; Mary Jane the housewife did not. Gear that could be purchased in the domestic sector were novelty items on par with the x-ray glasses found for sale in the back of old comic books.

The new millennium, however, has brought a sudden surge of surveillance gear into the public market. Modern living involves modern fears — terrorist attacks, skyrocketing crime rates, domestic abuse — and has blown the doors open for the sale of spy gear. Now, Mary Jane the housewife can spy on her husband's extra-curricular activities with a hidden camera and electronically tag her children to make sure they're not snatched away by urban predators. Surveillance gear can now be part of any house or office, school or street corner. Below are a few of the spy-related items available to characters.

James Bond, Internet Junkie

Spy gear sounds like stuff characters can't purchase — except, they can. The first place to buy spy or surveillance items is at local "spy shops." Most towns have them, though most of

what they sell consists of cheap stuff or gag gifts. Characters might purchase a hollowed-out Bible in which to hide valuables, or the characters might buy prank items such as hand buzzers. Assume that of all the items listed below, characters can only find one or two of the devices listed, usually those with Cost •• or below.

The Internet is the other outlet available to characters when looking to purchase the items found below. Various spy and surveillance websites sell them to the public sector. No paperwork, no frills and no permanent record. Auction sites such as eBay also sell some of this stuff, but, for the most part, the merchandise is equal to the level of junk sold at a local spy shop.

Binoculars

Durability 2, Size 1, Structure 3, Cost •

The value of a good pair of binoculars cannot be overestimated. It may be necessary to see something farther than the human eye allows. Want to see what's on a computer monitor in the building across the way? Does your character need to keep an eye on the skulking derelict who just wandered into her territory? Anything past 100 yards will incur penalties to any Perception-based Investigation or Composure rolls when made with the naked eye. A pair of binoculars, however, eradicates the majority of such distance-related penalties.

A good pair of binoculars can see up to 1,000 yards, though after 500 yards, the character starts to lose detail. Every 100 yards past 500 confers a –1 modifier to any Perception-based rolls using the binoculars to a maximum of –5 dice.

Night vision binoculars exist, as well. Night vision allows long-range viewing in the dark, but a character begins taking the penalties at 200 yards (–1 for every 100 yards thereafter). Such sighting devices cost •••.

Bugs (Covert Listening Devices)

Durability 1, Size 1, Structure 2, Cost ••

Bugs are small audio devices that transmit sounds, such as conversations, to the user, who is far away. Characters planting bugs may hide them in a room or upon a person's body in an attempt to hear privileged information. The police use bugs in sting operations, often wiring operatives to obtain proof of ill-doing. Criminals use bugs in sting operations, looking to catch traitors filching cash or giving tips to the other side. Covert listening devices are no longer relegated to the law-enforcement sector. Anybody can buy them from various websites, pawn shops or spy shops.

Most bugs are easily concealable. Characters can attach them to or hide them in the ceiling, or stick them in a houseplant or even under a desk with glue or tape. Some bugs are small enough to fit in the end of a pen or on a button, but most of *these* have wires that must still be concealed on the body, often taped to the skin ("wearing a wire," in common parlance).

Bugs relay the audio to a party via a radio frequency. Most listening devices require the listener be within a quarter-mile. One of the problems with bugs is, if they're transmitting via a radio frequency, somebody else can listen in on what you're hearing. If the other character finds the proper frequency with a Wits + Computer or Wits + Crafts roll, then she will be privy to the transmission.

Planting a bug requires a Wits + Larceny roll. Anyone attempting to find the device in the future must succeed on a contested Wits + Investigation (or Wits + Composure) roll. If the successes on this roll exceed those achieved on the user's Larceny roll, the investigator finds the bug. If the successes are lower, the bug remains hidden from view.

Assume that the stats above reflect a bug that is one to two inches in diameter. Smaller bugs are available to characters; these bugs can fit into the ends of a pen or be made to look like a button on one's shirt. Such devices are small enough to confer a –1 penalty to all Wits + Investigation rolls made to find the device. Smaller devices, however, come with a higher price tag (Cost •••). Some bugs are larger, as well, having the approximate dimensions of a cigarette pack. Larger listening devices tend to be older. Their cost remains the same, but they have +1 to Size and, as a result, +1 to Structure. Hiding such a bulky device, which may have wires that need to be hidden as well, is more difficult. The Wits + Larceny roll to conceal the device is made at a –1 penalty.

Bug Sweeper

Durability 1, Size 1, Structure 2, Cost •••

Paranoid or pragmatic characters may believe that they have been bugged. Maybe somebody is listening in at the office. Maybe a video camera records whatever the character is doing in his bedroom. Maybe his buddies, his wife, even his children can hear what he says to other people because of a bug planted in his shoes or his pocket. Is it true? Probably not. But, as the saying goes, just because you're paranoid doesn't mean they're not out to get you.

Bug sweepers help such individuals scan an area for recording devices, whether video or audio. Such a device usually looks something like a small, black walkie-talkie. A character sweeps the device over various parts of the room. If the bug sweeper picks up something emitting radio frequencies or odd electromagnetic radiation, it'll show it through a series of lights. When looking for bugs, characters can add a +2 modifier to the contested Wits + Investigation roll if using a bug sweeper.

Disguised Camera

Durability 1, Size 2, Structure 3, Cost ••

Hidden cameras have become easily accessible to the public, often replacing closed-circuit video surveillance. They're cheap and popular. Parents use them to spy on babysitters, bosses watch employees in offices or break rooms, girlfriends snoop on boyfriends (and vice versa). The monsters of this world find hidden cameras endlessly useful, as well: predators watch the habits of favored prey while surveying the boundaries of their territory, and some sorcerers litter their sanctums and libraries with these cameras as well, monitoring every corner and shelf obsessively.

Stationary cameras such as these come in countless forms: clock radios, smoke detectors, air purifiers. All the devices are functional in addition to being cameras. Clock radios still have alarms and tell the time, and desk lamps still illuminate one's paperwork. Such items must be of Size 2 or greater. Smaller cameras, such as those that might look like a pen, wristwatch or pair of eyeglasses, are more expensive (Cost •••), and have a Size 1 and Structure 2.

Hidden cameras don't usually transmit an image to a monitor as the action happens, but instead require that the captured video be viewed later after hooking it up to a TV's audio/video inputs. The resultant video is low resolution with washed-out coloring, and only lasts about two hours. Better cameras are available, but come with a bigger price tag. Assume that any bells and whistles (better video, wireless monitoring and playback, longer recording time, submersible up to 30 yards) add +1 to the Cost, up to a maximum of Cost ••••. For a similar price tag, characters can also purchase cameras that *do* transmit an image wirelessly to a monitor. This monitor must be within a quarter-mile.

Characters actively hunting to find such disguised cameras can make a Wits + Investigation roll, with a penalty equal to the Cost of the camera. (The higher the cost, the more authentic the device appears.) These items are designed to be hard to find, and a casual passerby will *not* be allowed a Wits + Composure roll to accidentally find it.

Tracking Device

Durability 1, Size 1, Structure 2, Cost •••

Tracking devices are far more prevalent than people think. Some cars come fitted with LoJack or OnStar tracking in case the cars are stolen. Criminals out of jail or potentially going *to* jail almost always wear electronic tags, usually bound around their ankles, so cops can trace their movements from afar. People can buy tracking devices for their kids, pets, computers or any other goods they want monitored.

Many consumer-level tracking devices (car-trackers, child or pet trackers) can be purchased through and tracked by a third party. Some devices allow you to track the item or individual via a website, but most report the location from a phone call. Other devices might track via a GPS handheld. *In theory,* only police or government officials can monitor law-enforcement private sector tags, but someone savvy enough could reconfigure such a tracking device and trace it himself. Doing so requires 15 successes on an extended Intelligence + Crafts roll, and each roll takes a half-hour.

The electronic tags used in the intelligence community (CIA, FBI, Mossad, etc.) are not available to the public sector, but particularly wealthy or crafty individuals might be able to get their hands on such devices.

Physically, a tracking device is a tiny microchip. The electronic tag tracking a pet, for instance, is a microchip implanted in the animal's ear. Some non-standard tracking devices are encased in hard-to-break cases, such as the reinforced plastic collars around a prisoner's ankle or neck. Reinforced devices have a Durability 2 and a Structure of 3, but, because these devices are less concealable, they do not have a higher Cost.

Hiding a standard tracking device requires a Wits + Larceny roll. The small Size of the device grants a +2 bonus. Implanting a microchip tag in a creature living or dead requires an Intelligence + Medicine roll. Making the chip part of an existing device (car, cell phone, laptop) requires a Wits + Crafts roll. Discovering a hidden or implanted electronic tag requires a Wits + Investigation roll, whose successes must exceed those made on the roll to conceal the device in the first place.

Keystroke Logger

Durability 1, Size 1, Structure 2, Cost •

This piece of hardware requires physical access to a subject's computer. A keystroke logger is no bigger than a person's thumb; to use the logger, a character inserts it between the keyboard plug (USB or PS/2) and the computer port. Anything typed on the keyboard is captured in this device, which can be retrieved by the user by later plugging it into the character's own PC. Of course, she must find a way to stealthily apply and remove the device, but once done, she can see a text-file transcript of everything the subject typed – BIOS passwords, system logons, emails, letters. Employing and retrieving the small device require separate Wits + Computer rolls.

Reverse Peephole

Durability 1, Size 1, Structure 2, Cost •

With this gadget, a character can use a peephole to peer from the outside in. The device looks like a jeweler's loupe (the small magnifier used to appraise a gem). The reverse peephole fits over the peephole on the outside of the door. A character can then look *into* the building. The view is limited, of course, as no peephole allows a fully accurate assessment through such a minimal opening. Characters looking for something specific through the peephole can make a Wits + Investigation roll with a –4 penalty, assuming the object is at all visible from the user's vantage point. While such a device would seem uncommon, many real estate agents carry them on-hand, as do a number of police officers and criminals.

Spyware

Durability n/a, Size n/a, Structure n/a, Cost ••

Spyware is usually something one inadvertently downloads when using a computer connected to the Internet. Such accidental installation may occur because of tracking cookies to software that "bombs" your system with advertisements while watching your every move.

Some spyware, however, can be installed by a third party in an effort to monitor someone's computer use. Spyware not only records keystrokes but actually captures every visual movement of the user. The "spy" can see every website the target visited, every document typed, every chat session. The user must install the software upon a subject's PC. Once installed, the spyware collects all the information, and even transmits this information automatically to the hacker, provided that the infected system is connected to the Internet.

Installing the spyware might mean that a character needs physical access to the target computer, but savvy

hackers can forcibly push such software over a network connection (wired or wireless), or even through a Trojan attachment via email. Assume that such installation requires a contested hacking attempt (see p. 57, the **World of Darkness Rulebook**) requiring seven successes. Spyware adds a +2 equipment bonus to this roll.

Wi-Fi Sniffer

Durability 1, Size 1, Structure 2, Cost •

A sniffer is generally a keychain-sized device that hunts for wireless networks (i.e., "Wi-Fi," or "Wireless Fidelity"). This device doesn't require a computer to use; the sniffer simply detects wireless networks within 100 yards and identifies their presence and the strength of the frequency with a few green lights. Wireless laptops and handheld devices bought within the last four years can usually perform this function, but are far more conspicuous. A character can monitor the keychain without drawing attention. After finding a wireless network a character can return with a Wi-Fi-capable laptop, handheld or phone and use the network without requiring physical contact with the system. Whether this means he's looking for free Internet access from some poor fool's wireless router or whether he's trying to hack into a major corporation's financial records, it still requires the appropriate contested Hacking roll (see p. 57, the **World of Darkness Rulebook**).

Warchalking, Wardriving

In the "old days" of hacking, *wardialing* was the process in which the hacker would find a modem line by which he'd simply set up a device to dial countless phone numbers. If the device detected a modem line, he'd try to hack it. If not, the device would hang up and dial another number.

Those days are largely gone, and have been replaced with *wardriving* and *warchalking*. Wardriving is simply the practice of driving around sniffing out any and all wireless networks (see above), and then marking this in notes or on a public website. Warchalkers, on the other hand, resort to a more tribal methodology of marking WAPs (wireless access points). A warchalker physically marks the area with symbols that identify the nature of the network. These symbols, based off old "hobo" markings, might tell if a network is open or closed, its bandwidth or in what manner it is protected. The hacker actually marks the location with chalk or paint (though some scratch the symbol into walls, mailboxes or sidewalks) for other warchalkers to find. Most people ignore the symbols, assuming it's just graffiti or the meaningless marks of an urban sprawl.

In one or two cities, a new set of symbols has begun to appear. This chalk language is infinitely more complex, looking almost like fractal snowflakes or bizarre Mandelbrot sets. The markings seem to coincide with wireless networks, but what do the marks mean? Stranger still, why do some mages experience painful headaches when approaching these unusual icons?

Wiretap

Durability 1, Size 1, Structure 2, Cost ••

A wiretap is a variant form of a covert listening device. A character doesn't use a wiretap to record environmental sounds, but instead conceals it within a phone or upon a phone *line*. Any conversations spoken over that line are transmitted to the user or an appropriate third party. Some wiretaps are fitted in a phone's receiver, while others are placed along the phone wire or at the jack in the wall. A rare few phone taps can be placed at the switchboard, such as those located at the bottom floor of many skyscrapers or office buildings, usually found in a locked closet. Placing a phone tap requires an Intelligence + Larceny roll. This is a contested roll against any attempts to find the device (with an appropriate Wits + Investigation roll). These devices are also made to fit inside cell phones.

Survival Gear

Survival gear helps characters to stay alive in strange places and bad conditions. Characters might need such equipment when wandering in the wilderness *or* when trapped or lost amid the dangers of urban decay. Survival gear might help a character live through tsunamis, earthquakes or floods, or keep a character safe and sane during blackouts, storms or terrorist attacks. When a building crumbles, when a dirty bomb explodes in the city center or when the water supply is poisoned with chemicals or infectious toxins, the threat can be mitigated by the proper tools.

NBC Suit

Durability 1, Size 5, Structure 6, Cost ••

NBC stands for "Nuclear, Biological, Chemical." Not much can be done to directly diminish smallpox, radiation or nerve gas. The only option for a character is to protect herself in the event of exposure. One of the primary methods of protection is an NBC suit: a plastic bodysuit equipped with gas mask and filtration unit. Such outfits offer some protection against the aforementioned trio of attacks. The mask offers protection against inhalants, and the seamless suit itself protects the character against those toxins or radiation that damage by touch. An NBC suit protects against inhaled or touch-based toxins, offering a +5 bonus against such toxicity (see "Poisons and Toxins" on p. 180 of the **World of Darkness Rulebook**). In the case of radiation poisoning (see p. 122), an NBC suit nullifies all penalties associated with the appropriate Stamina + Resolve rolls.

NBC suits protect the user for only so long, however. The plastic withstands toxins for five days. After that,

the bonus dice the suit offers to a character's Stamina + Resolve drops by one per day until the modifier is nullified. In addition, even a single point of lethal damage to the suit (which must overcome its Durability as normal; see p. 139, the **World of Darkness Rulebook**) will puncture the suit and negate its protection.

Full-on biohazard suits have Durability 2, Cost •••• and provide complete immunity, rather than a bonus to the resistance roll.

Potassium Iodide

Durability 1, Size 1, Structure 2, Cost ••

Potassium iodide protects a character against radiation sickness. This medication keeps long-term cancers at bay and helps stave off the immediate effects of exposure. Taking two pills a day confers a +1 bonus to a character's Stamina + Resolve roll when trying to withstand the effects of radiation toxicity (see p. 122). For the pills to grant this bonus, they need to have been taken at least four hours before exposure to radiation. The stats above are for a bottle of 500 pills.

Survival Kit, Basic

Durability 1, Size 2, Structure 3, Cost •

A basic survival kit includes items such as a sleeping bag, canteen, flashlight, glowstick and enough food and water for one character to last a single day (after which the character must forage or hunt for food). This kit offers +1 to all Survival-based rolls and any Stamina + Resolve rolls made to resist harm from exposure.

Give Us This Day Our Daily Bread

How much food and water is equal to a day's worth? What comes with a survival kit likely differs from what a character normally eats per day. A single day's worth of food is generally equal to one 2,500-calorie meal ration. This meal is a nonperishable bar (like a big granola bar) loaded with vitamins, carbohydrates and calories, which comes in different flavors (apple cinnamon, chocolate chip, cranberry and nut). Some kinds of survival kits come with MREs, or Meals Ready to Eat, a military ration that is essentially a freeze-dried meal of meat and vegetables.

A day's worth of water packaged with a survival kit is about 24 fluid ounces, split between three equal packets. Kits that come with multiple days' worth of food and water simply offer more rations.

Survival Kit, Advanced

Durability 2, Size 2, Structure 4, Cost ••

An advanced survival kit includes the items found in the basic kit, along with several others. Such items might be a compass, rope, a one to two person tent, solar blanket, heat pads, a multi-tool or Swiss Army knife and possibly even a book on survival, as well as enough food and water for one character to last two days (after which a character must forage or hunt for food). This kit offers

a +2 bonus to all Survival-based rolls and any Stamina + Resolve rolls made to resist harm from exposure.

Survival Kit, Superior

Durability 2, Size 3, Structure 5, Cost •••

A superior survival kit generally includes the items found in the basic and advanced kits, along with more expensive items, such as a GPS location device, water filtration unit, four-person all-season tent, first aid kid, sewing kit, bungee cables, portable fishing rod, camp machete or emergency poncho, as well as enough food and water for one character to survive a full week. This kit offers a +3 bonus to all Survival-based rolls and any Stamina + Resolve rolls made to resist harm from exposure.

Survival Kit, Urban

Durability 2, Size 2, Structure 4, Cost ••

The urban survival kit (sometimes called a "Go Bag") is a little different than the average gear, because this kit is designed with metropolitan survival in mind. In the case of an urban emergency, this kit will help a character survive in extreme city-wide conditions such as a blackout, chemical attack or natural disaster. Such a kit likely features all the same items found in the basic survival kit, but the urban kit also offers a number of objects specific to disturbed urban conditions, including protective face masks, city maps, storm matches, antibiotics, AM/FM radio, LED flashlight and a Mylar emergency blanket, as well as enough food and water for a single individual to survive for three days. This kit offers +3 to all Survival-based rolls and any Stamina + Resolve rolls made to resist harm from exposure and airborne (inhaled) toxins *if used in the city or suburbs* (+1 in the wilderness).

Miscellaneous

Below are a number of items that don't quite fit into the other categories. Such items may help a character in a fight or may instead work outside of combat situations.

Camouflage

Durability variable, Size variable, Structure variable, Cost •

Camouflage allows a character to blend in with his environment. To conceal himself, a character may wear camouflaged clothing or paint his skin with the appropriately colored paint. To disguise his gun or other objects (Size 4 or below), he can wrap them using a roll of camo-tape. He can hide larger objects beneath tarps disguised to blend in with the environment.

Characters can either purchase camouflage or make it themselves. Store-bought camo is easily found at sporting good, department or Army/Navy stores. This camouflage features mottled patterns of green for wilderness, brown for desert and gray for urban environments, and adds +1 to a character's Wits + Stealth roll when moving, and +2 when remaining still. This roll is contested against any Wits + Composure rolls made by potential witnesses to see the character.

Making camouflage requires a Wits + Survival roll, and involves a character decorating himself or an object with actual pieces of the environment. This roll is easier in a dense forest (+1 to the roll), but difficult in desert or urban environs (–2 to the roll). A character may cover himself in leaves, sticks, dirt, sand, even ash. If the roll is successful, he can add +2 to the contested Wits + Stealth roll when moving, and +3 when staying still. An exceptional success on crafting the camouflage grants an additional +1 bonus to both moving and still characters.

One other exception is worth noting: camouflage is of exceptional value against night vision. Night vision cloaks everything in green, distinguishing no colors at all. Because of this, camouflage blends in seamlessly with most environments. Any character using night vision to attempt to spot a camouflaged individual is hampered by a –1 penalty on the Perception-based roll.

Ghost-Hunting Equipment

Durability 3, Size 3, Structure 6, Cost ••••

Some ghost-hunters are New Age spiritualists, concerned with the emotional and psychic resonance of the departed. These ghost-hunters' arsenal is a pastiche of pagan and occult objects: Ouija boards, crystals, dowsing rods, wind chimes (to "capture" the ghost's soul or attention). Other ghost-hunters, however, lean toward the more scientific end of the spectrum. These paranormal investigators are generally hobbyists, though some ply their trade professionally. Most professional ghost-hunters make the bulk of their money from the attention of local radio stations and other promotional gigs at Halloween time than they do through actual spirit detection. Some investigators manage to make a living from it, but such investigators are rare.

While the scientific community considers the methodology behind such ghost-hunting dubious, ghost-hunters maintain that what they do has genuine scientific merit. Therefore, they have their own arsenal of equipment. Most ghost-hunting gear comprises various meters and detection devices. Thermal scanners detect drastic temperature drops (ghostly "cold spots"). EMF detectors seek to reveal electromagnetic disruptions. Other sensory equipment helps to detect ion spikes or unseen motion. Ghost hunters often bring digital voice recorders to capture EVP ("electronic voice phenomenon") and digital cameras to find "ghost orbs." Since many ghost-hunters choose to work in the dark, they also buy night vision goggles or lenses for their cameras.

When the pieces are purchased together, ghost-hunting equipment is costly. For this reason, some ghost-hunting groups purchase sub-par equipment or are forced to seek out sponsors to pursue their hobby/career. Most ghost-hunters find few are willing to support this pseudo-science. A few groups exist that will help to bankroll a group of budding ghost-hunters, such as the faceless Eurydice Group.

The big question is, does this stuff really work? Can ghost-hunting equipment really detect a ghostly presence? Generally, no. Such equipment provides too many false positives. Old wiring in the walls will stump EMF detectors, dust motes look like "ghost orbs" when caught on most cameras and radio frequencies are so omnipresent that they provide a worthless watermark. Ghost-hunters may abide by some science, but such scientific endeavor is poor, at best.

That's not to say their equipment fails to pick up supernatural activity; it just means it doesn't reliably do so. A ghost disrupting electronic equipment can wreak havoc on a ghost-hunter's EMF reader. Restless spirits can imprint messages on forms of media, thus affecting voice or video recorders. Ghosts can create a number of illusory (and contradictory) effects, and ghost-hunting equipment may very well capture this, but, in the end, is it proof of anything? A whisper on an audio tape, a weird reading on the motion detector or a glowing light on digital video add up to nothing more than speculation and skepticism.

However, ghost-hunting equipment can inadvertently detect *other* supernatural beings. Vampires caught on camera will show up as blurry distortions. Unless well fed, vampires have a lower body temperature than most humans, and a thermal scanner that can reliably take a subject's temperature from up to 100 yards away will reveal this disparity (see p. 166). Some non-ghostly spirits can also affect an environment with their Numina, and may create bizarre readings on an investigator's equipment.

Investigating the Unseen

At the Storyteller's discretion, ghost-hunting equipment can help characters with the Unseen Sense Merit more easily pinpoint spectral presences. Characters possessing this Merit *and* utilizing any form of ghost-hunting equipment can make a Wits + Investigation roll. Success on this roll allows the character to confirm the presence of the restless dead. A character interprets strange readings from the devices as well as the odd physical reactions that such a presence makes manifest (shudders, goosebumps, cottonmouth). The equipment doesn't help the character communicate or see the spirit; the equipment only assures her of its locality.

Handcuffs

Durability 3, Size 1, Structure 4, Cost •

Police-grade handcuffs, made of stainless steel and connected by a small but stalwart chain, are difficult to break, especially when a character finds herself in their metal grip.

Breaking a pair of cuffs requires an extended Strength + Stamina roll (made with a –4 penalty). Each roll takes one turn. A total of four successes must be achieved to break the chain; each success diminishes the chain's Structure by one. Failure means the handcuffs take no damage. Dramatic failure at any point means that the character suffers a muscle cramp or bruised wrist, and may not try to break the cuffs for the rest of the scene. The character takes one point of bashing damage upon a dramatic failure. Note that many supernatural creatures can enhance their Physical Attributes in a number of ways that may help them break handcuffs more easily. Breaking the chain still means that the character has unconnected cuffs adorning her wrists.

Characters may also try to slip out of the cuffs in a feat of escapology but to do so, they must succeed on a Dexterity + Athletics roll, made at a –4 penalty. One success allows the character to escape, but she takes one point of bashing damage to her hands. An exceptional success allows her to avoid this damage.

Picking the lock on a pair of cuffs requires four successes on an extended Lockpicking roll (see p. 75, the **World of Darkness Rulebook**), with each roll being equal to one turn's worth of work.

A character wearing handcuffs behind her back may be subject to a number of other penalties. Any rolls involving manual dexterity (firing a weapon, climbing, throwing an object, picking the lock on a pair of handcuffs) are done with a –4 penalty. At the Storyteller's discretion, some actions may not even be possible. Hands cuffed together in front inflict only a –2 penalty. Unless a character can conceal the fact that she is handcuffed (with a Wits + Steath roll), she will likely invoke a –3 Social penalty at the Storyteller's discretion for looking like a convict.

Some police (or serial killers) prefer to bind their targets with zip ties instead of handcuffs. Zip ties are reinforced plastic bands that tighten and lock in place, and are in some ways harder to break than handcuffs, because the tightness allows for zero movement of the hands. Mechanically, handcuffs and zip ties function similarly, except the latter are Durability 2, Size 1 and Structure 3, and, where handcuff penalties are –4 and –2, zip tie penalties are –5 and –3. Unlike handcuffs, zip ties have no lock to pick, but are vulnerable to a quick knife cut or other sudden friction.

Lie Detector (Polygraph Machine)

Durability 2, Size 4, Structure 6, Cost ••••

Polygraph machines are designed to measure a world of physiological responses in a subject, all geared toward catching liars in the act. A modern polygraph machine measures a subject's blood pressure, his respiratory rate and his electro-dermal activity (checking for sweat upon fingertips). Many machines also record a "twitch" rate, detecting anxious movements in legs, arms, hands, even eyes. The trick is that a polygraph examiner has to be well versed in the ways of lying. The machine details biological read-outs only. It's up to the examiner to determine if the information points to fact or fiction. Lying is a contested roll of the liar's Manipulation

+ Subterfuge versus the examiner's Wits + Subterfuge. Using a polygraph grants the examiner a +5 bonus to his roll to detect Deception, and also allows the examiner to swap out Wits for Intelligence on the roll if he so desires.

Many modern lie detectors are digital. The examiner hooks all the equipment up to a laptop, desktop or handheld device. Some machines are archaic, however, still printing out data on scrolls of paper. Archaic polygraph devices cost the same, but yield only a +3 bonus to the examiner's roll.

Vampires offer no heart beat, blood pressure or sweat for a polygraph machine to read. A vampire may still offer clues when lying (body twitch, looking up and to the left, stuttering), but a polygraph machine is only so useful in detailing these minor tells. For this reason, polygraph machines offer only a +1 bonus to the examiner. Of course, the bigger concern is what happens when the examiner notices that his subject is missing a number of important biological functions.

Sat Phone

Durability 2, Size 1, Structure 3, Cost •••

A sat phone bypasses major carriers and receives its signal directly from orbiting satellites. The advantages of this are that a character can use such a phone in extreme locations (mountaintops, distant forests, deserts). Plus, these phones feature little of the interference that normal cell/digital phones receive. Most sat phones are a little bigger than the average cell phone, and are also ruggedized in hard rubber to take a beating. Sat phones do not use satellite service when indoors, as they require usage under a clear sky. Indoors, they default to cellular coverage.

Sat phones are used frequently by government employees (anybody from FBI agents to senators) as well as high-end construction contractors (who might not be able to receive a normal signal when working atop a skyscraper or some other piece of distant architecture).

Scent Eliminator

Durability 1, Size 1, Structure 2, Cost •

Scent eliminators come in a number of forms. Game hunters use animal urine or blood to mask the scent of their trail. Others use small portable fans that direct scent away from prey or predator. Another form is a kind of "neutralizing" odor, meant to be used like perfume or a bar of soap. This scent counterbalances the normal smells emitted by the human body, rendering them less perceptible. Generally, a scent eliminator inflicts a –2 penalty to any Wits + Composure roll used to try to detect the user by scent, or any Wits + Survival roll used to *track* by scent. Some creatures have the ability to sniff past such odorous masquerade. Vampires using an ability like Heightened Senses negate the penalties associated with a scent eliminator, while werewolves

cancel the penalties with the bonuses to Perceptions rolls provided by their various forms.

Characters may attempt to make their own scent eliminator. Doing so requires an extended Wits + Science roll. Five successes must be achieved, and each roll is equal to 30 minutes. Homemade scent eliminators work the same as the store-bought kind. The only notable difference is that, should the character achieve an exceptional success beyond the required successes, the odor eliminator confers a –4 penalty to any scent-based detection rolls.

Voice Disguiser

Durability 1, Size 2, Structure 3, Cost ••

Sometimes an individual may desire to change his voice. Perhaps a boss wishes to act like a secretary, or maybe a teenager plans to make prank phone calls. Other, darker reasons persist as well. A pedophile may hope to sound like another child, or a Spirit-Ridden mortal may no longer feel comfortable with his own voice. A voice changer doesn't allow the user to sound like a specific person, but it likely affords him the chance to sound like a *type* of person. The device may modulate his voice to make it sound deeper, more womanly, even pre-pubescent.

Voice changers offer a +2 bonus to a user's Subterfuge rolls when attempting to disguise his voice. A listener may attempt a Wits + Composure roll to recognize that the voice is being modulated. Success on the roll allows the listener to know that the voice was changed, and an exceptional success allows her to identify the person behind the modulation. If the listener fails the Wits + Composure roll, she fails to identify the speaker or the masquerade.

Various types of voice changer are available on the market. A child's toy voice changer (making his voice vaguely like Darth Vader's or SpongeBob's) costs •, but offers only a +1 bonus to the Subterfuge roll. Alternately, high-end software voice modulators are available, which cost •••, but offer a +3 to the roll. These software packages require a Wits + Computer roll to set up properly.

Armor and Shielding

Characters may want to safeguard themselves from coming attacks. While doing so can require any number of strategic maneuvers, the easiest manner of impromptu protection is wearing some kind of armor or going into battle with a handheld shield.

Armor

Sometimes, armor is the one thing that keeps a character alive. A leather jacket might help diminish a knife's attack, and a bulletproof vest might stop a .38 slug from perforating a lung. Whether such protection is archaic or modern, any defense is good defense.

What follows is a list of armor a character may potentially own and/or use. For information on what the ratings mean, please refer to the "Armor" section of the **World of Darkness Rulebook**, found on p. 166.

Bomb Suit

Rating 3/6, Strength 3, Defense –3, Speed –3, Cost •••••

A bomb suit is a huge, clunky vest that covers a subject's entire upper torso (arms included, if he wants to squeeze them behind the armor). Essentially, it's one big Kevlar body blanket, interlaid with heavy ceramic plates. These plates function by absorbing an explosion and then breaking. The bomb suit protects against rifle rounds and explosives particularly well, but it's exceedingly cumbersome. Once the ceramic plates shatter, the suit has to be refitted with plates before it can again become fully functional. Assume that an explosion that does four or more lethal points of damage will shatter the plates in the bomb suit. At this point, the bomb suits downgrades to a particularly cumbersome bulletproof vest with a Rating of 2/3.

Bomb squads in major metropolitan areas are well funded enough to afford a number of these heavy suits. Squads in suburban areas may have one, and police precincts in rural areas probably don't even *have* a bomb squad.

Bulletproof Vest

Rating 2/3, Strength 1, Defense –1, Speed 0, Cost •••

The average bulletproof vest is black and made of Kevlar. The vest stops bullets, edged weapons and blunt attacks with some efficiency. Like all true bulletproof armor, a bulletproof vest downgrades damage done from Firearms from lethal to bashing.

Worn on the upper torso, the majority of bulletproof vests only cover the chest. The wearer's back is not protected with the average Kevlar vest. In fact, a number of places remain unprotected, and targeted attacks will ignore any defense the vest offers. For bodily fortification beyond the chest region, see "Bulletproof Vest Accessories," below.

A bulletproof vest is not technically a "flak jacket" (see below), though this vest is often mistakenly called such.

Bulletproof Vest Accessories

Rating 1/2, Strength 1, Defense 0, Speed 0, Cost ••

A vest covers only the chest. A number of places on the body are still wholly vulnerable to all manner of damage. Characters can separately purchase individual "pieces" of bulletproof armor for varying body parts, such as groin shields, neck/throat protectors, arm or leg armor, back armor or even helmets. None of these accessories offers precisely the same level of protection that the vest does, but each piece offers its Rating against attacks *targeted specifically against the region the piece protects*. Assume that each section must be bought separately. All together, this is *not* the same thing as "Full Riot Gear" (see below).

Chain Mail

Rating 2/1, Strength 3, Defense –2, Speed –2, Cost ••

In the Middle Ages, medicine was woefully inadequate. An open wound was vulnerable to a number of fatal infections. Knights on the battlefield could stand bruises, but cuttings would eventually grow deadly. Chain mail helped to keep a knight safe: he'd still take a number of lumps and bumps and even broken bones, but at least he would be free from fatal infections. Chain mail is a fabric of interlocking metal rings draped over the torso like a shirt. Chain mail doesn't offer as much protection as plate armor, but is also far less cumbersome. A full suit of chain mail offers its protection to the entire body and not just the torso, but costs •••.

These days, chain mail can be purchased through various vanity outlets as accoutrements to fantasy garb or sexual roleplaying. These mail suits or shirts are made from aluminum instead of steel. They are lighter because of this (and feature –1 Defense and –1 Speed instead of those stats listed above), but also suffer less Durability. The Rating on vanity mail is 1/1 instead of 2/1. The vanity mail looks good and costs the same but offers less practical function.

Flak Jacket

Rating 1/2, Strength 1, Defense –1, Speed 0, Cost •

People assume that a bulletproof vest and a flak jacket are the same thing, but they aren't. Most cops or Marines wouldn't want to be caught dead wearing flak jackets. Popular during the Vietnam and Korean Wars, flak jackets are now outmoded technology. They were supposed to stop bullets and explosive shrapnel, but failed to do so to the level the military promised. Some flak and low-caliber bullets couldn't penetrate the vest. The rest punched clean through and into the tender flesh of the unsuspecting soldier.

A flak jacket isn't technically bulletproof. It stops some bullets, but any damage taken over its Rating is still lethal, not bashing. The bullet's impact isn't diminished over the entire vest, as is with true bulletproof armor, and the bullet can still cut through the material and into the body.

Flak jackets can be purchased at Army/Navy stores, at flea markets or on the Internet.

Full Riot Gear

Rating 3/4, Strength 2, Defense –2, Speed –1, Cost •••

Full riot gear protects almost all of the human body, even hands and feet. Moreover, this gear offers stronger protection than normal Kevlar armor. This armor is soft and flexible on the outside (using Kevlar), but hard on the inside (using armor plating made of metal or rigid polyethylene fibers). Riot gear also comes with any number of accoutrements: shell and bullet holders, built-in holsters, a half-dozen pockets, badge displays, radio holsters, even microphone tabs by the head and neck. The disadvantages of riot gear are that it's heavy and cumbersome: characters wearing it will have their movements hindered (as reflected in higher Defense and Speed penalties).

For a higher price (Cost ••••), a character can find riot gear that protects against armor-piercing weapons, as well. This gear offers the same statistics as normal riot gear, except that this riot gear offers equal protection against weapons with Armor Piercing (armor-piercing rounds, rapiers, screwdrivers).

Riot gear cannot be purchased on the open market. While savvy buyers might be able to find a vendor through the Internet or on the black market, such armor is generally available only through government or police channels.

Leather Armor

Rating 1/0, Strength 2, Defense –1, Speed 0, Cost •

Leather armor is a cheap and less effective alternative to chain or plate armor. Most leather armor consists of a tough leather shirt or leggings dipped in wax and hardened (a process called *courboulli*). Leather armor offers the same protection as reinforced clothing, such as a heavy jacket. Historically, knights without a liege or who served a destitute master wore the armor because they could afford nothing better. Some squires and peasants who were expected to fight were allowed to bear leather armor into battle. Today, a character can purchase this armor over the Internet or at Renaissance festivals.

Some vanity outlets sell a stronger version of leather armor. This armor consists of leather scales or leather strips riveted over one another, making the armor tougher. Such riveted leather, sometimes called *lamellar*, costs ••, but offers a Rating of 2/0 against attacks.

Lorica Segmentata

Rating 2/2, Strength 3, Defense –2, Speed –2, Cost ••••

Legionaries of the Roman Empire wore this complex, fitted armor, which consisted of a number of

segmented metal plates overlapping one another at various points. Creation of *lorica segmentata* (literally, "segmented armor") was considered an art, and only the legionaries were allowed to wear it.

It's worth noting that the vampires of the Lancea Sanctum still make use of this armor, as ceremonial garb and in actual combat. Their prophet, the nigh-mythical Longinus, purportedly wore this type of armor as he thrust the spear into the Messiah's side. Many Sanctified vampires even smear blood upon their armor to imitate how their founder's own *lorica* must've looked.

Plate Armor

Rating 3/2, Strength 4, Defense –2, Speed –3, Cost ••••

From the 13th to the 15th centuries, the finest knights and warriors wore plate armor. It weighed down the knight and his horse, but was still functional because it was fitted to the knight's body specifications. Helmet, cuirass, leggings, breastplate — all were made exclusively for an individual warrior.

These days, few wear plate armor except in combat simulations. Some eldritch creatures still cleave to the rigors of antiquated combat, and, therefore, still bear plate armor into ritual melee. If plate armor is not fitted to the wearer (say, if a character simply picks up a set of plate armor from a museum or collection and tries to use the armor in battle), the character suffers a –3 Defense penalty and a –4 Speed penalty instead of the Traits above, though the armor still provides the Rating and Strength requirements listed.

Reinforced Clothing

Rating 1/0, Strength 1, Defense 0, Speed 0, Cost •

Clothing won't stop much in the way of an attack, but if a leather jacket helps stop a switchblade or a heavy ski jacket weakens a gut punch, so be it. The Storyteller must decide what counts as reinforced clothing and what doesn't. A good rule of thumb is that any kind of layered or heavy clothing will do the trick. A T-shirt won't protect against squat, but a long overcoat or construction vest might help cushion a blow.

Sports Equipment

Rating 2/0, Strength 2, Defense –1, Speed –1, Cost •

Sports equipment is *meant* to take a beating. Kneepads help when falling, helmets reduce some of the damage when getting tackled or smacked with a hockey stick and shoulder pads absorb further impact. Characters looking for cheap armor could do worse than go shopping at a local sporting goods store (or a high school's sports closet). Better to go into a fight with a hockey mask and shoulder pads than with nothing at all.

Weak Points

No armor is seamless. Even a full suit has points of vulnerability. Most armor neglects to cover arm or leg joints. Some armor leaves the neck or wrists open. Other armor doesn't come with a helmet or lacks defense for one's limbs.

Aiming for unprotected parts requires a targeted attack with the appropriate penalties. If armor covers the majority of a target's body, however, a character can attempt to target her attack against that weak point. This is universally made at a –5 penalty. If such an attack is successful, the attacker can ignore the armor's Rating.

Only Weaponry or Firearms attacks can be made against armor's weak points.

Shields

A shield is one way of potentially turning attacks aside. Characters might use anything to keep blows from connecting: a medieval buckler, a riot police shield, even a garbage can lid.

Using a shield in battle can be tricky. In game terms, a character wielding a shield and a weapon in combat finds that her attacks suffer at the cost of additional Defense. All attacks made while holding a shield are done at a –2 penalty. Characters with the Ambidextrous Merit reduce this penalty to –1.

In close combat, a shield adds to a character's Defense score. If the character chooses *not* to use a weapon in combat while wielding the shield, she can figure in an additional +1 bonus to her Defense as she concentrates on avoiding harm, hiding behind the shield and using it to counter attacks.

In long-range combat, a shield isn't particularly useful. Bullets punch right through most shields and into a character's soft body. Unless otherwise specified (such as the "Ballistic Shield," below), shields do not offer bulletproof protection. However, all shields allow a user to claim bare concealment. In most cases, ranged attacks against someone holding a shield up are done at a –1 penalty.

Shields also have a Strength requirement. A character with insufficient Strength to use a given shield can't bring it to bear quickly enough, and it provides her no Defense bonus, though she still benefits from the concealment penalty to ranged attacks made against her.

Characters *can* attempt to attack with a shield. Shields are heavy and can be used to bash or batter an opponent. Generally, attacks made with a shield are done at a –1 penalty, and cause bashing damage if successful.

What follows are a few shield types that may see use in your game. These shields range from the archaic to the modern, and a few are improvised.

Ballistic Shield

Defense +2, Strength 3, Cost •••

Sometimes called a "body bunker," the ballistic shield can be a cop's best friend. When a riot or other situation rages out of control, this fortified personal shield might well save an officer's life.

Made of ballistic polycarbonate and steel, this shield protects against all manner of attacks, even those from firearms. This shield is generally about four feet high and two feet wide, covering the majority of the user. Most ballistic shields have small, clear windows toward the top of the shield (also bulletproof) so the wielders have a view of the combat without exposing their faces.

If used in close combat, the shield works normally, adding +2 to the user's Defense. The shield also works in long-range combat situations. A character using the ballistic shield counts as being substantially concealed, and, therefore, all firearm-related attacks made against him suffer a –3 penalty. Bullets that strike the shield do not penetrate, *unless* they're armor-piercing rounds. Attackers using armor-piercing rounds can ignore the –3 penalty, as the bullets cut clean through the shield's protection. Note that if the user fires his own weapon from his concealment, he does so at a –2 penalty (per the rules on pp. 163–164, in the **World of Darkness Rulebook**).

Ballistic Armor Wall

Defense n/a, Strength n/a, Cost ••••

An armor wall is rolled into combat on a set of wheels. The armor wall isn't precisely a shield, instead this provides cover against incoming attacks. Cops use the armor wall in particularly tense firefights or use several armor walls together to make a protective wall. One of the advantages of the armor wall is that it protects against all manner of bullets, including armor piercing.

Characters behind ballistic armor walls are covered in ranged combat (see "Cover," pp. 162–163, the **World of Darkness Rulebook**). For the purposes of determining whether bullets can pass through the armor wall, it has Durability 5, Size 7 and Structure 12. The armor wall provides no Defense in close combat.

Improvised Shields

Defense +1, Strength variable, Cost variable

Improvised shields should be assumed to offer +1 to Defense and require Strength 1 to wield. Improvised shields aren't made for combat, however, and suffer a number of problems. First, any attacks made while wielding an improvised shield are done at a –3 penalty. Second, most improvised shields don't last very long. Assume that an improvised shield lasts a number of hits equal to the shield's Structure. An umbrella won't withstand much damage (Structure 2, so it takes two hits before becoming useless), but a metal garbage can lid (Structure 4) or wooden chair (Structure 5) may deflect a few blows before becoming useless.

Medieval Shield

Defense +2, Strength 3, Cost ••

These days, medieval-style shields are relegated to museums, private collections and staged combat simulations, but sometimes, this sort of shield is all one has available. If a shield of this type can be grabbed off the wall in a historian's haven or if a user is adept with this shield because of years of simulated stage combat, then perhaps such a shield is better than nothing at all. Moreover, some creatures (elder Kindred, anachronistic mages) still prefer the antiquated feel of shield and sword.

Medieval shields come in various types (metal, hardened leather) and shapes (round, rectangular, kite). All medieval shields offer similar protection in close combat.

Riot Shield

Defense +2, Strength 2, Cost ••

These opaque, polycarbonate shields are about three feet tall and one foot wide with a slight curve. Cops use these shields to deflect bottles, rocks and the fists and weapons of rioters. Police officers also use riot shields *en masse* for quick crowd control, presenting a sudden and unified line of shielded officers pressing forward until the crowd moves or disperses.

Riot shields aren't bulletproof and offer no protection against firearms. However, unlike some other shields, riot shields do offer protection against thrown weapons, such as bottles, rocks or hatchets. A character wielding a riot shield in combat can count his full Defense (including the shield's +2 modifier) against incoming thrown attacks.

Prisons, in particular, arm some guards with electrified riot shields. These shields have a number of metal studs on the front that, when touched to a living being, deliver an 80,000-volt charge. Cops and guards can immobilize vast numbers of rioters or prisoners with this device. Any subject who comes into contact with one of these shields must succeed on a Stamina roll to remain standing. Failing this roll causes the subject to fall down and remain immobilized (but conscious) for a number of turns equal to five minus his Stamina score. Electrified riot shields offer the same protection against normal close-combat attacks, but cost more (Cost •••).

Security and Traps

Sometimes, it's not only about keeping your corporeal form safe. Keeping one's house or business safe might mean installing a few motion detectors and an alarm system or peppering the driveway with steel-jaw bear traps.

Security Systems

Breaking and entering can be a grim necessity in the World of Darkness. A victim may trespass at night to slit the throat of a sleeping oppressor, or during the day, when she plans to plunge a chair-leg stake through a vampire's dead heart. A thief may need to steal a Phry-

gian idol of the goddess Cybele from a local museum for his shadowy mistress. A character may plan to destroy strange alien viruses at an out-of-the-way science lab, shred personal files found back at her last job or even sneak a .38 snubnose into the courthouse to execute a troublesome judge.

Every one of these characters will be opposed. This opposition may not come from a human or monstrous presence, either. In all the above cases, each character will likely contend with some manner of security system, which may sound an alarm and place a call to the local police, fire department or whatever cruel *thing* owns the place. What is an intruder to do?

The first option is to sneak past the security system. This is possible with some home and small-business security systems. The doors and windows are sure to be protected, but what about vents? Or a cellar door? Some thieves and interlopers have even managed to pull a Santa Claus and make it down antiquated chimneys. (Newer chimneys make such invasion impossible.) Alternately, maybe the trespasser got in the house or office during the day (used the bathroom and hid in the ductwork, was brought inside a shipping crate, pretended to be an exterminator and secreted himself away in a janitor's closet) and merely has to hide from motion sensors and cameras.

When possible, sneaking past a security feature involves a Dexterity + Stealth roll (an instant action when the situation arises). This roll requires only one success, but may be hampered by penalties (–2 for motion sensors, –4 for automated cameras). Alternately, a character may have bonuses as well: black clothing, soft shoes, a blueprint of the location or alarm schematics may all add +1 or more to the roll. An invading character must roll every time she enters a secure room and wishes to pass by unnoticed. Every camera and motion sensor must be overcome individually.

Some intruders recognize the danger inherent to this. One false step, one poorly stifled cough or one diligent guard watching a closed-circuit surveillance screen, and it's curtains for the invader. Plus, some particularly sophisticated systems cannot be fooled by sheer stealth.

In this case, it's either fool the security system or bypass it. Fooling it involves a character being somebody she's not. Perhaps she steals a key-card from a drunk employee at a bar, or maybe she cuts off that employee's finger and uses it on the biometric fingerprint scanner. Maybe she cons (or intimidates or supernaturally "convinces") a maid into giving her the access code. The Storyteller should encourage a number of social situations and dice rolls to make such successes or failures happen.

The other option is bypassing a security system. Characters have two ways of accomplishing this. The first is performed on site. A thief may need to reconfigure a simple closed-circuit system, and, on more complex systems, she might be required to actually rewire a number pad or other entry device. Such attempts cannot be performed at a leisurely pace, however. In regard to all security systems, an intruder usually has a period of 10 to 60 seconds in which to perform her task. Failing to do so in the appropriate time frame will set off the alarm. (More information can be found on "Bypassing Security Systems" on p. 74, **World of Darkness Rulebook**.)

The second way is to hack the system. Well over half of the security systems presented below are controlled by security companies that sell the basic setup but then charge a monthly fee to keep the system going. The majority of these systems are controlled by computer, meaning that they are vulnerable to an able hacker. Hacking the actual computer at the security company is technically easier than doing so from afar. It also means that a character must first gain access to the security company (rarely easy) and then gain access to a terminal. Most hackers prefer to attack a security setup from the comfort of their own systems. While harder to do from a distance (–2 penalty to Hacking rolls; see p. 57, **World of Darkness Rulebook**), the hacker remains safely off-premises. When breaking and reconfiguring a security system via computer, the hacker may learn the passwords to the system, download the schematics or reconfigure it so it works only for her.

What follows are a number of generic security systems and their potential configurations, meant to provide basic guidelines on what characters might want to buy to protect their homes or businesses, as well as what other characters might encounter when trying to break into locations.

Security System Configurations

Security systems come enabled with a number of variables that may be useful, but unexpected. For instance, most normal motion sensors are PIR detectors, also called "Passive Infrared." These sensors rely upon being properly tuned to a range of body temperatures, usually anywhere from 90–100°F. Unless configured to accept a wider range of temperatures, most motion detectors would *not* detect a vampire.

Some people have health-based security systems. These systems provide buttons around the house for the infirm or elderly so they can call for medical attention. Particularly sophisticated versions wirelessly monitor an individual's vital signs and automatically call 911 if they drop.

Some creatures have hearing so sensitive that they can detect the subsonic modulation when a silent alarm has been tripped. All werewolves and some vampires (those with Heightened Senses in particular) can perceive the faint, normally inaudible sound that a silent alarm makes by succeeding on a Wits + Composure roll.

Many alarm systems are also tied into other detection systems, going off when sensing fire, flood, carbon monoxide or burst pipes.

Security System, Basic

Cost ••

This is the security system you'll find protecting apartments, town homes or small houses. It's possible that a fool might protect his mansion with this system, but it's unlikely. This core protection defends only the outside of the house from invasion. This basic system doesn't put motion sensors inside or offer a zone-by-zone breakdown. Basic security offers a 60-second (20 turn) window in which a legitimate user (or intruder) can de-activate the system. After that period, the alarm goes off and the security company will contact the police, who are expected to show up within 15 to 30 minutes. Breaking into this type of security system (per the extended "Bypass Security System" roll) requires five successes.

Such a system generally has some combination of the following:

Touchpad: Inside the door is a touchpad for passcode entry (always numbers, never letters). If a character can pick the lock and get to the pad, he can operate at a +2 modifier on the Bypass roll. Note, however, that lock-picking begins the 60-second countdown. Each turn spent picking a lock is a turn diminished from this timer.

Lights and Siren: Basic systems have a nearly deafening alarm. This wailing siren or klaxon may be accompanied by flashing lights, coruscating just outside the front door. These lights are meant to notify neighbors and signal arriving police, and also tend to scare away trespassers. Neighbors or other potential witnesses may need to succeed on a Wits + Composure roll to notice the lights or sounds.

Two Windows, Two Doors: Most basic systems don't technically cover all entry and exit points. A good rule of thumb is that two doors are covered, as are two windows. Everything else is untouched by the alarm system. A character might be able to discern which points are protected and which are not by making a successful Wits + Larceny roll. Penalties may arise (–2 for darkness, for instance).

Motion Sensor Light: This system usually offers a single motion-based light at the front door. Anyone coming to the front door is subject to being bathed in sudden, harsh light. Fooling the light requires slow movement and an extended Dexterity + Stealth roll. A character must achieve five total successes, and each roll is equal to 15 seconds (five turns) worth of time. If at any point the character moves suddenly (flinches away from a gunshot, sneezes, turns his head toward a sound), he voids his stealth and sets off the motion sensor. Setting off the motion sensor light does *not* set off the alarm. If it did, every raccoon sniffing around the driveway would bring the police.

Security System, Intermediate

Cost •••

This is likely the level of security found in middle-class homes in both cities and suburbs. Such a system offers more than mere perimeter protection, and provides security all throughout the house, usually by using motion detectors in the upper corners of various rooms. This level of security is also present in most small businesses and offices.

Intermediate security allows a 45-second (15 turn) window in which a user or intruder can de-activate the system. After that, a silent alarm goes off and alerts the security company, which then calls the home or business owner (by mainline or cell phone) and asks for a password. If the owner provides the correct password in 30 seconds, the alarm is shut down. If she does not provide the correct password during that time, the system contacts the police. Unless otherwise prevented from doing so, they show within five to 10 minutes. Bypassing this system requires 10 successes on the extended roll.

This system may have one or all of the following features:

Touchscreen: More than a simple number pad, a touchscreen is a computer with a touch-sensitive liquid-crystal display. Attempts to bypass directly at the screen invokes a –2 penalty, because of the sensitive electronics. However, because this is a computer, a hacking attempt can be made at the touchscreen (which means taking time to pick the lock). Intermediate systems may have several touchscreens throughout the house, such as in the bedrooms or the kitchen.

All Doors, All Windows: Every point of entry is covered. Windows are also protected by a glass-break alarm, which is set off by the sound of glass shattering or overtly vibrating.

Off-Site Access: Owners can operate their security systems from outside the home. This may involve a telephone call or programmable key fob. In doing so, a character can sound the alarm or turn it on or off, and can program lights or other electronic devices, such as garage doors or thermostats, to respond by the touch of a button. If access is granted via a keychain device, that device can be stolen (a contested roll, see "Sleight of Hand," p. 75 of the **World of Darkness Rulebook**). Alternately, characters can attempt to build a device themselves that will "hack" the system. Doing so requires an extended Wits + Crafts roll that suffers a –3 penalty (for improvising such a physical hack). Ten total successes are required; each roll is equal to 30 minutes.

Zones: The security company can tell which zone has been breached. The perimeter of the location is a single zone. Other zones are usually set up by room. Each zone is protected by a motion sensor. Characters walking through these areas must first disable a zone via the touchscreen. A character walking through his house to get a midnight bowl of ice cream runs the risk of setting off his own alarm if he's not careful.

Panic Button: Intermediate systems come with a single button in the house that can be pressed to call the police. This button is not connected to the rest of the system, and, if the system is disabled, the button still works. It's actually connected to the phone lines. If these lines are cut or the location's power is turned off, the button will not work. Such buttons are usually kept in a safe location away from the reach of children, and are often at least partially obscured (in the bedroom behind a vase, for instance).

Security System, Advanced

Cost ••••

Advanced systems are typically found in large office buildings, labs, some lower-level government buildings and high-cost homes (mansions, estates, elaborate condominiums). This level of security is deeply complex. Advanced security will allow for 20 seconds (6 turns) in which a valid or invalid user can clear or bypass the system. Cameras focus in where the breach is occurring even before those 20 seconds are completed. Once the time is up, the system alerts police or building security. They show as fast as possible.

Bypassing this system requires 15 successes to disarm, and, because the system is particularly sophisticated, the roll is made at a –2 penalty. A character can disable or modify the security system parameters (such as closing down elevator security or modifying password or keycard restrictions) from afar via computer. Doing so requires 15 successes on the Hacking roll. This roll is also made at –2 due to the sophistication of the system.

Some or all of the following elements may be present in this level of system:

Video Surveillance: High-tech security systems usually have video cameras connected to a closed-circuit TV system. These cameras are generally placed at all foot-traffic locations, such as hallways, elevators and offices. The cameras are meant to dissuade intrusion and to deter employees from stealing office supplies or engaging in any kind of corporate espionage. Cameras are generally not found in the lesser-traveled parts of a home or building such as ducts, access passages, elevator shafts, even some stairwells. Most cameras in this level of security travel a fixed path, and are not triggered by motion. They have a cone of sight, which is the area that the camera can see at any given time (if the camera moves, so does the cone). Sneaking past this cone requires a Wits + Stealth roll. (Modifiers to this might be +2 for a crowded hall or for an area in which the camera cannot differentiate between intruders and normal passersby or –2 for an empty room that offers no shadows or objects behind which to skulk.). After succeeding on the Stealth roll, a character may sneak past the cameras into a new location — and potentially a new camera's cone of sight — or she may attempt to dismantle the camera with a Dexterity + Crafts roll. Success indicates the camera no longer has visual, but the system is alerted to the camera's failure. Exceptional success means that the system is unaware of the device's breakdown.

Key-Card: Some systems do not require passcodes for access. Instead, the system's owner furnishes employees, agents or family members with key-cards. Those who possess these cards feed them into slot scanners or pass them over magnetic scanners like those found at grocery or department stores. The key-card might be as big as a credit card or as small as a key fob. These systems are tricky to fool (they're so sensitive that they don't always properly read the *real* key-card, much less a fake), so the only reliable option is to steal a key-card from somebody, which requires success on a contested Sleight of Hand roll.

Changing Codes: Some systems still rely on passcodes, but make it so it's difficult to learn a code or give one out. These codes might change daily or even vary every five minutes. If the time between changes is long (a day or more), the system may email employees the code when it changes. If the code changes sooner than that, the company provides employees with watches, key fobs or phones that wirelessly receive the new code as it changes. Stealing one of these would require the appropriate Sleight of Hand roll.

Fingerprint Biometrics: In some systems, access is granted to a building (or to a particular room, computer or safe) by using a biometric scanner. At this level, this is almost always fingerprint recognition. Aside from chopping off an employee's digit and using it to gain entry, the machine can be fooled in other ways. First is through computer hacking. If an individual can gain computer access to the system network (on- or off-site), he can do what's called a "replay attack," which means looping the last valid fingerprint over and over again. Any finger scanned for recognition ends up being identified as this last valid fingerprint. (Reconfiguring any biometric systems to do this requires eight successes on the extended Hacking roll.) Similarly, some scanners can be fooled by simple techniques such as smearing fatty residue across the scanner, dusting it with graphite powder or applying hot steam to the device. Doing this requires five successes on a Bypass Security System roll. Success on this roll doesn't diminish any of the system's other features, and the fingerprint scanner returns to full functionality within 30 seconds.

Access Tracking: A number of corporations actually track the movement of their employees through a building. The system may track them room-to-room or only when they travel between departments. The system shows the exact time each employee arrives in and leaves every area of the building. Some systems require key-card or passcode entry at every doorway. Every time the employee's card or code enters the system, the system logs it. Day after day, an employee's movements are tracked accordingly, painting a picture of where she goes and when. Alternately, each employee might be fitted with an RFID (Radio Frequency Identification) tag, monitoring her location. The system is likely sophisticated enough to flag when someone is in an area that she shouldn't be.

Security System, Bleeding Edge

Cost •••••

Few are willing to shell out the bucks for a bleeding-edge system like this. It's too much money, too much trouble. These systems are universally hand-designed, and aren't "canned" like most other setups. Only the richest of the rich possess such protective technological marvels. Characters may find bleeding-edge systems in

museums such as the Louvre or the MOMA, the sensitive substations of the intelligence community or in the homes of paranoid billionaires.

Bypassing one of these systems requires Herculean effort. A total of 20 successes is required on the roll, and the intricate system confers an automatic –3 penalty to any attempts. Moreover, the alarm trips after 10 seconds (meaning that an attempt must be successful within three turns, as the alarm will sound on the fourth). Finally, getting a hold of system schematics is all but impossible, because these systems are practically as unique as snowflakes. The designers may have only a few copies of the blueprints, and they are kept locked away beneath their own bleeding-edge security.

Bleeding-edge systems are likely to have many of the features of earlier systems (cameras, for instance), and also might include any of the following elements:

Full-Body Biometrics: The biometrics scanners in this system don't just scan for fingerprints. A full-body scanner checks for fingerprints and two of the following: voice recognition, eye pattern, handprint, facial markers or gait analyzer. This means the system can identify individuals by the way they walk, the way they talk or all the unique features on the hand or face or in the eye. Some systems even reference national databases of biometric information and can identify criminals, terrorists or government agents.

Pressure Pads: Anybody can buy or rig a cheap pressure pad under a small carpet. Anyone who steps on the pad connects two contacts and triggers an alarm. But these highest-end security systems aren't content with just one. No, usually *every* floor is riddled with them. Each tile or square foot of wood is sensitive to pressure. When a room is closed off and the security is activated, any pressure upon those pads signals the alarm. Getting past them requires either turning them off, or somehow floating or flying over them. They trigger at 20 pounds of pressure.

Gates: In many mansions and museums, being caught trespassing in an off-limits room means staying in that room. The reason for this is that triggering any kind of sensor (motion, pressure, infrared) in a restricted area means the entries and exits become suddenly sealed by steel gates. Whether made of bars or steel mesh, these gates come crashing down and generally hold intruders indefinitely. Assume these gates to have the following stats: Durability 3, Size 6, Structure 9.

Safe Room: Safe rooms, made famous in the film *Panic Room*, are growing in popularity. Little more than a heavily fortified boxy room with one door, the safe room is a combination bunker, bank vault and bomb shelter. These rooms offer 10 inches of concrete defense on all sides, reinforced by steel sheeting and a steel door. The room is monitored by its own camera and security system, both of which remain unconnected to the main system. If the primary security is bypassed, the panic room's system remains active. These rooms generally have 5+ hours of battery-powered backup lighting and offer a separate phone line with which to contact some manner of security. Safe rooms should be stocked with the appropriate survival items (first aid, flashlight, food and water), and may contain other additions (weapons, valuable goods). Assume that the door to a safe room has the following stats: Durability 5, Size 7, Structure 12.

Security System, Dummy

Cost •

Characters without a lot of money (or who don't want to spend it on an expensive system) may buy the physical trappings of a security system without all the technology to back it up. A dummy security system might come with stickers to plaster on the windows, or a sign to post on the front lawn ("Protected by WLD Security!"). Fake systems also offer dummy items such as motion sensors, cameras and touchpads. Other versions might threaten "Beware of Dog" or even play a soundtrack of a dog barking triggered by motion at the front door. Retail stores may similarly eschew real security for *faux* protection. The theft detectors at the door might look real, but are really just big plastic look-alikes. These fakes generally fool the lower-level criminals who aren't willing to make trouble for cheap DVD players. Any trespasser who comes upon the dummy system may want to scrutinize it with an Intelligence + Larceny roll to determine whether or not this is a real system or just a mock-up.

Cheap as Free Security

Crafty characters can conjure up easy (and mostly free) security on the fly when necessary. Such gutter security won't be pretty, but it works. Only one success is required on a Wits + Crafts roll to make most of these rudimentary setups. Some examples are the following:

• Sometimes, homeless people scatter a five- or 10-foot radius of peanut shells or broken glass around them while they sleep. Anyone stepping on the debris will wake up the vagrant.

• Kids know how to do it. In protecting a treehouse, a child might string up a fishing wire or string with cans, washers or wind chimes along its length. Anyone coming into contact with these items will make a noise. Such primitive security isn't relegated only to kids.

• While sleeping in a motel room or even his own bedroom, a character can pile up a bunch of junk against the door. Anything from brooms to paint cans work. Anyone trying to get in through that door will make quite a racket.

• Get a dog. No, a dog is not technically free (and a dog doesn't require a Crafts roll to maintain), but dogs can be purchased from most shelters for just a few bucks. Dogs are territorial creatures, and tend to bark at potential intruders.

Supernatural Security

Vampires make frequent use of security systems. Few have the system autodial the police or fire upon intrusion, however, because what Kindred wants police breaking down the door to his haven? Generally, the Kindred prefer to have the security system autodial mortals within the Damned's employ or held under their sway, whether this means a well-paid security force, thrall bodyguards or a "My Gal Friday" ghoul assistant. Also, the Damned might reconfigure their motion detectors to sense a wider range of body temperatures, to include the chilly bodies of their fellow undead.

Some vampires furnish their security systems with supernatural modifications. Rumors tell of a Crúac ritual (sometimes called "Hag Eyes") that involves drizzling lines of Vitae across doorways and windowsills, and anything that crosses those lines shows up as foggy images in the vampire's mind for a single moment. The vampire knows the line has been crossed and, potentially, who crossed it. Some say that the Kindred of the Lancea Sanctum and Ordo Dracul both have managed to protect their sanctuaries in a number of strange ways. Some Kindred invoke invisible barriers that, when crossed, make the trespassers feel weak and confused. Other Kindred use strange sorcery to keep animals like snakes, crows, dogs and cats hiding in the shadows and functioning as living security systems (ones with fang, tooth and talon).

Urban werewolves do not reject modern technology out of hand, and may use such systems to protect their homes or territories. Some spirits may be bullied or cajoled into keeping eyes toward the werewolves' territories as well acting as invisible eyes and ears. Lupines both in and out of cities also make use of traps (see below). Finally, any security system combined with the "Warding Gifts of the Forsaken" (pp. 144–146 of **Werewolf: The Forsaken**) can be quite powerful in guarding a pack's territory.

Mages, too, use mortal security, enhanced with magic. Legends tell of "living" security systems that actively oppose intruders with a kind of alien consciousness. Other stories speak of ensorcelled pit traps that capture interlopers and lock them away in dark, shadowy places outside the normal boundaries of the physical world. Some stories even suggest that mages have learned how to harness or enslave the power of restless ghosts to watch over the mages' domains. The mages of the Mysterium in particular are quite proud of their vast libraries, and protect them with whatever is available.

Traps

Traps do not call the police when triggered and cannot be de-activated with the proper password. Characters setting off traps might find themselves held fast by a rusty set of metal teeth or break a leg toppling into a dark pit.

Who would use such cruel inventions as primitive security? Survivalists might make use of human-sized traps to contain or even kill intruders. Werewolves and their wolf-blooded kin living out in the wilderness may not care to rely upon technology to keep their territory safe, and may dot the area with pit traps or snares to surprise unwary trespassers. Some vampires and dark sorcerers make use of elaborate trap systems to catch and kill prey. Those mortals or other creatures who find themselves living in dangerous areas might similarly set out traps a little bigger than usual, just in case.

Some traps can be purchased, but most must be rigged and hidden. This might mean concealing a trip wire, covering and camouflaging a pit, or hiding a jaw trap. Concealing a trap requires a Wits + Larceny roll, which is contested against any witnesses' Wits + Composure or Wits + Investigation rolls to spot the trap before triggering it. Characters hiding a trap may gain bonuses up to +3 if the environment is rich with potential concealment (dense forest, trash heap, pitch darkness) or penalties up to –3 if the environment provides little opportunity for concealment (well-lit office, empty warehouse, busy street).

Each type of trap comes with a number of important statistics. First is a trap's Damage rating. If a character triggers a trap, he automatically suffers the Damage rating. The same number of dice is also rolled, with any successes being added to the total damage done. So, a trap with a Damage of 4 inflicts four Health points automatically. Four dice are then rolled. Each success adds another point of damage to the total. If two successes are rolled, the total damage is six. Some traps allow for a character's Defense to apply to this roll. Damage can be bashing or lethal, and is listed with each trap.

Traps also come with a Rigging Modifier. Some traps are easier to set up than others. This modifier adds or subtracts from a character's roll when rigging the trap (see below).

Rigging Traps

Dice Pool: Dexterity + Crafts + equipment

Action: Extended (five–15 successes; one roll is equal to 30 minutes of work)

Rigging or building a trap is an extended action. Characters may purchase some traps, while others require improvisation. Traps might be designed to ensnare, harm or even kill an interloper. Some traps are of simple construction (dig a body-sized pit; five successes required) or complex (set up a trip wire that, when triggered, fires a shotgun blast at a targeted area; 15 successes required). The more complex the trap, the higher the successes required.

Some traps require specific tools. A shovel would be necessary to dig a pit, an axe might be necessary to chop down trees and so on. Other items necessary might be wire, knives, pliers or the like. If the character lacks some of the necessary equipment, she operates at a –2 penalty when making her trap. Missing all of the proper equipment means she cannot attempt to make the trap.

If a character wishes to create a less damaging trap, she may voluntarily reduce the automatic damage a particular

trap inflicts (padding the bottom of a pit, for example), though the damage dice may not be reduced in this manner.

At the Storyteller's discretion, a character may make the rigging roll with Survival in place of Crafts. This should only be allowed if the character is making the trap in the wilderness. The trap should similarly be made *from* the surrounding environment (trees, rocks, ravines) and not from human-made items.

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: The character suffers two points of damage (bashing or lethal, depending upon the severity of the trap) as she triggers an early and unfortunate response from the device. She may fall into the pit she dug or might accidentally close the trap upon her.

Failure: The character makes no progress toward crafting a useful trap.

Success: The item comes off as designed.

Exceptional Success: The character completes the trap with alarming speed. She can also add +1 to either the roll to conceal the trap, or can add +1 to the trap's Damage rating.

Suggested Equipment: Appropriate tools such as hammer, saw or shovel (+1 per item)

Possible Penalties: Distractions (–1), Dangerous environment (–2)

Caltrops (Tire Spikes)

Damage 1(L), Rigging 3, Durability 3, Size 1, Structure 4, Cost ••

Caltrops look like a child's jacks except they're black, metal and spiked. A character can litter a roadway or passage with caltrops in the hopes of doing damage to a car's tires or a target's feet. Alternately, caltrops can be purchased in a long strip and laid across a roadway.

If caltrops damage a car's tires, the tires may rupture (see "Tire Statistics" on p. 142 of the **World of Darkness Rulebook**). Against vehicle tires, a horse's hooves or anything with a Size of 8 or greater, the Damage trait of caltrops is 2(L); they do two automatic lethal damage, and two dice are rolled for additional damage.

Caltrop damage automatically bypasses one point of an item's Durability. If done to a person or animal, caltrops are considered to have Armor Piercing 1.

Caltrops are easy to rig, as they require little more than strategic placement on the road or walkway. Assume that this requires only five successes on the Rigging Traps roll. This roll can be made at +3 (per the Rigging modifier listed above). Characters can try to make their own caltrops, which requires 10 successes on the Rigging Traps roll.

Hiding caltrops, on the other hand, can be difficult as they're obvious. Characters can attempt to use areas of sunlight and shadow to hide the spikes, but doing so can be difficult. The Wits + Larceny roll to hide them is made at –3 dice. Characters who spot the spikes may avoid them safely. If driving in poor conditions, the Storyteller may require characters to make a Dexterity + Drive roll to actively avoid the caltrops.

Deadfall

Damage variable, Rigging variable, Durability 3, Size 5, Structure 8, Cost n/a

A deadfall trap is a rock or other heavy weight supported by a locked right-angle bar. When someone or something trips across a hidden trigger, the locked bar moves out of position. When this happens, the weight falls upon the unsuspecting victim.

Assume that for every 100 pounds of weight put into the deadfall, it will do one point of bashing damage. However, for every 100 pounds put into the deadfall, the Rigging modifier goes down by one to a maximum of –5. So, any object equal to or heavier than 500 pounds confers the full –5 penalty to the Rigging Traps roll.

A character can make the damage of a deadfall trap lethal. Adding in sharp objects (broken glass, nails, metal edges) will make the damage lethal, but also makes the deadfall trap harder to handle and rig. Making the item lethal confers a –1 penalty to the Rigging Traps roll in addition to any modifiers that exist already (maximum –5 penalty).

Rigging a deadfall trap requires a total of 10 successes on the roll. Hiding the deadfall is difficult, because it requires concealing a large mass from an unsuspecting individual. Assume this roll to conceal is made at a –3 penalty, though appropriate environmental cover may nullify this.

A character who fails to see the trap and then triggers it can still apply her Defense against the damage roll. A character still takes the base Damage rating of the deadfall, but can potentially avoid further damage by rolling out of the way or moving with the trap's motion (as reflected by her Defense).

Jaw Trap

Damage 2 (B/L), Rigging 2, Durability 3, Size 2, Structure 5, Cost •

The jaw trap (sometimes called a leghold trap) is, as the name suggests, a metal jaw held open. When an animal or person steps on a plate found in the center of the trap, the jaws close upon the limb. Jaw traps are common among hunters and farmers looking to trap small game, coyotes or wolves.

This trap can do bashing or lethal damage. Jaw traps that do lethal damage have metal jaws with sharp, serrated edges. Traps that do bashing damage are without the teeth and are simply flat metal jaws. Characters trapped in one of these can take a turn to escape. Doing so requires a successful Strength + Athletics roll made with a –1 penalty due to the distracting pain. A character can find his arm caught in a jaw trap by clever trappers who place "bait" in the concealed center of the trap. When a character reaches for the bait (a watch, a wallet, a small pouch), he triggers the plate, and the trap snaps shut on his wrist or forearm. Characters attempting to escape this manner of trap make the Strength + Athletics roll at a –3 because of the ensnared arm.

Animals without opposing thumbs cannot free themselves in this way, though some creatures such as coyotes are known for chewing off limbs to manage escapes.

Setting up a jaw trap requires five successes on the Rigging Traps roll.

Pit Trap

Damage variable, Rigging 2, Durability n/a, Size variable, Structure n/a, Cost n/a

Digging a 10x10 foot pit requires five successes on the Rigging Traps roll. For every additional five square feet added to the pit, another success is required on this roll. A pit 20 x 20 feet would require seven total successes. A pit's Damage rating is counted by the pit's depth. A pit does one point of Damage per 10 feet down. A pit 10 feet deep would have a Damage of 1, whereas a pit 50 feet deep would have a Damage of 5.

A character can add other modifications to a pit trap to make it more dangerous. Lining the bottom of the pit with sharp objects makes the damage lethal. Making the walls of the pit slick, smooth or poorly angled confers a –3 penalty to any rolls made in an effort to escape the pit. Each such modification subtracts a die from the character's Rigging Traps roll.

Concealing a pit trap requires covering it somehow, perhaps with a leaf-strewn blanket, a nest of sticks and debris or a rug or carpet. If an unsuspecting victim does not notice the trap and falls into it, she may try to escape with a Climbing roll (see p. 64, the **World of Darkness Rulebook**). This roll is extended if the pit is deeper than 10 feet, per the "Climbing" rules.

Some pits don't need to be dug, and Rigging Traps roll can be ignored. A loosened sewer grate on an abandoned street, a natural gulley or chasm out in the woods or a concealed manhole may all count as an already existent pit that can be used to trap an unwitting victim, though the pit must still be appropriately concealed with a Wits + Larceny roll contested against a witness' Wits + Composure roll.

Shit and Poison

Any trap that causes grievous injury and cuts flesh can be made worse by smearing the sharp parts with feces or poison.

The most famous example of this was the punji stake, a simple tool used by the Vietcong in the Vietnam war. The punji was a sharpened stick (as small as a pencil or as large as a spear) placed either at the bottom of a concealed pit trap or simply on the ground along well-worn paths. American GIs would fall onto or step upon these sticks, and they would pierce skin or go right up through a boot. The sticks were covered in fecal matter to help promote infection and keep the soldier out of combat in the long-term.

The feces needn't be on a stick, though. Feces can be rubbed on any sharp or pointed surface. Poison or other toxins, too, can be made to function in this way. A character might lace a trap with snake venom, bug spray, diseased blood, a soporific drug or even liquid LSD. Stories say one urban terror kills from afar, lacing small, hollow needles with potent poisons and infected blood. They say police have found these needles in the coin return slots of pay phones, in the colorful children's ball pits at fast food playgrounds and in the toilet paper dispensers in public restrooms.

Refer to "Poisons and Toxins" on p. 181 of the **World of Darkness Rulebook** for information on the effects of various toxins upon the human body. Excrement has a Toxicity rating (injection) of 3. The Stamina + Resolve roll to resist is extended (each roll represents one hour) and suffers a –3 penalty. Ten successes are required to overcome the infection, and every failed roll inflicts a point of bashing damage, which refuses to heal until all 10 successes are accumulated. If *any* of the Resistance rolls fail, an infected character begins to suffer a –2 penalty to all *other* rolls, which doesn't go away until all damage inflicted by the sickness is healed. Bed rest grants a +2 bonus to the Resistance roll.

Projectile Trap

Damage variable, Rigging –3, Durability 3, Size 3, Structure 6, Cost n/a

Making a projectile trap involves rigging a projectile weapon (likely a firearm) to fire at an area when triggered. This trap might involve tripping a wire or stepping on a plate. Either way, this action literally pulls the trigger on the weapon.

The Damage of such a device is the Damage of the firearm used, halved (rounded up). A small revolver, normally Damage 2, would have a Damage 1. A rifle in the trap normally does Damage 5, but here would do Damage 3. The trap's damage is lethal and automatic. A number of dice equal to this rating must also be rolled (per all traps). Successes on this roll are taken as additional damage, but the target of the trap can apply her Defense, potentially lessening or obviating this additional harm.

Making a trap like this is difficult. It requires 15 total successes on the Rigging Traps roll, and this roll is also made at a –3 penalty (per the Rigging modifier listed above).

Snare

Damage 1(B), Rigging 1, Durability 1, Size 5, Structure 6, Cost n/a

At its core, a snare is a hidden loop of rope, twine or wire meant to capture a creature's limb and detain it. Most snares drag the captives and hoist them up in the air, making it all the harder to escape. Like a deadfall, a snare is not purchased but built.

Making a snare requires seven successes on the Rigging Traps roll. The snare made with this roll can hoist a creature weighing up to 200 pounds. Anything more than that is too heavy. For every 50 pounds of weight above 200 that the character wishes the snare to hold, she must gain one additional success on the roll. If she wants the trap to hold a 300-pound creature, she would need nine total successes.

Characters who are snagged by snares will find it difficult to escape. One must be able to reach upward while dangling and attempt to undo or loosen the noose. A character must succeed on a Strength + Dexterity to do this, but does so with a –4 penalty. An exception to this is if the character has a knife or other sharp object with which to cut the snare, at which point he must succeed on a Strength + Weaponry roll with only a –2 modifier.

They call me
hnakaung shay,
"long-nose,"
because I'm
American. They watch
me like nervous crows
until I pull out the case
and pop the latch. Then
they swoon
and smile.
These Burmese belong to one of
the 100 warlord armies controlling
this GOD-FUCKED country. It's all been
sliced up so thin: every few miles, the laws
and the names change, but the DRUGS and GUNS
and MONEY all stay the same. I'm just here to
sell my wares.
We stand there in the sun, trucks all around us,
guns pointed at my back. The main guy — Kun Lone, I
think is his name — is one of the higher-ups in the North-
ern Shan Director's Army. Kun Lone been trying to bring heroin back
to this region ever since it was taken over by jungle-hut meth labs
run by bloodsucking monsters. That's his business. What's in the
case is mine.
He pulls out one of the pistols.
It's a RUGER MARK III HUNTER, stainless steel and shiny as
hell. He looks at his reflection in the barrel. My heart's
beating. I know he could kill me now, take my goods and
drive away, leaving my body for a hungry leopard. But
the look in his eyes is a good one.
It's funny.
The Burmese love pistols. They're hard to get.
The AKs, the Kalashnikovs, they're easy.
More common than shoes. Pistols, though,
they're a mark of distinction,
pistols are art.
He throws me a bag of money and
closes the case, then offers me a
snaggletooth smile. It's a done
deal, and *I'm still alive.*

AMEN.

Chapter Six: Weaponry and the World of Darkness

"Now I'm hinding in Honduras
I'm a desperate man
Send lawyers, guns, and money
The shit has hit the fan."
– Warren Zevon, Lawyers, Guns, and Money

For a character who blithely abuses the items presented in this book without giving a passing thought to local laws, consequences might include a police raid team blasting its way through his front door at three o'clock in the morning as a tear gas grenade sails through his bedroom window. This chapter examines the legal, social and practical issues that face an armed character in the United States and selected other nations around the world.

Can I Really . . .?

Yes. The laws cited in here are current as of this book's writing (mid-2005). We've chosen to present the real world as a baseline and let individual Storytellers adapt it to their own World of Darkness games as they see fit. Depending on the kind of game you want to run, your chronicle's authorities may be corruptly lax, allowing the black market to run rampant, or the authorities may exercise iron-fisted control to keep anyone who might oppose their minions from legally arming himself, using weapons laws as yet another tool to crush potential rabble-rousers.

Weapon ownership is a highly controversial political or moral issue for citizens of any nation. This book makes no attempt to argue any side of the issue. As always, we encourage you to educate yourself, then formulate your own informed opinions.

Critically Important Note: Do not consider anything in this chapter to be legal advice for you, the reader. Do your own research and verify your findings before taking any action that might be against the law where you live. We are not responsible for your illegal antics.

Gearing Up

The first step in using and abusing weapons is, of course, getting them. A character who wants to get her hands on a weapon has several options available to her.

Civilian Weapons

In the United States, federal law broadly defines the weapons that private citizens can freely own. No restrictions on melee weapons are in place. A civilian-legal firearm may not be fully automatic and may not be classified as a "destructive device" or "any other weapon" under the 1934 National Firearms Act (see Items Not Child-Safe, following). Rifles must have barrels at least 16 inches long, shotguns must have barrels at least 18 inches long and all shoulder-fired weapons must be at least 26 inches in overall length (with collapsible stocks fully extended, if applicable). Some states have enacted additional restrictions, but these laws apply nationwide.

The most obvious method of purchasing a firearm is to buy one through a gun dealer. Federal law requires that the seller perform a background check in any firearm transaction if the seller has a federal firearms license (e.g., is a gun dealer) or if the buyer is a resident of a different state. Background checks typically take less than 10 minutes during normal business hours. The seller calls the FBI's Criminal Justice Information Services Division and provides the buyer's name and Social Security number (SSN). If the background check comes up clean (see sidebar), the purchase has the federal government's seal of approval. Some states mandate a waiting period

for purchases, a delay of several days between the transaction and the time the buyer can take possession of the gun, but there is no federal law to this effect.

Purchasing a firearm from another private citizen does not require a background check so long as the seller and the buyer live in the same state. Some states require registration of all such transactions, while other states do not regulate them at all; the latter include Alabama, Alaska, Georgia, Idaho, Kentucky, Maine, Mississippi, New Hampshire, South Carolina, Texas, Vermont and West Virginia. Even in states that require no record keeping, a private seller is still liable if he sells a firearm to someone prohibited from possessing one. If a private citizen sells a gun registered to him and the weapon is later used in a crime, police will trace the weapon back to him, not to the actual owner.

Serial Numbers

Every firearm is manufactured with a unique serial number. This number is stamped or imprinted on the major parts of the gun: the receiver at a minimum, and often the barrel and frame as well. The serial number is how retailers and governments record transactions and ownership of specific weapons. Being in possession of a firearm with an obscured or removed serial number is a felony offense. When police seize a firearm as evidence, they typically run its serial number against a national database to see if the weapon is listed as stolen or linked to other crimes.

Legalities

Under United States federal law, the following factors bar a character from owning or purchasing explosives or a firearm:

- Having any conviction or current indictment for a crime with a possible prison sentence of more than one year, regardless of actual punishment imposed.
- Being a fugitive from justice (e.g., being the subject of an active arrest warrant).
- Unlawfully using and/or being addicted to a controlled substance, including any positive drug test within the past year or multiple arrests on controlled substances charges within the past five years.
- Being judged mentally defective or incompetent, or being involuntarily committed to a mental institution. This includes criminal charges of which the character was found not guilty by reason of insanity.
- Being an illegal alien, or being a legal resident alien who does not specifically quality for firearm ownership.
- Being dishonorably discharged from military service.
- Renouncing United States citizenship.
- Having any misdemeanor conviction for the use of physical force or threatened use of deadly force in a domestic violence situation, or being the subject of a protective order issued for domestic violence.

Several of the legal procedures mentioned in this chapter make use of background checks conducted by or through federal authorities. A basic background check, such as that performed when a character attempts to purchase a firearm or applies for a C&R FFL (Collector of Curios and Relics Federal Firearms License), is simply a check of the NICS (National Instant Criminal Background Check System) database against the applicant's SSN. This database contains complete records of all the above factors. The NICS does not access death certificates, which may be relevant for a character who has been or is dead.

A character applying for an FFL or an explosives permit faces more detailed examination. This begins with a records search similar to the basic NICS check, but one that is run against the applicant's fingerprints, not her SSN, which makes the use of forged identification problematic. Following this procedure, federal investigators examine her credit history, confirm her employment and residence history, double-check court records for all jurisdictions she's lived in for the past decade and interview the people she lists as personal references. Such an intensive search does not include medical records, but its scope will uncover a death certificate, which investigators will take as evidence that their applicant has stolen the identity of a dead victim.

Federal Firearms Licenses

A federal firearms license (FFL) is a permit issued by the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (colloquially "ATFE" or just "ATF") that allows the holder to make firearm transactions by mail order and across state lines and to operate a retail business in guns. In addition, most manufacturers offer dealer prices to FFL holders (typically • lower Cost).

To obtain an FFL, a character must apply through the ATFE. This process takes up to a month and a half and requires an application fee (Cost •). The applicant must pass a federal background check and an interview with ATFE investigators, and must have a site from which to conduct his business. The ATFE has been known to audit FFL holders without notice, and an individual who isn't actually using his FFL to run a business is likely to face legal trouble. An FFL holder is also required to report any loss or theft of a firearm to the ATFE within 48 hours.

Collector of Curios and Relics Licenses

A Collector of Curios and Relics FFL is a restricted type of FFL that applies primarily to firearm collectors. A C&R holder may purchase firearms through mail order and across state lines, so long as the firearms were made before 1946 or are on a list of collectible firearms that the ATFE maintains and updates regularly. The application process for a C&R is the same as for an FFL, minus the interview and the proof of having a business site.

Items Not Child-Safe

Items that ordinary citizens can't buy at the local gun store include suppressors, short-barreled shotguns and rifles, fully automatic weapons or anything that falls into the "destructive device" or "any other weapon" (AOW) category. Destructive devices include explosives, armor-piercing ammunition, incendiaries, poison gas and all firearms with a bore larger than one-half inch (with exceptions for sporting shotguns). Fully automatic shotguns are emphatically not sporting. AOW is a broad and loosely defined category that includes firearms concealed in pens, canes, cell phones and other housings, as well as items such as briefcase housings for submachine guns. Restricted firearms are collectively referred to as "NFA firearms," after the National Firearms Act that classified them, or as "Class 3" weapons, after the special tax classification that applies to their retailers. All NFA firearms are recorded in the NFA Registry, a federal database.

To acquire an NFA firearm, a civilian must purchase it from a dealer or other citizen within her home state (unless she has a C&R license and the gun is a C&R weapon). In addition to the sale price, she must also pay a $200 transfer tax, which is incidental next to the thousands or tens of thousands of dollars that a civilian-market NFA firearm typically costs. She must also submit a form to the ATFE that includes her fingerprints, her photograph and a signed statement from a local head of law enforcement (police chief, sheriff, district attorney, chief of state police or state's attorney general). The head of law enforcement must attest that the buyer lives within his jurisdiction and that he has no information that the buyer intends to use the weapon for any unlawful purpose. This convoluted process cuts down on rapid or casual transactions in automatic weapons. It also ensures that legally registered NFA firearms don't see much criminal use in the hands of their owners.

Anyone who owns an NFA firearm is legally responsible for keeping it secured at all times. Part of the documentation that a purchaser signs gives the ATFE the right to search her home, vehicle or property at any time, without a search warrant, to ascertain that all NFA firearms registered to her are actually in her possession. Also, any NFA firearm *ever* transferred illegally is subject to seizure, even if the current owner has complied with all laws.

Transporting an NFA firearm out of the state in which the owner lives requires ATFE approval, even if the owner is the one moving it.

NFA Businesses

A Class 3 Special (Occupational) Taxpayer is licensed to deal in NFA firearms, while a Class 1 SOT is an importer and a Class 2 SOT is a manufacturer. NFA businesses do not have to pay transfer taxes, submit fingerprints or photos or get law enforcement endorsements to transfer NFA firearms between each other. Becoming an SOT requires an extensive application process (Cost •••), which involves an in-depth background investigation from the ATFE.

NFA Consequences

The federal government takes the NFA *very* seriously. Violations of the NFA, including illegal transfers, are felonies punishable by 10 years in prison and a $250,000 fine. Use of a suppressor or automatic weapon in the commission of a crime can add *30 years* to the prison sentence. It's a testament to the rigorous background checks involved in the process that there's only one recorded instance of a FFL holder being convicted of using one of his NFA weapons to commit a crime.

Most characters who bother to acquire NFA weapons are likely to break some or all of the laws presented above during the course of play. Storytellers are advised that the federal justice system *aggressively* investigates the kind of crime scenes that players tend to have their characters leave behind.

Explosives Permits

Explosives are even more heavily regulated than NFA firearms. To legally manufacture, sell or purchase explosives (even "low explosives," such as high-end fireworks), a citizen must have a federal explosives permit. This requires the applicant to provide photographs and fingerprints not only of

Item	Allies/Status	Black Market	Cost
Firearms			
Handgun	•	3 successes	-
Shotgun/rifle	•	3 successes	-
Shotgun/rifle, NFA (illegally shortened)	••	4 successes	-
Submachine Gun	•••	8 successes	+1
Assault Rifle	••••	12 successes	+1
Machine Gun	•••••	20 successes	+2
Ammunition, civilian-legal	•	2 successes	-
Ammunition, riot control/breaching/gas	•	3 successes	+1
Ammunition, armor-piercing	•••	6 successes	+1
Heavy Weapons			
Flamethrower	••••	15 successes	+1
Grenade Launcher	••••	15 successes	+2
Rocket Launcher	•••••	20 successes	+2
Mortar	•••••	25 successes	+1
Guided Missile Launcher	•••••	30 successes	+2
Ammunition, unguided weapons	•••	15 successes	+2
Ammunition, guided weapons	••••	20 successes	+2
Explosives			
Industrial-Grade	•••	6 successes	+1
Military, demolitions (plastique, det cord)	••••	12 successes	+1
Military, combat (hand grenades, land mines)	•••••	15 successes	+2
Weapon Accessories			
Night Vision Optics	••	5 successes	-
Suppressor	•••	8 successes	-
Other Gear			
Security Systems	••	4 successes	+1
Body Armor	••	5 successes	+1
Surveillance Equipment	••	6 successes	-
Vehicles			
Civilian Vehicle, unlicensed	•	3 successes	+1
Commercial Vehicle, unlicensed	••	5 successes	+1
Watercraft, unlicensed	•••	9 successes	+1
Aircraft, unlicensed	•••	12 successes	+2
Military Vehicle, unarmed transport	••	8 successes	+1
Military Vehicle, armed/armored	•••••	40 successes	+2
Military Aircraft	•••••	60 successes	+3

himself but of all other authorized parties who may handle the explosives he or his business purchases. He must also prove that he has a secure and blast-resistant facility in which to store his material. The application process typically takes one to three months, involves a face-to-face interview with an ATFE agent who also inspects the storage facility and costs ••. As with owning NFA firearms, holding a federal explosives permit forfeits the character's Fourth Amendment rights to an extent: ATFE agents can search his property and audit his records and explosives inventory at any time.

Secure Storage

Characters applying for SOT status or explosives permits must have storage facilities that meet federal requirements for security and, in the case of explosives, blast resistance. Such additions cost ••••. Alternately, if a character has Haven Security (see **Vampire: The Requiem**, p. 100), three or more points in this Merit can qualify her domicile – but she'd better have a good explanation ready when the ATFE agents ask about any other features that raise their eyebrows.

Shopping off the Record

The preceding information assumes that a character wants to acquire his lethal hardware through legal means. If he doesn't care about following the law, or actively wants to avoid it, he has three options: theft, making his own or going on the black market.

Stealing weapons or explosives is much like stealing anything else, and Storytellers should run such scenes on a case-by-case basis. Virtually every employee of a gun store has at least one handgun on his person at all times as a precaution against just such acts. Also, virtually all legitimate firearm owners will report the thefts and the weapons' serial numbers to the local police as soon as possible. Characters who want to steal from military armories will need to deal with multiple trained, well-armed guards with overwhelming backup on hand.

Rules for making explosives are on p. 114. Coverage of homemade firearms (zip guns) is on p. 67, and illegal conversion of semi-automatic weapons to fully automatic fire is on p. 54.

A character who just wants a cheap civilian-legal gun without a record of the sale can find one through a local street-level criminal, usually paying no more than what she would normally. Such firearms are almost always stolen, and police may already have ballistic evidence linking them to previous crimes. Sawed-off shotguns and rifles are also commonly available on the street. Buyers who want heavier equipment need heavier connections: black-market arms dealers.

Midnight Requisitions

Making contact with black-market dealers in illegal weaponry and ordnance isn't as easy as it sounds. It's a long walk from buying a dime bag from the neighborhood dope peddler to setting up a deal for AK-47s and Semtex.

Domestic black marketeers usually confine themselves to dealing in mass quantities of stolen guns, with a few NFA firearms thrown in for good measure. These are most likely submachine guns or illegally shortened shotguns or rifles. Stolen industrial explosives are likewise available on the domestic black market. Organized crime dealers usually steer clear of assault rifles and machine guns, as the demand is low enough that the potential for profit isn't worth the legal complications of getting caught.

For military-grade armament, most characters will need to travel internationally. "International arms dealers" who can procure machine guns, military-grade explosives or other gear normally the exclusive property of armies don't tend to do business in nations with active and ubiquitous law enforcement. The typical arms dealer is a former soldier who spent time in trouble spots, either as part of his regular service or in a mercenary ("private military contractor") capacity later. He favors areas of the world with few or no authorities, or with those who are themselves so involved in the black market that he can buy their inattention with sufficient money or favors. Currently, the major wartime centers of the international arms trade are central Africa, the Middle East and the Balkans — all areas with ongoing conflicts, where military equipment is readily available. Other "business centers" not currently embroiled in shooting wars are rumored to include Libya (especially the city of Tripoli), Honduras, the island of Corsica and Southeast Asia.

Once a character has acquired her highly illegal armament, getting it back into the country in which she intends to use it is yet another problem she must solve.

Black-Market Shopping

Characters who want to work the black market have three primary options: use an existing friend on the inside, find someone in the business or *be* involved in the shadow economy themselves. The following table summarizes the recommended requirements for characters to acquire various restricted equipment illegally. The "Allies/Status" column represents the minimum amount of Allies (Criminal) or Status (Underworld) that the character needs to procure the item in question if he's already an insider or knows one. (At the Storyteller's discretion, other Merits, such as Contacts, may assist or be substituted, as may different Allies or Statuses that seem appropriate.) The "Black Market" column is the number of successes that the character must achieve on an attempt to work the black market via her Streetwise Skill (see the **World of Darkness Rulebook**, p. 86). The "Cost" column is the amount by which the item's Cost changes if the character buys it through illegal channels.

Note: The following prerequisites are just what the character needs to locate a seller who's willing to negotiate with her. If she doesn't have an appropriate level of Resources, she'll need to find another means of payment, which may turn into a story in and of itself.

Gearing Up in the Line of Duty

Law enforcement and military professionals are issued weapons as needed to perform their respective duties. This doesn't entitle them to go gun shopping on the department's expense account, though. They often have less choice in their armament than do the citizens they protect. Members of law enforcement and the military receive the right to carry and use weapons through large organizations that favor standardization, because this system allows for discounted bulk purchases, ensures a uniform standard of training, simplifies maintenance and allows friendly forces to share each other's gear during combat.

Depending on budget constraints and policy, a police department either issues duty sidearms to its officers or requires them to purchase their own. In either case, the list of approved handguns is very short, often no more than two or three models. In addition to a duty sidearm, all police officers carry pepper spray and an impact weapon (collapsible baton, billy club or tonfa) when on duty, and those in well-funded departments also have ranged stun guns or pepperball guns. Many departments issue shotguns (or

semi-automatic rifles, in some rural areas) to selected officers as supplementary weapons, though these remain locked in the officers' cars unless needed. Department policies vary on backup handguns; most departments commonly authorize backup handguns only for undercover work and require advance approval. Few departments authorize the use of nonstandard primary sidearms, and the few departments that do are almost exclusively small and rural. A police officer who carries, much less uses, an unauthorized firearm will be subject to administrative action, at the very least.

SWAT teams maintain their own supplementary armories. They typically standardize with one model each of handgun, submachine gun, assault rifle, shotgun and sniper rifle. SWAT teams also have access to non-lethal munitions, such as smoke, tear gas, baton and flashbang grenades. Only a few large and well-funded teams use lethal explosives, and these are confined to breaching charges (see p. 86). NFA firearms owned by police departments are almost always assigned to SWAT armories and are not available for personal use or issued to patrol officers.

Military forces are even more rigid in their standardization, procuring large numbers of a small array of weapons for specific purposes. A typical army has a single assault rifle that serves as its standard infantry weapon, and virtually every combat soldier is issued one, if he doesn't use a specialized support weapon such as a sniper rifle or machine gun. Support personnel may be issued the same weapons as combat troops, or may make do with submachine guns and handguns. Shotguns are limited to military police units.

Soldiers are forbidden from carrying personally owned firearms while on duty. Other weapons are usually off-limits as well, though some commanding officers authorize blades. Nonstandard weapons are issued only to elite units operating deniably (without benefit of official sanction) or in areas where resupply will be unavailable and the soldiers will have to acquire ammunition from local sources. Soldiers in past wars may have been able to ship home enemy equipment as souvenirs, but modern armies destroy captured armament to keep it from falling into the wrong hands (including those of disgruntled veterans).

During peacetime, weapons on military bases are securely locked away in armories, save for those weapons in the hands of guards. When a unit goes to the field or the firing range to train, the unit is issued weapons and ammunition, and must turn in the former (and any unused amount of the latter) at the conclusion of training. The unit must account for any lost or destroyed material, and a soldier who loses (or "loses") a weapon faces severe disciplinary action.

Story Seed: The Devil's Right Hand

Cursed arms (among other objects) play roles in many stories, and a character may find the negative side effects of a particular weapon worth the benefits it grants. For best effect, a curse or similar dark taint should be subtle, gently influencing the character's actions rather than overtly directing her. Possible mechanical effects include rewarding a bearer who indulges in the vice of Wrath or removing a die from the pool to resist degeneration every time she kills with the weapon.

Packing Heat

Once a character has acquired armament, he'll undoubtedly want to carry it. This carries both logistical and legal complications.

Transport

As with firearm purchases, laws regarding weapon transport vary from state to state. The most restrictive law states that a firearm in a motor vehicle must reside in a case and be stored in an area of the vehicle not accessible from the passenger compartment. In other words, the weapon must be locked in the trunk. Characters with concealed weapons permits (see p. 198) receive more lenient treatment in states where their permits are valid. Police officers making traffic stops tend to err on the side of caution if they see a weapon in a vehicle, and such evidence is probable cause for an intensive search.

A character may carry a weapon on a commercial airliner only if she is a federal law enforcement agent whose duties specifically authorize her to carry one at all times, if she is a police officer and has a signed statement from her chief attesting that she is performing duties that will require her to be armed immediately on arrival (e.g., transporting a felon for extradition) or if she's a pilot who's undergone federal Flight Deck Officer certification and deputization. Air travel regulations require all other gun owners to check their firearms in hold baggage, unloaded, in double-locked cases, and to declare the contents of those cases upon check-in. Ammunition must be in a locked case separate from the one that contains the weapon. All cases must be "hard"; soft-sided bags, even sturdy leather ones, are unacceptable.

Other weapons (swords, for example) must also be checked in locked cases. Explosives, incendiary materials and pressurized containers (including pepper spray and the like) are strictly forbidden, even for owners with the appropriate permits. When dealing with international flights, the destination's local laws apply as soon as the aircraft touches down, and air carriers will refuse passage to a character trying to move something illegally.

No laws forbid transport of weapons on chartered or private flights. However, chartering firms and private pilots tend to err on the side of safety when asked to transport such items.

Open Carry

Again, laws regarding open carry (carrying an openly visible weapon on one's person) vary widely. Some states allow any citizen who can legally own a firearm to carry it at any time. More moderate states restrict open carry to hunting or sport shooting, while the most restrictive states outlaw any open display of a weapon. In urban areas, open display of a weapon usually leads to citizens assuming that violence is imminent and making panicked calls to the police. A character whose display of armament generates such a response may or may not receive the chance to put his weapons away in a secure location before his arrest on charges of disturbing the peace.

Most casual observers do not consider holstered or otherwise secured weapons to be as "threatening" as those carried in the hand or slung over the shoulder. An average citizen, upon seeing a handgun in a holster, is likely to think "cop" first. Upon seeing the same handgun stuck in its owner's waistband, the reflexive thought will probably be "criminal." Police officers will react with the same basic procedure regardless of how a character is carrying a weapon but may be more courteous if she appears to be handling it responsibly.

The majority of states do not consider small utility knives to be weapons. The definition of "small" is typically three to six inches, but the definition varies by state. The eyes of the law view larger blades as lethal weapons. Characters who think they can avoid gun laws by carrying melee weapons are just as likely to draw police attention. While the cops will assume that a character with an assault rifle is a dangerous criminal, they'll assume that his friend with a great sword is a dangerous mental patient.

Federal law prohibits all weapons (save those in the possession of law enforcement officers) in all federal buildings and on all federal land, including national parks. Exceptions to the latter are granted for lawful purposes such as hunting or using a shooting range in the park. Firearms are also banned within 1,000 feet of schools unless the weapons are legally owned and are being transported through the school zone or are stored in a home within that radius. Most states also ban all weapons from state-owned facilities and state parks.

State by State

This chapter qualifies most of the weapons laws described herein as not applying to all states. In the United States, each state has the power to enact its own laws, so long as these do not pre-empt federal regulations or the Second Amendment of the Constitution. Consequently, laws may vary widely among states, and characters who travel armed may be in for unpleasant surprises if they assume that laws across the state line are the same as at home. Information regarding individual states' weapons laws, such as whether concealed weapons permits are available or how long the waiting period for handguns is, is readily available online.

Most states have enacted state pre-emption laws, which forbid local governments from further legislating weapons. This ensures that state residents can at least commute from one city or county to another without running afoul of changing laws. States that do not have pre-emption laws include Illinois (where Chicago has banned all handguns within city limits) and Ohio. Outside the United States, most countries have uniform laws nationwide, with Germany and Finland being two exceptions.

Brandishing

"Brandishing" is the act of displaying a weapon in a threatening manner. This requires the offender to actually have the weapon in her hand and pointed in the general direction of someone. Brandishing a weapon is a criminal offense, even in areas where the character would otherwise be within her rights to carry it. Brandishing is a highly subjective offense, and enforcement varies widely depending on circumstances, the reliability of witnesses and how readily the accused complies with police.

Generally speaking, anyone who displays a weapon in a threatening manner while not in immediate danger of being the victim of deadly force can be charged with brandishing it.

The 21-Foot Rule

Most defensive firearm courses teach the Tueller standard, named for the police officer who first articulated it. This rule states that a subject armed with a melee weapon is capable of covering 21 feet and striking a killing blow in the one-and-a-half seconds that it takes a trained defender to draw a handgun and fire in self-defense. Police departments worldwide use some variation of this minimum distance as a guideline for use of lethal force against suspects armed with knives, clubs and other implements. Practically speaking, most officers confronted with characters waving katanas are likely to interpret the standard as a polite suggestion, and the departments will back the officers up on the decision to shoot the crazy meth junkies with the big swords.

Story Seed: Living History

A burglary at a local museum results in the theft of several antique or downright archaic weapons. They're still deadly, but grossly inefficient compared to modern firearms. Weeks later, those same weapons begin showing up

in a series of murders or other high-profile crimes. The characters may be patrons of the museum, friends of the deceased, police detectives assigned to investigate the case or otherwise connected to these bizarre events. Is there a murderer on the loose with a penchant for history, or is a weirder culprit working with the implements he knows best?

Concealed Carry

A character who wants a lethal weapon that nobody sees must resort to carrying it concealed. This is a criminal offense in almost every state, on the grounds that carrying a concealed weapon automatically indicates criminal intent (in Vermont, it's legal unless the carrier actually *has* criminal intent). However, over two thirds of states have laws that allow law-abiding citizens to apply for concealed weapons permits on the grounds of self-defense.

To obtain a concealed carry permit, a character must first take a training course that educates him on his state's laws regarding concealed carry, self-defense and the use of lethal force and firearm ownership. (The courses assume that the permit applicants intend to carry concealed handguns, not melee weaponry.) The character must then demonstrate proficiency at a shooting range under the eye of a state-certified instructor. Once the character has completed the course, he must apply in person at the sheriff's office in his county of residence, providing his fingerprints and photograph. His application goes to state authorities for a background check, covering much the same information as any application to purchase a firearm but also examining repeat misdemeanor or weapon-related offenses. If the applicant passes the state's scrutiny, he receives his permit in one to three months. Permits are good for three to five years and must be renewed in person. The combined Cost for the training course and application is •.

A character with a concealed weapons permit may legally carry a concealed weapon anywhere he could legally carry openly, subject to certain restrictions. Most states do not allow their concealed carry permit holders to carry in businesses with alcohol or gambling licenses. The character is subject to all other weapons laws and gains no special authority or legal protection.

Weapon Concealment

The **World of Darkness Rulebook** states that all weapons with Size 0 or Size 1 can be hidden in a hand and all Size 2 items can be hidden under a coat. This allows characters to hide a wide array of weapons with impunity. The following optional concealment values, used throughout this book to supplement the Size ratings of items of Size 2 or smaller, provide an alternate method of determining how easily a character can hide a given weapon. In the appropriate tables, each such

item has one of the five following codes assigned to its Size as a supplementary value: from smallest to largest, these are 1/P, 1/S, 1/J, 2/J, 2/L and 2/N.

P (Palm or Pocket): The weapon is small enough to be hidden in a shirt or pants pocket. Few firearms are this small; most are "hold-out" weapons with low calibers and ammunition capacities. Weapons with Size 1/P are less than five inches in total length and four inches in height: small enough to fit in an adult's hand without overlapping at any point.

S (Shirt): The weapon is small enough that it will not produce a noticeable bulge if the character hides it under a loose shirt, in an ankle holster or in the cargo pocket of a jacket or a pair of pants. Weapons with Size 1/S are less than seven inches long.

J (Jacket): The weapon will fit under a light jacket or a business suit's coat. The weapon is less than 10 inches long and less than eight inches tall. This is the largest weapon that can fit in a purse or briefcase. Most Size 2/J firearms have this value only with the magazine removed or with a low-capacity magazine inserted — if a character attempts to hide one under a jacket with a full magazine in the weapon, it moves up to Size 2/L due to the added three to six inches of height.

L (Long Coat): A character can hide the weapon under a calf-length coat. The weapon is less than three feet long, which does not make it comfortable to shove up an armpit. Most firearms with Size 2/L have this value only with the magazine removed. If a character attempts to hide the weapon under a coat with the magazine in, the weapon moves up to Size 2/N due to the added six to 12 inches of height.

N (Not Concealable): The weapon is too large for a normal-sized human to conceal it under any reasonable amount of clothing. The weapon is longer than three feet or has features that make it too bulky to hide without a large, obvious bulge. Characters who are significantly larger than the human norm may hide *some* weapons of this size at the Storyteller's discretion, but are likely to draw attention to themselves in other ways.

Ways to Carry Concealed Weapons

Weapon and equipment manufacturers offer a wide variety of concealed-carry holsters, sheaths and other devices. All of these are designed to keep a weapon close to the body to minimize its visibility. However, there's always a tradeoff. The better hidden a weapon is, the more difficult it is to draw quickly. The following methods are some of the ways in which characters may conceal weapons.

Each of the following options lists two factors: a maximum Size for concealment and a dice pool modifier. The latter is the modifier for a Perception check (Wits + Composure, Wits + Investigation or Wits + Firearms) to visually detect a weapon concealed using that method. For every step that a weapon is below the minimum Size for that method, reduce the modifier by –1. For example, a Size 1/P weapon concealed using a method suitable for Size 2/J inflicts an additional –3 modifier on attempts to detect it. A hand search gives the observer a +2 bonus, and security personnel conducting screening usually have additional equipment available as well.

Belt (Maximum Size 1/J, +2): Although a simple belt holster may not seem very concealed, the wearer can fasten a business coat or windbreaker halfway and arrange it to completely cover the weapon. A belt holster is "casual concealment" — it's often not so much a means of hiding a weapon as a way to politely cover it. Many plainclothes police officers prefer belt holsters, which maximize accessibility while keeping the guns out of the way while they're seated.

Armpit (Maximum Size 2/J, +1): The ubiquitous shoulder holster, which places the weapon against the wearer's ribs and under his arm, has fallen out of favor in recent years. While the shoulder holster does allow the wearer to conceal the weapon with a shorter outer garment than a belt holster does, the shoulder holster is also less comfortable for extended wear. In addition, the under-arm location causes the weapon to pick up more sweat and grime from its wearer, and female users complain about weapons digging into their breasts.

Ankle (Maximum Size 1/S, –1): This is a favored location for carrying a small backup weapon in addition to a primary sidearm. An ankle holster is unlikely to be noticed in a confrontation. However, an ankle holster is also rather inaccessible unless the wearer bends down "to tie his shoes." The added weight on one ankle tends to throw off most wearers' strides, so weapons worn in ankle holsters tend to be very lightweight.

Small of the Back (Maximum Size 1/J, 0): Some belt holsters are designed for small-of-the-back wear, and owners can also stuff their guns down the back of their pants (referred to as "Mexican carry"). Either arrangement is effective so long as no one looks behind the character. However, having a hard metal object stuffed against one's lower vertebrae is uncomfortable, particularly for sitting, and can cause serious spinal injuries if a character falls backward onto her weapon.

Crotch (Maximum Size 1/P, –2): While uncomfortable, the crotch is the least-likely location for a weapon to be discovered during a pat-down search. (Most cops will check, but amateurs aren't always so thorough.) A suspicious bulge in this location also tends to be written off as something other than a — ahem — small weapon, at least for a male. Removing a weapon from a crotch holster is not a process that a character can perform both safely and quickly while still wearing pants.

Inner Thigh (Maximum Size 1/S,–2): The best arrangement for an inner thigh holster involves a skirt, either short or long but with rip-away seams at mid-thigh. This holster is only marginally less uncomfortable than a crotch holster, but the inner thigh holster has the advantage of being more securely positioned against the body and less likely to be seen (unless the character sits in a compromising position, anyway). The act of drawing the weapon may also give the character a momentary advantage of surprise, as most women don't hike up their skirts in the middle of gunfights.

Wrist or Forearm (Maximum Size 1/P, 0): Use of a wrist holster requires wide, flowing sleeves, which generally means the character needs to be wearing a jacket or dressing 30 years out of style. The amount of arm movement that the average person performs requires this type of holster to hold the weapon securely, which precludes rapid draws.

Accessory (Maximum Size 1/S,–1): Belt packs are popular with tourists and mall-walkers and with weapon owners who want to blend in with them. For women, a purse incorporating a concealed holster is also an option.

Body Cavity (special: Size 1/P weapons only, impossible on visual inspection): Characters in the World of Darkness are sometimes dedicated to desperation. Any weapon small enough to be hidden in a body cavity is most likely a single-shot pen gun (see p. 67) or something similar in general shape. Methods for rapidly drawing and using such a weapon are left to the player and Storyteller.

Packing Heat in the Line of Duty

Police officers are authorized to carry firearms openly when on duty. Officers are out of uniform if not armed. In addition, most states unilaterally allow police officers to carry concealed weapons when off duty. When in uniform, an officer's sidearm and other weapons all ride on his duty belt, in plain view and readily accessible. Studies in the early 1990s showed that a significant percentage of slain officers are killed with their own guns, so many departments have adopted retention holsters. Such a holster doesn't release its weapon without the press of a safety catch or a specific series of motions such as rocking the gun forward and backward. Training and practice make the release procedure second nature to the officer wearing a retention holster, but few criminals are familiar with it. On-duty officers carry their weapons in "Condition One": loaded, with a round in the chamber and the safety on. Most officers carry two spare magazines for their primary sidearms.

Some departments keep SWAT team weapons locked up in armories until a call-out, but other departments issue the weapons to individual officers who are responsible for keeping the weapons secure. The latter case is more common with smaller departments that don't have full-time SWAT teams, where SWAT officers fulfill normal patrol duties most of the time. These officers carry their duty sidearms, keeping their specialized weapons securely locked in their vehicles.

When a military unit prepares for combat, the unit draws weapons and ammunition from its base armory. Once a soldier signs for the weapons he's been issued, he is responsible for keeping them under his control and in good working order until he turns them in again. The usual method for carrying a longarm involves a shoulder sling, and modern tactical slings allow the soldier to hang his weapon's weight from his torso while keeping the weapon ready to hand around waist level. When in base areas, soldiers are supposed to unload their weapons to prevent accidents, though paranoid or experienced ones don't bother. While in the field, Condition One is the norm, and troops who expect imminent combat already have their guns in their hands with the safeties off.

A soldier doesn't bother with carrying concealed weapons. Load-bearing equipment, colloquially known as "web gear," is a set of straps and pouches that distributes a soldier's load across his shoulders, hips and torso, and this is where spare magazines, grenades and a holstered sidearm reside. A military holster incorporates a retaining strap or flap to keep the handgun from falling out at inopportune moments. A soldier with an assault rifle usually has six spare magazines for it, and probably carries one spare belt for his squad's machine gun as well as two or more smoke grenades, a few fragmentation grenades and a bayonet or survival knife. If he's assigned a grenade launcher, part of his load-bearing equipment is a grenadier's vest that holds up to two dozen 40mm grenades. A machine gunner has, at minimum, two full belts for his primary weapon.

Story Seed: We Few

Lost and empty-handed in a remote corner of the world, the characters stumble upon a cache of military weapons left over from the last war that occurred in the region. Unbeknownst to their new bearers, though, the guns are anchors for the ghosts of the soldiers who died wielding them. Depending on the origin of the weapons and the characters' ethnicities, the ghosts' attitudes may range from helpful to wrathful. Alternately, if the characters find the weapons in an urban area, they may be the former possessions of gang members or police officers.

Lethal Force

Actually using a deadly weapon on another person (or a creature that can pass for a person in the eyes of the authorities) is illegal except in self-defense or defense of a third party's life. This won't stop most characters during the moment of truth, but may lead to unpleasant consequences once the police analyze the evidence of the fight.

Most violent incidents draw the attention of the authorities — immediately if a witness (or participant) calls 911 or in a few days when a passerby finds bloodstains or a decomposing corpse. State laws throughout the United States also require hospitals to notify the police of patients admitted with gunshot or stab rounds or other signs of violence.

"Ordinary" violence — involving fists, knives, civilian-legal guns and other weapons not illegal or unusual in and of themselves — remains a local matter unless specific evidence links the violence to crimes committed elsewhere. When dealing with this level of incident, police collect physical evidence. A victim, either living or dead, is the single most useful piece of evidence, as the nature of the wounds on the body can identify the type of weapon used or even the specific weapon if it has a distinguishing feature such as a notched blade. If bullets or empty casings are present at the scene, ejector or rifling marks can link them to the gun that fired them, and evidence from the same gun at multiple scenes tells police that they have a repeat offender on their hands.

If a fully automatic weapon is involved in a crime, federal law enforcement (usually in the form of the ATFE) may take note, with this possibility becoming a certainty if multiple incidents occur. Thanks to the ATFE's national database of all registered NFA weapons, this agency can quickly identify any such firearm recovered from a crime scene and match the weapon with its recorded owner. If criminals are using an unregistered NFA firearm, that's another federal felony charge that the government can use to put them behind bars after their apprehension.

Odd ammunition types are likely to raise eyebrows because of their rarity. Petty criminals buy the cheapest brands or those with the most ominous-sounding names, and even the Mafia doesn't send its enforcers out with magazines full of armor-piercing or tracer ammunition. Ballistic evidence of any ammunition type but FMJ or hollowpoint is a red flag for investigators. Depending on the crime scene, they'll label the shooter either a deranged gun nut or a specialized professional.

Use of explosives in any crime *always* brings in federal investigators from the ATFE. Chemical residue and debris from a blast can point to the nature of the explosive material or the device or vehicle in which the material was housed.

Crimes involving the use of pure military-grade weapons such as surface-to-air missiles or nerve gas bring in not only the ATFE, once again, but also the FBI and possibly even military intelligence or internal investigation units. In the modern era, any appearance of such armament outside the hands of the military automatically gains the label "terrorist action." Characters foolish enough to use such measures outside the world's most lawless areas will be lucky if they can avoid being linked to their actions. Unlucky characters can expect to have their identities distributed to every law enforcement agency on the planet.

Self-Defense

Some characters who kill may make no effort to hide their deeds, instead trusting in the law to absolve them of guilt by declaring their actions *justifiable homicide*. On American streets and in American courts, the governing

standard for determining whether a character was justified in using lethal force is this: *Would a reasonable adult have believed, based on the information he had at the time, that his own or someone else's life was in imminent danger from the aggressor?* If the answer is "yes," any investigation will most likely find the character to have acted within the bounds of the law, though she is likely to be arrested for murder until evidence is found to support her claim.

The *perception* of threat is important in many cases. If a citizen sees a masked assailant pointing a gun at him, he is within his rights to shoot and kill that attacker, even if the gun the citizen sees is later found to be a stage prop rather than a real weapon, as long as he believed himself in imminent danger at the time he pulled the trigger.

Incipient victims of sexual assault are also entitled to use lethal force in self-defense, and many states have some variation of a "no retreat" law, stating that a resident of a home may use lethal force rather than retreat from her home when confronting an intruder. Outside of her own home, however, a character has a legal obligation to attempt retreat before using lethal force.

Police are much more likely to favorably view a character who claims self-defense if she's the one to notify them that she just shot someone. Any attempt at covering up such an action and only trying to justify it when caught will result in murder charges, regardless of the justification.

Acceptable Force

In the eyes of the law, all lethal weapons are equally lethal. A knife, motorcycle chain or length of pipe is equally as deadly as a gun (see "The 21-Foot Rule," p. 197), and a character with a shotgun is not required to put it away and "fight fair" when a sword-wielding lunatic attacks him. A character can theoretically use any *personal* weapon he can legally possess when defending himself (courts don't accept dynamite or VX as legitimate defensive armament). However, use of NFA firearms and the like may bring pointed inquiries from federal authorities, who will be very interested in the character's explanations as to why he was carrying a suppressed submachine gun and wearing Class IIIA body armor while walking his pet tiger in the park.

Lethal Force in the Line of Duty

All police departments have a clearly defined use of force policy, which regulates the degree of force that an officer can use in response to various situations. The standard policy is that an officer is allowed to use one level of force greater an opponent is using. A typical continuum of force, from lowest to highest, is the following:

- Verbal commands.
- "Soft hand": arms locks, pressure points, handcuffing.
- Chemical irritants: pepper spray.
- "Hard hand": punches, kicks.
- Impact weapons: batons, electrical stun weapons.
- Lethal force.

A police officer is entitled to use deadly force to stop a fleeing violent felony suspect, even if the suspect isn't using force at the time. The officer may also use deadly force to stop any convicted felon attempting to escape custody. Legal precedent states that a police officer is never under any obligation to sustain injury, and the threat of imminent violence is sufficient for her to act preemptively with the appropriate level of force.

Rules of Engagement

Soldiers operate under rules of engagement (RoE) that similarly define how and when the soldiers can use force. A military unit's RoE come from its chain of command and may vary widely, depending on the unit's mission. A common provision of RoE when a nation is trying to avoid provoking an incident is that forces "may not fire unless fired upon," effectively requiring troops to let the other guy take the first shot. If a military is at war, the unit's RoE allow its personnel to shoot first when they believe themselves to be in imminent danger of attack. Unlike police officers, most soldiers do not carry non-lethal weapons or are trained to use lesser measures.

The laws of war, collectively derived from the Geneva and Hague Conventions and other international treaties, are the body of international law and legal precedent governing armed conflict between countries. These standards ostensibly serve to mitigate the effects of war by protecting noncombatants, safeguarding the rights of captives or occupants of conquered territory, minimizing undue suffering brought on by war or the use of specific types of weapons and bringing conflicts to a close as soon as possible after the resolution of the political issues that spawned the conflicts. Most militaries require their troops to follow the laws of war and have stiff military justice penalties for miscreants.

From Denmark to Mombassa

The majority of this chapter addresses weapon laws in the United States, as this is where the majority of World of Darkness chronicles are set. (We intend no offense to our foreign readers, but our sales figures bear out this assertion.) This section summarizes the laws of selected other nations where characters may find themselves.

National Weapons Laws

The United States is significantly more permissive than many other countries where private ownership of firearms and other lethal weapons is concerned. The following capsule summaries provide guidelines for national weapon laws elsewhere in the world.

Australia

A handful of highly publicized incidents in the mid-1990s and early 2000s prompted Australia to impose strict gun laws. The only longarms legal in Australia are bolt-action and break-action rifles, semi-automatic .22 caliber rifles and a few pump-action and semi-automatic shotguns. Handguns are restricted to a capacity of 10 rounds or less and calibers of .38 or smaller, and must have a barrel length of at least 12 cm (about 4.7 inches).

To acquire a weapon, an Australian must apply to purchase that specific weapon through his state police department, demonstrating a valid need for it. Under Australian law, self-defense is not justification for a handgun purchase. Membership in a competitive shooting organization is required for a handgun purchase, and the handgun must be stored at the club to which the owner belongs. A separate permit is required for ammunition purchases. Weapons and ammunition must be securely and separately stored at all times. Use of lethal force in self-defense is illegal in Australia.

Brazil

As of this writing, Brazilian citizens have access to the same types of firearms that Americans may purchase, though this may have changed before you read these words. A national referendum on a ban on all handgun sales in Brazil is currently scheduled for October 2005. A Brazilian attempting to purchase a firearm must be at least 25 years old and pass a background check. The only citizens allowed to carry firearms in public are licensed security guards or hunters. Violent crime is common in Brazil, and use of lethal force in self-defense is permissible.

Canada

Canadian law has traditionally included strong gun control measures. Canadians technically have access to most of the same firearms that Americans can purchase without specific permits, with the exception of compact handguns and all handguns in .32 and .25 calibers. A prospective gun owner must apply for a Firearms Acquisition Certificate, which requires completion of a gun safety course in addition to a background check. Canada requires firearm registration, though many provincial governments oppose universal registration and do not prosecute an offender unless he commits another crime with the weapon.

Carrying weapons in public is technically illegal for private citizens. In practice, longarms are common in rural areas for dealing with predators or vermin. Handguns are relatively uncommon. Concealed handgun permits technically exist, though they are all but impossible for average citizens to obtain. Most accounts state that fewer than 100 permits are in circulation, all in the hands of former heads of state, crown attorneys who prosecute organized crime or other highly placed government officials who run the risk of assassination. Permits for open carry are likewise available, and almost as difficult to acquire. Canadian authorities most commonly issue these to citizens who work in remote wilderness areas and need weapons for protection against wild animals.

Finland

To purchase a firearm (or a non-lethal alternative such as pepper spray) in Finland, a citizen must first qualify for a permit to buy that specific weapon, which she obtains through her local police department. After making the purchase, she must then apply for a separate ownership permit (which, in practice, is usually approved *pro forma* unless the government sees a reason to change its mind at the last minute). Valid reasons for acquiring a permit include hunting, hobby shooting and a security or law enforcement job, but not self-defense. Weapons available to Finns are equivalent to those available to Americans, but local police departments have the right to further restrict weapon purchase within their jurisdictions — for example, no handguns larger than .22 caliber or no semi-automatic rifles.

Despite these fairly stringent laws, Finland's civilian population is the third-best-armed in the world on a per capita basis (after the United States and Yemen), with one registered gun for every four households. In addition, some high-end estimates place the number of illegal and unregistered firearms in Finland as high as several million. Despite these statistics, violent crime is rare in Finland. (Unless suicide is counted, as 90% of Finnish suicides are via firearms.) Most unregistered guns are hidden in rural homes, relics of World War II or the early cold war.

Ordinary citizens are prohibited from carrying loaded firearms in public, openly or concealed. Any gun must be unloaded and cased. Concealed carry permits are issued very rarely, and an applicant must prove that she has a valid reason: bodyguard duty, transport of valuables or guarding a location of high public value. A permit holder is required to conceal her weapon at all times. Killing in self-defense almost always results in a trial, and conviction is assured unless the defendant can indisputably prove that she had no other option.

France

French gun laws restrict most gun ownership to members of sport shooting clubs. Only bolt- and lever-action .22 caliber rifles and black powder weapons are openly available to citizens age 18 or older. Such a firearm allows the owner to join a shooting club, where she must be a member for at least six months before she can purchase any other gun. During these six months, she must attend at least three certified shooting sessions at the club, which are recorded with the local police as proof of membership. Once she's established membership, she may apply through the club to buy any other civilian-legal firearm (anything legal for civilian ownership in the United States), for which she must have a

gun safe in her home. If a character's club membership expires, usually due to missing multiple bimonthly shooting sessions, police will confiscate all her weapons if she does not sell them to a licensed gun dealer. France also issues handgun permits for home defense. Such a permit allows the owner any one handgun in a non-military caliber and 50 rounds of ammunition, but does not allow her to take the weapon outside her home.

Germany

German laws theoretically allow ownership of the same weapons that American citizens can acquire, with the exception of semi-automatic rifles based on the design of fully automatic weapons and stun guns. Firearm ownership is restricted to permit holders and a separate permit is required for each gun. Germany issues two types of permits. A hunting permit (for hunting rifles or shotguns) requires the applicant to be 18 years old, while a sporting permit (for all other guns) has a minimum age of 21. An applicant must pass a psychological and medical examination if under 25, and authorities can impose these requirements on older applicants if the authorities see a need. All first-time applicants must also pass a government-standardized test comparable in difficulty to a college entrance exam (extended Intelligence + Firearms action, must achieve five successes with four rolls). Individual German states may further restrict firearm ownership.

A permit entitles the holder to purchase ammunition for the weapon for which it was issued and to carry that weapon on his own home or business property. Carrying in public requires an additional firearms certificate (*Waffenschein*), which the German government issues only to applicants who can prove distinct needs. In practice, this permit is available only to bodyguards and security personnel. A *Waffenschein* allows both open and concealed carry.

Ireland

Irish gun laws are similar to those in the UK, but not identical. To own a firearm, an Irish citizen must be at least 16 years old, be "of good character and sound mind" and have a valid reason for firearm ownership. As in many other European nations, valid reasons include hunting and recreational shooting but not self-defense. Irish law also makes specific provisions for veterinarians and other professionals who may have to humanely put down animals during the course of their duties.

Private handgun ownership in Ireland has been illegal since the 1970s. Irish citizens are allowed to own shotguns or rifles, but the purchase of any weapon requires a permit. Shotgun permits are easier to acquire than rifle permits, but only relatively speaking. A permit applicant must prove that he is licensed hunter, or is a landowner and needs the weapon to protect his crops or animals from vermin and predators. All registered firearms in Ireland are logged in a national database. Crossbows are also regulated as firearms.

Irish urban legend is rife with tales of well-armed gangs of thugs. In actuality, common criminals are rarely better-armed than local citizens. However, the IRA and other separatist groups are quite well supplied, with stockpiles ranging from assault rifles to homemade mortars to a handful of rocket-propelled grenade launchers. Most of this armament is buried in fields and bogs across Ireland rather than ready for immediate use.

Italy

Italian law distinguishes between weapons that citizens own but do not use and those weapons whose owners intend to use them (for hunting or self-defense). Owners must register all weapons with the local branch of one of the two national police agencies (the civilian *Polizia di Stato* or the military *Carabinieri*), and the government tracks all ammunition purchases. Italian citizens are allowed to own handguns and shotguns; rifles are banned, as are all military-grade weapons. In addition, all firearms chambered for military calibers — 9mm Luger, 5.56mm NATO, 7.62x39mm Soviet and so forth — are illegal for civilian ownership.

Those who wish to carry their guns for any purpose must acquire a *porto d'armi* weapons permit. Three types of permits exist: sporting permits (which allow transport of unloaded guns to and from a shooting range), hunting permits (which allow transport of unloaded guns to and from a hunting area and use of them while hunting) and self-defense permits (which allow concealed carry of a loaded weapon in public). Use of a weapon in self-defense always sends the shooter to trial.

Japan

Japanese weapon laws, imposed in the wake of World War II, absolutely forbid any private ownership of firearms or swords. The only exceptions are shotguns, available *only* for target shooting and hunting. (Rifles became illegal in 1971, but current owners may retain theirs until death; currently about 25,000 exist in Japan.). To apply for a shotgun or air gun license, a citizen must first attend firearm safety classes and pass written and shooting tests. He must then pass a psychological exam, a drug test and a police background check. Any criminal history or membership in a radical political or activist group disqualifies the applicant. If he passes, he must store his weapons and ammunition in separate locked safes and provide his local police with a map of his home showing where these are. Permits must be renewed every three years, and Japanese police check every owner's home twice a year to ensure that weapons are stored properly and have not been stolen.

Public carry, much less use, of firearms is strictly forbidden, and Japanese cultural codes and imperatives result in rigid obedience of these laws from the vast majority of citizens. Japan has fewer than 200 firearm-related violent crimes a year, most committed by members of organized crime groups. Japanese police officers typically carry nothing heavier than .38 Special revolvers and can go on trial

if they use their guns to inflict more harm than their shots prevented. Japanese police officers prefer to rely on nightsticks and martial arts, in which they receive significantly more training. This, in return, results in an unwritten code that effectively de-escalates the level of violence that most Japanese criminals are willing to engage in against police.

Mexico

The Mexican constitution guarantees Mexican citizens the rights to own firearms and to use lethal force to defend their lives and homes. However, some limits are in place on the firearms that Mexicans can own. Handguns are restricted to .38 caliber or smaller and shotguns to 12 gauge or smaller. In addition, military calibers for handguns and rifles (9mm Luger, 5.56mm NATO and so on) are illegal, though waivers to this law are available for registered members of shooting and hunting clubs. The *Secretaria de la Defensa Nacional* administers Mexican gun laws, including requiring registration of all firearms through the owner's local army facilities.

Mexico has only one legal gun store, the *Unidad de Comercialización de Armamento y Municiones* in Mexico City. Most gun sales are private transactions with no background checks. Many sporting goods stores stock ammunition, though military calibers are hard to find.

Concealed carry permits are available, though difficult for most citizens to acquire. In practice, a citizen who wants a permit must have a job that requires him to be armed or must be able to prove to the authorities that his life is under threat.

Norway

Norwegian gun laws are a product of the nation's history. When Norway became an independent nation in 1905, it was too poor to equip a standing army, so the law required every farmstead to provide, equip and arm one militiaman. Today, Norwegian culture still sees firearm skill as vital to national security, and approximately one third of Norwegian homes have guns.

The purchase of a firearm in Norway requires a permit, which the prospective buyer acquires through the local police, for the specific gun. Four types of permits exist. Hunting permits allow the purchase of shotguns and rifles, with the exception of military semi-automatic rifles, and require the applicant to pass a hunter safety course. Target shooting permits encompass any type of handgun, rifle or shotgun appropriate to the applicant's fields of competition, and require proof of shooting club membership for at least six months. A collector must define her "area of interest," such as "World War II Russian weapons" or "Lee-Enfield rifles," and must already have a related collection of guns or memorabilia, but can then purchase any type of gun appropriate to the collection, including fully automatic weapons. Self-defense permits are rare, and allow both purchase and concealed carry of handguns. Minimum ages for purchase are 18 for longarms (16 with parental consent) and 21 for handguns. Suppressors are not regulated in Norway.

Story Seed: Shrapnel

Someone blows up a character's house, vehicle or business — possibly with her friends or family in it. Not only does she now have to worry about further attempts on her life from an enemy who's willing to scoff at a federal investigation, but she also has to worry about those same investigators finding evidence of her own misdeeds or illegal property within the wreckage. Or was bringing those inquiries down on her the whole point of the blast? Alternately, the blast flattens a public place that the group collectively used as a meeting site, hunting ground or other resource, preferably on a night that they all planned to be there but were delayed.

Russia

Russian weapon laws are holdovers from those of the Soviet Union. Most former Soviet republics and many other Eastern European nations have similar laws. In Russia, civilian handgun ownership is strictly prohibited, with the only official exceptions being retired military officers formerly of high rank. Adult citizens with hunting licenses may apply for firearms licenses (Cost •••), which initially allow them to purchase smoothbore hunting weapons (shotguns or archaic firearms). Professional hunters, or citizens who have owned shotguns for at least five years without running afoul of the authorities, are also allowed to own hunting rifles. Any civilian-owned firearm must be registered within two weeks of its purchase, and the registration process involves test firing and the logging of the gun's ballistic characteristics into official records. Suppressors and night vision optics are banned, as are fully automatic firearms.

Russian citizens may purchase non-lethal sprays such as tear gas without a license; such devices are commonly available. Electrical stun weapons may not be imported, but domestically produced models are legal. Russians are entitled to armed self-defense, but only within their homes. Carrying lethal weapons in public is strictly prohibited unless the owner is transporting his weapon for hunting purposes. Even then, firearms must be disassembled — but, under Russian law, removing a weapon's magazine renders it "disassembled."

It's worth noting that organized criminals in Russia and the rest of the former Soviet Union are among the world's foremost suppliers of black-market military armament. They don't tend to flaunt their wares, as ostentatious displays of firepower would require the paid-off local officials to take note, but it's always nearby if needed. Any attempt to acquire weapons on the black market in Russia enjoys a +1 bonus.

United Kingdom

The UK's gun laws are some of the tightest in the world, having seen a series of gradual increases since the 1920s. The only firearms that are legal for civilian ownership are bolt-action and lever-action rifles, semi-automatic rifles in .22 caliber and shotguns with a capacity of three rounds or less. Two types of firearm licenses exist. Shotgun licenses do not require the applicants to demonstrate need. Firearms certificates, which authorize rifle ownership, require the application to belong to a shooting club or hold a hunting license. An owner must store all weapons and ammunition securely, and must have a legitimate business or sporting reason to own firearms. Firearm and ammunition Costs in the UK increase by 1 from the normal values given in Chapter Two due to the small market.

UK law does not consider self-defense a legitimate reason for firearm ownership or use, and carrying a weapon openly will draw an immediate police response. No provisions exist for citizens to obtain concealed carry permits, as the only exceptions to local laws are for "Servants of the Crown" (e.g., police and military personnel).

Most police in the UK are not armed. Authorized Firearms Officers (AFOs) must undergo a certification process before being issued firearms and ranged stun guns, and even then operate under very strict use of force policies.

Trouble Spots of the World

In war zones or lawless regions such as central Africa, the Balkans and parts of the Middle East, any firearms laws are honored more in the breach than in the observance. Governments can proclaim total weapon bans, and many do, but it's hard for police to enforce laws in areas they can't survive entering. Any area that has seen military action within the past few years is liberally strewn with arms dealers — some major players, but most locals looking to make a quick profit from battlefield salvage. In such areas, characters can acquire virtually anything they want, up to and including military-grade weapons (most commonly Soviet-era exports). As stolen goods are never sold at a loss, these items are usually cheap: Costs are one lower than those given in this book. However, *caveat emptor* when buying something that's been through a few battles and a few years of harsh weather. At the Storyteller's discretion, any such weapon is poorly maintained; do not re-roll 10s when using it.

International Travel

Carrying weapons internationally is risky at best. Nations typically frown on armed non-citizens. A weapon owner who travels commercially must observe

all weapons laws for both her country of origin and destination. When entering a country through customs, a traveler with weapons must declare everything she's bringing into the country. Many nations require foreign citizens to receive advance permission before bringing weapons in, which can be difficult or impossible if the host nation has restrictive weapon laws. Law enforcement officers may have an easier time of this if they're traveling on official business, though they still have no jurisdiction.

The European Union has a specific provision for citizens of a member nation traveling to other member nations. An EU European Firearms Pass grants the bearer permission to travel to any EU member state with weapons, so long as she observes all local laws. The application process for such a pass goes through the national law enforcement community of the citizen's country and requires a background check and a declaration of the make, model and serial number of every firearm to which the pass will apply.

Arms Smuggling

Travelers who want to move weapons illegally have a wide range of options. If a character wants to smuggle a weapon in his own luggage, he must pack to defeat customs searches and screening at points of entry. This is a contested action: the player rolls Intelligence + Larceny – the weapon's Size, and the Storyteller rolls a separate Wits + Investigation pool once for every searcher who inspects the luggage. Note that most customs and port security searches use machine assistance: a handheld metal detector wand provides a +1 bonus, an x-ray machine +3 and an explosives sniffer/scanner +4. Conversely, a weapon disguised to resemble a non-threatening object (e.g., a pen gun or a shoe bomb) provides a +2 bonus to the player's roll.

If a character wants to move larger quantities of weapons, he'll have to ship them, preferably hidden in an innocuous shipment of bananas or car parts. The procedure is the same as above, but not all cargo receives a thorough search. For each port facility, border or other possible search point, the Storyteller should roll a die: on a 1–6, no search occurs.

Would-be arms smugglers can avoid port security entirely by crossing borders illegally. This carries its own hazards, but such travel is outside the scope of this book. Storytellers may play out such attempts to build suspense, or may require the player to make a contested and/or extended Intelligence + Survival (if traveling on foot) or Intelligence + Drive (if using a vehicle) rolls against a Wits + Investigation pool for the local border patrol.

Story Seed: Hot Iron

The characters receive or intercept a shipment of illegal arms, only to find that the guns are somehow marked or being tracked. The weapons that the characters thought would solve all their problems are liabilities. Now the characters must dissociate themselves from their booty before the authorities or other interested parties track them down.

Appendix: Merits

What follows is a set of Merits for characters who are experts in certain types of equipment. While previous chapters focused on items and objects, this Appendix focuses on talents and tricks that can put equipment to its most effective use.

"If you live among dogs, keep a stick. After all, this is what a hound has teeth for – to bite when he feels like it!"
– Nikita Khrushchev, Soviet Premier

Mental Merits

EOD (••••)

Prerequisite: Wits ••• or Dexterity •••, Crafts •••, Demolitions Specialty in Crafts

Effect: Your character is well versed in handling all types of explosives. She is familiar with all kinds of techniques used in bomb making, from creating her own explosives to identifying and arming manufactured ones. She has also been trained in explosive ordnance disposal (EOD) and is comfortable disarming unfamiliar devices. Your character does not suffer the –2 penalty for disarming an explosive she did not build (see p. 114).

Technophile (• to ••)

Effect: Through professional experience or a hobbyist's fanaticism, your character is exceptionally knowledgeable with regard to one specific type of equipment, chosen upon purchase of this Merit. With one point in this Merit, its focus is relatively narrow: Edged Weapons, Handguns, Consumer Vehicles, 20th-Century French Military Equipment and so forth. With two points, the Merit's focus may be broader: for example, Melee Weapons, Firearms, Vehicles, 20th-Century Military Equipment.

With regard to items that fall within the chosen focus *only*, this Merit functions as the Encyclopedic Knowledge Merit (see p. 109, the **World of Darkness Rulebook**). With a successful roll, your character is fully versed in the performance, history and trivia of any specific item he encounters. In addition to identifying an item, he can recite the likely metallic composition of an ancient sword, the ballistic characteristics of an enemy's sidearm, the top speed of a sports car or the explosive yield of a nuclear warhead.

This Merit confers no actual bonuses or abilities when the character attempts to *use* an item that falls within his field of study. Unlike Encyclopedic Knowledge, this Merit is available after character creation, though the character's actions and interests over an extended period of time should justify the purchase.

Physical Merits

Fighting Style: Archery (• to ••••)

Prerequisites: Strength ••, Dexterity ••, Athletics ••

Effect: Your character has devoted years of practice to the bow. She may be a competitive archer, a low-tech hunter or a medieval history enthusiast.

Dots purchased in this Merit allow access to special combat maneuvers. Each maneuver is a prerequisite for the next. So, your character can't have "Rapid Nock" until she has "Draw and Loose." The maneuvers and their effects are described below. All of the following maneuvers work *only* with bows.

Draw and Loose (•): Your character's arm muscles are well-toned for the demanding task of repeatedly drawing a heavy bow. She gains +1 Strength for the purposes of a bow's minimum Strength, Damage and Range.

Rapid Nock (••): Your character can maintain a withering rate of fire. Once per turn, she may "reload" a bow as a reflexive action.

Arcing Fire (•••): Arrows, like all other projectiles, travel in ballistic arcs. Your character is a master of estimating range, wind and other factors to arc shots much farther than they would travel if fired directly. Double the Ranges of any bow your character uses.

Plunging Fire (••••): Your character can eschew direct attacks in favor of launching arrows high into the air to plummet straight down on hapless victims. Your character's bow attacks suffer no penalties for target concealment behind solid objects, so long as the target lacks overhead protection and your character can see *any* part of the target by which to gauge her location. For example, a target hiding behind a log with her foot sticking out applies no penalty, but a character in a fetal curl on a van's floorboards receives normal protection. **Drawback:** Your character may use this maneuver only outdoors or in enclosed spaces large enough to provide for several hundred feet of vertical flight (e.g., football stadiums).

Fighting Style: Chain Weapons (• to ••••)

Prerequisites: Strength ••, Dexterity •••, Weaponry •••

Effect: Your character is trained in the difficult art of fighting with chain weapons. Chain weapons are notoriously unpredictable unless mastered — a poorly skilled fighter is as likely to tangle or cut himself as he is to harm an opponent. Your character's training is likely to have been formalized, having learned the skill at a martial arts dojo or perhaps in stage combat for the theater. (Note that a character using chained weapons who possesses *no* Dots in this Merit suffers an automatic –2 to all attack rolls.)

Dots purchased with this Merit allow access to unique combat maneuvers with chain weapons. Each maneuver is a prerequisite for the subsequent maneuver. So, your character cannot have "Hand Bind" until he has "Impenetrable Defense." These maneuvers and their effects are described below. All maneuvers are based upon the Weaponry Skill.

Impenetrable Defense (•): Your character may choose not to attack in a given turn, and instead whirl the chain in the direction of her opponent (or opponents). During the entire turn, regardless of Initiative, you may add +2 to your character's Defense to deflect incoming blows. Your character also takes no penalty for defending against multiple opponents

until she faces three attacks. The first and second attacks made against her cause no negative modifiers to her Defense.

Hand Bind (••): This defensive maneuver is made against an incoming attack (Brawl or Weaponry-based). When a foe attacks with a weapon or with his body, your character wraps the attacking limb with the chain, grappling it with a Strength + Weaponry attack. The foe's Defense is not subtracted from this roll, but his successes on the attack roll are. If your character is successful, the limb is bound with the chain, and the opponent can attempt to escape this next turn with a Strength + Brawl roll. If the foe achieved more successes on his attack, his attack is still diminished by whatever successes you rolled on the Hand Bind roll. This maneuver must be done on the attacker's Initiative turn, and performing this action means your character cannot make an attack this turn.

Outside Choke (•••): Your character attempts to wrap the chain around her opponent's neck. Roll Strength + Weaponry. The victim may attempt to free himself on his next action with a Strength + Brawl roll, which is reduced by your character's Strength +1. This maneuver is not to cause damage or kill the opponent — this maneuver is to render him unconscious by pressing the chain against the arteries of his neck, thus halting blood flow to his brain. If your character is successful on the grapple, she can begin to choke the victim on the following turn. For every turn that the choke hold is not broken, the victim suffers an additional –1 on all rolls to resist. When your character has accumulated a number of uninterrupted turns equal to the victim's Stamina, he falls unconscious. This maneuver, when complete, causes a single point of bashing damage to the victim. This combat maneuver is ineffective against characters who need not breathe.

Whirl and Thrust (••••): Your character at this level is highly adept at using chains, and can make focused attacks with any part of the weapon. By whirling the chain a few times, she can build momentum on a single attack, which can be made with startling accuracy. On a targeted attack, you can ignore up to –2 of penalties associated with directed attacks. In other words, attacks to an opponent's torso or limbs are done at no penalty, attacks the head would be at –1, to the hand –2 and to the eye –3. **Drawback:** Your character negates her Defense for the rest of the turn. If your character has applied her Defense against any incoming attack before her turn, she may not perform this maneuver.

Fighting Style: Combat Marksmanship (• to •••••)

Prerequisites: Strength ••, Dexterity ••, Composure •••, and Firearms ••

Effect: Your character is not only proficient with firearms, but has trained extensively to maintain her accuracy in the stress of combat (see "Marksmanship in Combat," p. 51, for a discussion of these challenges). She most likely has experience in law enforcement or the military, though she may simply be a self-defense advocate or a dedicated hobbyist with uncommon self-possession.

Dots purchased in this Merit allow access to special combat maneuvers. Each maneuver is a prerequisite for the next. So, your character can't have "Tactical Reload" until she has "Shoot First." The maneuvers and their effects are described below, most of which are based on the Firearms Skill.

Shoot First (•): Your character's trained reflexes give her a split-second edge in a gunfight. Whenever she begins a combat with a firearm already in her hand, she gains a bonus to her Initiative roll equal to her Firearms Skill. If she also has the Quick Draw Merit for firearms (see the **World of Darkness Rulebook**, p. 113) and draws a firearm during the first turn of combat, this bonus is added retroactively, starting at the beginning of the second turn of combat.

Tactical Reload (••): Your character's muscle memory enables her to reload without conscious thought. Once per turn, she may reload a firearm that feeds from a detachable magazine or use a speedloader to reload a revolver, as a reflexive action.

Double Tap (•••): When using a lever-action, pump-action or semi-automatic firearm, your character may make short burst attacks as if her gun were capable of autofire.

Bayonet Range (••••): Your character can maintain accuracy and control even when facing an opponent at arm's length. The target's Defense does not apply to firearm attacks your character makes within close-combat range (see p. 155, the **World of Darkness Rulebook**).

Rapid Fire (•••••): Your character's concentration is such that she can unleash a hail of bullets. In a single action, she may make one extra Firearms attack for each point by which her Composure exceeds 2. Each extra attack is made at a cumulative –1 modifier. Thus, she can perform a total of two attacks at Composure 3 (the second of which is at –1), three attacks at Composure 4 (the third of which is at –2) and four at Composure 5 (the fourth of which is at –3). She must declare the targets of all attacks before rolling the first one. Each attack not directed against her initial target suffers an additional –1 penalty. All attacks made with this maneuver must be single shots. **Drawback:** Your character cannot use her Defense against any attack in the same turn in which she intends to use this maneuver. If she uses Defense against attacks that occur earlier in the Initiative roster, before she can perform this maneuver, she cannot use Rapid Fire this turn. In addition, your character may not use this maneuver with bolt-action or break-action firearms.

Fighting Style: Fencing (• to ••••)

Prerequisites: Dexterity •••, Weaponry •••

Effect: Your character is trained in the art of fencing. He likely learned this skill at a fencing academy, and is familiar with the sport in more than a passing capacity.

Dots purchased with this Merit allow access to unique combat maneuvers using fencing weapons. Each maneuver is a prerequisite for the subsequent maneuver. So, your character cannot have "Feint" until he has "Thrust." These maneuvers and their effects are described below. All maneuvers are based upon the Weaponry Skill.

Fencing is meant to be performed with specific swords. The maneuvers below can be used without penalty provided your character is using one of the following swords: curved sword, fencing sword, rapier or sword cane. Any other type of sword incurs a –1 penalty against any of the maneuvers listed below. (For more information on swords as melee weapons, see Chapter One.)

Thrust (•): The thrust is a simple yet powerful attack. A fencer's stance (one leg anchoring your character's position and the other leg lunging him forward) gives this attack extra force. When your character makes a thrust attack, plunging the blade toward an opponent, he does so with a +1 bonus.

Feint (••): Your character knows how to make a fake attack intended to throw off an opponent. Make a "normal" attack roll (Strength + Weaponry), and this roll is penalized by the opponent's Defense, par usual. This attack is fake; it does not strike the foe or do any damage. If your character achieves even a single success, however, the opponent is momentarily confused and off-balance, and may not apply her Defense against the next attack she suffers (which may be from your character the following turn or may be from some other source beforehand).

Riposte (•••): A Riposte requires an attack to be made against your character. He steps out of the way of the attack using his Dodge (i.e., her Defense, doubled). While his opponent is open, he can then make a sudden and quick attack, which is performed at a –1 penalty. However, the opponent's Defense does *not* further penalize the attack roll. **Drawback:** If your opponent suffers any further attacks on a turn where she has used Riposte, she cannot apply her Defense against them.

Moulinet (••••): If your character makes a successful hit on an adversary with his sword, he may then rotate his wrist and perform a quick spiral cut with the tip of the weapon. This additional cut requires no additional roll; the cut does lethal damage to the opponent equal to your character's Dexterity. **Drawback:** To perform this maneuver, the character must spend a Willpower point *before* he makes her initial attack roll. The Willpower does not grant him the additional +3 to attack. If the initial attack roll fails, the Willpower point is wasted and the Moulinet may not be added.

Kendo: Japanese Fencing

The above Merit is for European-style fencing, but can be adapted for Japanese kendo fairly easily. While the techniques (called *waza*) are slightly different, the mechanics stay the same.

Thrust (•) becomes **Kaburi**; instead of thrusting, your character makes an overhead attack, but the +1 modifier remains.

Feint (••) becomes **Kiai**. It involves shouting loudly while making a distracting maneuver.

Riposte (•••) becomes **Uchiotoshi Waza**, or "killing the sword." The character may not step out of the way but instead parries the attack before her own counter-attack.

Moulinet (••••) becomes **Nidan Waza**, allowing one completed attack and a second quick cut with the sword.

Again, all the mechanics are the same, and the Merit works in the exact manner, though with different terms. However, the swords used are different. A character can perform kendo waza with katana, wakizashi and curved swords — using them with any other swords incurs a –1 penalty.

Fighting Style: Filipino Martial Arts (• to ••••)

Prerequisites: Dexterity •••, Weaponry •••

Effect: Your character is trained in the art of Filipino fighting, which is often called *escrima* or *kali*. He may have learned this from an instructor or a family member. Most escrima techniques use weapons and are meant predominantly for self-defense.

Dots purchased with this Merit allow access to unique combat maneuvers with blunt weapons. Each maneuver is a prerequisite for the subsequent maneuver. So, your character cannot have "Disarm" until he has "Lock and Block." These maneuvers and their effects are described below. All maneuvers are based upon the Weaponry Skill.

Note that to perform these maneuvers, a character must have at least one blunt weapon in hand. This weapon is potentially one escrima stick (or a pair), but it can be any blunt object shorter than two feet in length. If the character wields two weapons, he still assumes the –2 penalty for off-hand attacks. Once the character reaches the fourth and final level of this style, he can then choose to use any of the maneuvers *without* weapons. At this stage he learns the "empty hand" techniques of escrima.

Lock and Block (•): With this move, your character uses an adversary's momentum against her. If you succeed on a Strength + Weaponry roll, your character captures an opponent's attacking arm in his own and gains a grapple over her (for grappling rules, see p. 157,

the **World of Darkness Rulebook**). You may add your character's *Defense* to the Strength + Weaponry roll, as he is technically making a defensive maneuver. However, if you choose to add his Defense to this attack, you may not apply his Defense against any incoming attacks that turn. If he has already applied his Defense, he may still utilize this maneuver, but he does not get to add his Defense to the roll.

Disarm (••): This allows your character to capture an incoming attack and bring his own weapon down upon a foe's forearm, potentially forcing the enemy to drop her weapon. (Note that this is *different* than the Disarm Merit.) To enact this maneuver, make a normal attack roll (Dexterity + Weaponry). Compare the successes on this roll against the opponent's Stamina. If the successes are equal to or exceed her Stamina score, she drops the weapon. This attack *does* cause damage to the opponent, as well. Take the successes gained on the attack roll and halve them (round up). The opponent takes this damage, bashing.

Off-Balancing Attack (•••): With this attack, your character uses his weapon to set a foe off-balance. This attack can take any form: thrusting a baton into a solar plexus, hitting a foe's temple or the bridge of her nose or using a stick's momentum to push her into an awkward position. The attack is made at a –2 penalty. If successful, the attack does full damage *and* the opponent's next attack is made at a –3 penalty.

Many-Handed Defense (••••): Escrima practitioners know how to move and flow with the combat in ways often unparalleled in other weapon-style systems. In this case, you may apply your character's full Defense (or Dodge) to all attacks against him in a single turn. They are not diminished at all by attacks made after the first.

Fighting Style: Sniping (• to •••••)

Prerequisites: Dexterity •••, Resolve •••, Firearms •••, and Stealth ••

Effect: A sniper is the antithesis of a gunfighter, patient and serene rather than swift and ruthless. Your character, through life-long experience or intensive military training, is patient and skilled enough to spend hours staring through a rifle scope before taking one perfect shot that decides the fate of a hostage or a nation.

Dots purchased in this Merit allow access to special combat maneuvers. Each maneuver is a prerequisite for the next. So, your character can't have "Battlesight Zero" until she has "On Scope." The maneuvers and their effects are described below, most of which are based on the Firearms Skill. All of the following maneuvers work *only* with rifles (including assault rifles).

On Scope (•): Your character has an intuitive understanding of long-range ballistics and has spent countless hours straining to pick out tiny details through a telescopic sight. The maximum bonus she may receive from aiming (see the **World of Darkness Rulebook**, p. 162) is increased to her Composure +1 for semi-

automatic and automatic rifles and her Composure +2 for break-action, bolt-action and lever-action rifles. In addition, when using a scope or other long-range optic device (e.g., binoculars), she receives a +2 bonus to all perception rolls (see the **World of Darkness Rulebook**, p. 45).

Battlesight Zero (••): Once your character is familiar with the capabilities of a rifle, she can wring unparalleled performance from it. Whenever your character sights in a rifle (see "Sighting Tools," p. 164), she doubles the number of attacks that receive the bonus from this process. In addition, whenever she makes an attack with a rifle that receives this bonus, the weapon's short range is increased by five yards times her Wits, medium range by twice this amount and long range by three times this amount.

Focused Shot (•••): Your character can lurk motionless in ambush for days, ignoring sleep deprivation, temperature extremes and even life-threatening injuries in the name of putting lead on target. When making an aimed shot, she may ignore an amount of penalties for wounds, drugs, disease, pain, fatigue, environmental conditions and similar factors equal to her Resolve. For example, if your character has Resolve 4, has two points of Health remaining (–2), has gone without sleep for 36 hours (–2) and has ingested strong hallucinogens (–3), her aimed shots suffer only a –3 penalty instead of the –7 that affects all her other dice pools.

Tactical Intervention (••••): Split-second timing and nerves of steel enable your character to take advantage of the smallest opportunities for accurate shot placement. When making an aimed shot, all penalties for shooting into close combat and for concealment are halved, rounding down.

One Shot, One Kill (•••••): When your character picks up her rifle, people fall down. It's just that simple. When making an aimed shot, do not add the rifle's Damage rating to the attack dice pool (though "9 again" or "8 again" still applies if it would normally). Instead, if the attack succeeds, add the rifle's Damage rating as extra successes. **Drawback:** Spend one Willpower per attack. Note that this Willpower expenditure does not add three dice to the attack.

Fighting Style: Spetsnaz Knife Fighting (• to ••••)

Prerequisites: Dexterity •••, Weaponry ••

Effect: Your character is trained to fight effectively with a knife. This particular form of martial knife training is based upon original *Spetsnaz* Russian Forces training. This training is now standard among many of the world's Special Forces. It involves holding a single-edged knife in a downward (or "reverse") grip. Maneuvers involve a lot of quick, fluid movements complemented by a mixture of slashing and stabbing toward vital areas.

Dots purchased with this Merit allow access to unique combat maneuvers with a knife. Each maneuver is a prerequisite for the subsequent maneuver. Your character cannot have "Advantageous Angle" until he has "Anticipate Attack." These maneuvers and their effects are described below. All maneuvers are based on the Weaponry Skill.

Anticipate Attack (•): Those trained in Special Forces knife fighting know to move fast before incoming attacks and in response to them. To do this requires a level of anticipation and strategy even before a combat begins. At this level, your character may substitute his Weaponry score for his Composure when determining his Initiative modifier. This is only during combat situations in which your character is using an edged or pointed weapon of Size 2 or under.

Advantageous Angle (••): Your knife-wielder knows how to make a feinted attack from the side or rear in a way that grants him advantage. While normally such attacks confer no bonuses, the character is aware how to deceive an opponent into mounting a Defense against an attack that isn't coming — and then stage an attack from a different angle. The foe's Defense is at –1 during such an attack. **Drawback:** This maneuver can only be made every other turn.

Vital Attack (•••): Your character knows how to target his attacks to vital organs and other vulnerabilities. Attacks made with a knife have Armor Piercing 1, and penalties to hit specific targets or body parts (see "Specified Targets," p.165 of the **World of Darkness Rulebook**) are reduced by one.

Slash and Stab (••••): Your character's deftness with a knife allows him to make two attacks against one target in a single action. The first attack is a slash, the second a thrusting stab. The first attack is made as normal, but the second suffers a –1 penalty. **Drawback:** This quick maneuver leaves the character somewhat more vulnerable against the next attack coming toward him. His Defense is counted as being one less against the next attack.

Fighting Style: Staff Fighting (• to •••)

Prerequisites: Strength •••, Dexterity ••, Weaponry ••

Effect: Your character has learned to wield a quarterstaff, bo staff or jo staff effectively in combat. This is likely something she has learned from a martial practitioner. This style is sometimes called bojutsu.

Dots purchased with this Merit allow access to unique combat maneuvers with polearms. Each maneuver is a prerequisite for the subsequent maneuver. Your character cannot have "Temple Strike" until she has "Trip." These maneuvers and their effects are described below. All maneuvers are based upon the Weaponry Skill.

Note that while a quarter-, bo or jo staff are the norm for this fighting style, the maneuvers are not limited to these weapons. A character can use *any* polearm for these maneuvers, but using other polearms with an item

that isn't one of the aforementioned three staff types requires an additional point of Weaponry (Weaponry •••). A character can also utilize improvised polearms (including post-hole diggers, scythes or other objects at least five feet in length) with this maneuvers. In such cases, the Weaponry ••• is still required, and all attack rolls are made with the appropriate improvised weapon penalties in place. Remember as well that utilizing a polearm in combat grants the wielder a +1 Defense.

Trip (•): Your character can use her polearm to trip a single opponent, hopefully sending him to the ground. It is a contested roll pitting the character's normal attack roll against the opponent's Dexterity + Athletics. The character's attack is penalized by the foe's Defense, as usual. If the opponent falls, assume Knockdown rules (per p. 168, the **World of Darkness Rulebook**). In this case, however, the fall to the ground incurs a single point of bashing damage to the opponent.

Temple Strike (••): Your character brings her staff against the side of her adversary's head. The normal –3 penalty to hit the head still applies, but if the damage meets or exceeds the target's Size, the target falls unconscious for a number of turns equal to the damage done. This damage is usually bashing, as it is meant to be performed with a blunt staff. The damage can be performed with a bladed weapon such as the naginata, however. The effect is the same, but the damage is now lethal instead of bashing.

Dangerous Radius (•••): With this technique, your character can swing her weapon in a wide arc, hitting anyone within three yards. Make a normal attack roll for the character (Strength + Weaponry + weapon bonuses). This roll receives a dice penalty equal to the number of opponents hit with this strike (to a maximum of –5 dice). Successes achieved on this roll are done as damage to all within the three-yard radius. If the weapon is a normal blunt polearm (i.e., a staff), it does bashing. If bladed, the weapon causes lethal damage. **Drawback:** This attack cannot distinguish between friend or foe. Any allies within the three-yard radius are hit along with enemies. The technique cannot be pulled to exclude friends from the damage.

Index of Weapon and Vehicle Tables

Who shall
conceive the
HORRORS
of my secret toil as I
dabbled among the
unhallowed damps of the
grave or tortured the
living animal to animate the
lifeless clay?

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